Presented to
The Library
of the
University of Toronto
by

E. H. Armstrong, Esq.
SCOTT'S POETICAL WORKS
The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott

Edited by Robert Ford

London & Glasgow

COLLINS’ CLEAR-TYPE PRESS
# CONTENTS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marmion</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lady of the Lake</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vision of Don Roderick</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rokeby</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bridal of Triermain</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lord of the Isles</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Field of Waterloo</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harold the Dauntless</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Imitations of the Ancient Ballad.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas the Rhymer</td>
<td>558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenfinlas</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Eve of St. John</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadyow Castle</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gray Brother</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War-Song of the Royal Edinburgh Light Dragoons</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Ballads, Translated, or Imitated, from the German, Etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William and Helen</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wild Huntsman</td>
<td>590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fire-King</td>
<td>594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick and Alice</td>
<td>597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Battle of Sempach</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Noble Moringer</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Erl-King</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Songs and Verses from the Waverley Novels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridal Song</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Captain Waverley</td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davie Gellatley's Song</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Luckie MacLeary's Tavern</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davie Gellatley's Song (Hie Away)</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Swithin's Chair</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davie Gellatley's Song (111)</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora MacIvor's Song</td>
<td>610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To an Oak Tree</td>
<td>612</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From Guy Mannering—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nativity of Harry Bertram</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twist ye, twine ye</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dying Gipsy Smuggler</td>
<td>613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossin's Song</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prophecy</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From the Antiquary—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epitaph on John o' ye Girnell</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elspeth's Ballad</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From the Black Dwarf—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From Old Mortality—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Bellenden's Song</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verses Found in Bothwell's Pocket-Book</td>
<td>618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epitaph on Balfour of Burley</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From Rob Roy—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Francis Osbaldistone's Lines to the Memory of Edward the Black Prince</td>
<td>619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation from Ariosto</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From the Heart of Midlothian—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madge Wildfire's Songs</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From the Bride of Lammermoor—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lucy Ashton's Song</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman the Forester's Song</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prophecy</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## From the Legend of Montrose—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Gaelic Melody</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Orphan Maid</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Ivanhoe—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Crusader's Return</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Barefooted Friar</td>
<td>626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulrica's War-Song</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca's Hymn</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Black Knight's Song</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirge for Athelstane</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From The Monastery—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take thou no scorn</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs of the White Lady of Avenel</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Sub-Prior</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the White Lady</td>
<td>632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Halbert</td>
<td>633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Pierce Shafton's Song</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Lady</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border March</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Lady to Mary Avenel</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Lady to Edward</td>
<td>636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The White Lady's Farewell</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From The Abbots—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pardoner's Advertisement</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Kenilworth—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldthred's Song</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Warder's Welcome to Kenilworth</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From The Pirate—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Song of the Tempest</td>
<td>645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claud Halcro's Song</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Song of Harold Harfager</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of the Mermaids and Mermen</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norna's Song</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norna's Invocation</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trolld's Reply</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norna's Answer</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claud Halcro and Norna</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of the Zetland Fisherman</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland's Songs</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claud Halcro's Verses</td>
<td>651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norna's Incantations</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Interview with Minna</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryce Snailsfoot's Advertisement</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From The Fortunes of Nigel—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Peveril of the Peak—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Quentin Durward—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Guy</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From St. Ronan's Well—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Redgaultlet—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From The Betrothed—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier Wake</td>
<td>664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Truth of Woman</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I asked of my Harp</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From The Talisman—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahriman</td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Minstrel's Song</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blondel's Song</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Woodstock—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Hour with Thee</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From Chronicles of the Canon-gate—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>From The Fair Maid of Perth—</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lay of Poor Louise</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Chant</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of the Glee-Maiden</td>
<td>674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold and True</td>
<td>674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Anne of Geierstein—</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Secret Tribunal</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Count Robert of Paris—</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Castle Dangerous—</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mottoes</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## LYRICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

### Juvenile Lines
- On a Thunderstorm
- On the Setting Sun
- The Violet
- To a Lady

### Bothwell Castle
- The Shepherd’s Tale
- Cheviot
- Joy to the Victors
- Rhein-Wein Lied
- The Reiver’s Wedding
- The Bard’s Incantation
- Hellvellyn
- The Dying Bard
- The Norman Horse-Shoe
- The Maid of Toro
- The Palmer
- The Maid of Neidpath
- Wandering Willie
- Health to Lord Melville
- Hunting Song
- The Resolve
- Epitaph
- Prologue
- The Poacher
- Oh, say not, my Love
- The Bold Dragoon
- On the Massacre of Glencoe
- For a’ That

### Song
- Pharos Loquitur
- Lines
- Letter in Verse
- The Author of Waverley

### Farewell to MacKenzie
- War-Song of Lachlan
- Saint Cloud
- The Dance of Death
- Romance of Dunois
- The Troubadour
- From the French
- Song
- Lullaby
- The Return to Ulster
- Jock of Hazeldean
- Pibroch of Donald Dhu
- Nora’s Vow
- MacGregor’s Gathering
- Verses
- The Search after Happiness
- Mr. Kemble’s Farewell Address
- Lines
- The Sun upon the Weardlaw Hill
- The Monks of Bangor’s March
- Letter
- Epilogue
- Mackrinmon’s Lament
- Donald Caird’s Come Again
- Epitaph on Mrs. Erskine
- On Ettrick Forest’s Mountains Dun
- Farewell to the Muse
- The Maid of Isla
- Carle, now the King’s Come
- One Volume More
- To J. G. Lockhart
- Lines
- Epilogue
- Epilogue
- Life of Napoleon
- Lines to Sir Cuthbert Sharp
- The Death of Keeldar
- The Foray
- Inscription
- Lines on Fortune

## DRAMATIC PIECES

- Halidon Hill
- MacDuff’s Cross
- Auchindrane
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portrait of Sir Walter Scott</th>
<th>. . . . .</th>
<th>Frontispiece</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Branksome at the present time</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>Opposite Page 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chancel and East Window, Melrose Abbey</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norham Castle</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The whitening breakers sound so near”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Soon as they near’d his turrets strong”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“A stranger I, the Huntsman said”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holyrood Palace</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The stag at eve had drunk his fill”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The antler’d monarch of the waste”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birch Tree, Trossachs Glen</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“God and the Cause”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen’s Isle, Loch Katrine</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“And backward borne upon the lea”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stirling Castle</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortham Tower, Rokeby</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Like wave with crest of sparkling foam”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Onward they press with weapons high”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Against the cuirass rang the blade”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There stood array’d in sable band”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The evening mists, with ceaseless change”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He spurr’d his steed, he couch’d his lance”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The wide plain thunder’d to their tread”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Down reeling steeds and riders went”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lancer and guard and cuirassier”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Their leaders fall’n, their standards lost”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When to the hook the salmon springs”</td>
<td>. . . . .</td>
<td>768</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.
A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
CHARLES EARL OF DALKEITH,
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The Poem, now offered to the Public, is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland. The inhabitants living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude, in this respect, than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular Poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure, which, in some degree, authorises the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery, also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a Poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad, or Metrical Romance.

For these reasons, the Poem was put into the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry, without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is Three Nights and Three Days.

INTRODUCTION.

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;

For, welladay! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door.
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh,
With hesitating step at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;

In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride:
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the Latest Minstrel sung.

CANTO FIRST.
I.
The feast was over in Branksome tower,¹
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.
The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdalemoor.

III.
Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall;²
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.
IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.

To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
They watch, against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow; 3
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome-Hall.

So piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter’d chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!  

IX.
In sorrow o’er Lord Walter’s bier
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot’s maids and matrons lent:
But o’er her warrior’s bloody bier
The Ladye dropp’d nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o’er the slain,
Had lock’d the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp’d from the nurse’s knee—
“And if I live to be a man,
My father’s death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother’s tears did seek
To dew the infant’s kindling cheek.

X.
All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o’er her slaughter’d sire,
And wept in wild despair,
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother’s alter’d eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, ’gainst her father’s clan,
With Carr in arms had stood;
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.
Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,
Of Bethune’s line of Picardie:
He learn’d the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said, he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery;
For when, in studious mood, he paced
St. Andrew’s cloister’d hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

XII.
And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.
"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.
—"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moon-beams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhillpen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aerial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it dext and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"—

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.
"Tears of an imprison'd maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"—

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.
"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,  
Shimmers through mist each planet star;  
Ill may I read their high decree!  
But no kind influence deign they shower  
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,  
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,  
And the heavy sound was still;  
It died on the river's breast,  
It died on the side of the hill.  
But round Lord David's tower  
The sound still floated near;  
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,  
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.  
She raised her stately head,  
And her heart throb'd high with pride:—
"Your mountains shall bend,  
And your streams ascend,  
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,  
Where many a bold retainer lay,  
And, with jocund din, among them all,  
Her son pursued his infant play.  
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy  
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,  
And round the hall, right merrily,  
In mimic foray rode.  
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,  
Share in his frolic gambols bare,
Albeit their hearts of rugged mould,  
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.  
For the grey warriors prophesied,  
How the brave boy, in future war,  
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,  
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.  

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,  
One moment, and no more;  
One moment gazed with a mother's eye,  
As she paused at the arched door:  
Then from amid the armed train,  
She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,  
As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;  
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,  
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;  
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,  
Had baffled Percy's best bloodhounds;  
In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,  
But he would ride them, one by one;  
Alike to him was time or tide,  
December's snow, or July's pride;  
Alike to him was tide or time,  
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumber-land;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweed-side;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better had'st thou ne'er been born."

XXIV.

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-grey steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairi-bee."

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He passed the Peel of Goldiland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round:
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVII.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."—
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turn'd him now from Teviot-side,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

XXVII.
A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love!

XXVIII.
Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX.
At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddlebow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gain'd the landing place.

XXX.
Now Bowden Moor the marchman won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.²¹

HERE paused the harp; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell;
Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seem'd to seek, in every eye,
If they approved his minstrelsy;
And, diffident of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age, and wand'ring long,
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they long'd the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
After meet rest, again began.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

If thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins grey.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;

²¹
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view St. David's ruin'd pile; 22
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.
Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair:
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate—
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket open'd wide:
For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III.
Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod:
The arched cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,
To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV.
"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me,
Says, that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.
And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide;
"And, darest thou, Warrior! seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast, in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
For threescore years, in penance spent,
   My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Would'st thou thy every future year
   In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
   Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"

VI.

"Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.\(^3\)
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."

VII.

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,
   And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
   And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high:—
Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII.

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start;\(^24\)
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door,
They enter'd now the chancel tall;
The darken'd roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbed aisle,
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;
The corbells were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourish'd around,
Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had bound.
X.
Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne! And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!
O fading honours of the dead! O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI.
The moon on the east oriel shone Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined;
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twined;
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Shew'd many a prophet, and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moon-beam kiss'd the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.
They sate them down on a marble stone,—
(A Scottish monarch slept below;)
Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
"I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God:
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.
"In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;
A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

XIV.
"When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened:
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed.
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said,
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

**XV.**

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on St. Michael's night,
When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

**XVI.**

"It was a night of woe and dread,
When Michael in the tomb I laid!
Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
The banners waved without a blast"—
—Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one!—
I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

**XVII.**

"Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be." ³²
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the Warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

**XVIII.**

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone
at length.
I would you had been there, to see

How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX.
Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX.
Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewilder'd and unnerved he stood,
And the priest pray'd fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.
And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"—
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.
When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

When the convent met at the noontide bell—
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd.

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he pass'd the tombstones grey,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
Felt like a load upon his breast;
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot grey;
He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might.

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot grey,
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's side;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome Towers and Teviot's tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And waken'd every flower that blows;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.
Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle so hastilie;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie;
Why does she stop, and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair;
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As he rouses him up from his lair;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII.
The ladye steps in doubt and dread,
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
The lady caresses the rough blood-hound,
Lest his voice should waken the castle round,
The watchman's bugle is not blown,
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII.
The Knight and ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately, and young, and tall;
Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon prest;
When her blue eyes their secret told.
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair,
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX.
And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow:
Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the Knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove;
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blush'd, and how she sigh'd,
And, half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid;—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX.
Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are grey, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
I may not, must not, sing of love.

XXXI.
Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear:
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border, far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII.
Use lessens marvel, it is said:
This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock:
And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
And often mutter'd "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
But well Lord Cranstoun served he:
And he of his service was full fain;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
An it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage,
Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIII.
For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish Page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes:
For there, beside our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd a band
Of the best that would ride at her command:
The trysting place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to St. Mary's lake ere day;
But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.
They burn'd the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIV.
And now, in Branksome's good green wood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly;

No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove:
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

While thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale
The Minstrel's voice began to fail:
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the wither'd hand of age
A goblet, crown'd with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.
CANTO THIRD.

I.
And said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor wither'd heart was dead,
And that I might not sing of love?
How could I to the dearest theme,
That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,
So foul, so false a recreant prove!
How could I name love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II.
In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.
So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
But the page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came prick ing on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay;
His armour red with many a stain:
He seem'd in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night;
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.
But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That mark'd the foemen's feudal hate;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seem'd to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V.
In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sigh’d nor pray’d,  
Nor saint, nor ladye, call’d to aid;  
But he stoop’d his head, and couch’d his spear,  
And spurred his steed to full career.  
The meeting of these champions proud  
Seem’d like the bursting thunder-cloud.  

VI.  
Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!  
The stately Baron backwards bent;  
Bent backwards to his horse’s tail,  
And his plumes went scattering on the gale:  
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,  
Into a thousand flinders flew.  
But Cranstoun’s lance, of more avail,  
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer’s mail;  
Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,  
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—  
Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,  
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,  
Down went the steed, the girding broke,  
Hurl’d on a heap lay man and horse.  
The Baron onward pass’d his course;  
Nor knew—so giddy roll’d his brain—  
His foe lay stretch’d upon the plain.  

VII.  
But when he rein’d his courser round,  
And saw his foeman on the ground  
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,  
He bade his page to stanch the wound,  
And there beside the warrior stay,  
And tend him in his doubtful state,  
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:  
His noble mind was inly moved  
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.  
“This shalt thou do without delay:  
No longer here myself may stay;  
Unless the swifter I speed away,  
Short shrift will be at my dying day.”  

VIII.  
Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;  
The Goblin Page behind abode;  
His lord’s command he ne’er withstood,  
Though small his pleasure to do good.  
As the corslet off he took,  
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!  
Much he marvell’d a knight of pride,  
Like a book-bosom’d priest should ride:  
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,  
Until the secret he had found.  

IX.  
The iron band, the iron clasp,  
Resisted long the elfin grasp:
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read,
It had much of glamour might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.\(^{37}\)

X.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"—
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
It was not given by man alive.\(^{38}\)

XI.

Unwillingly himself he address'd,
To do his master's high behest:
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse;
He led him into Branksome Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all;
And each did after swear and say,
There only pass'd a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye,
Was always done maliciously;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII.

As he repass'd the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport:
He thought to train him to the wood;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook;
The running stream dissolved the spell,
And his own elvish shape he took.

Could he have had his pleasure vile,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"

XIV.

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower;

And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouth'd bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher:
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.

Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire!

He faced the blood-hound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
But still in act to spring;
When dash'd an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
    He drew his tough bow-string;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy!"

XVI.
The speaker issued from the wood,
And check'd his fellow's surly mood,
And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good,
And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true, and eye more clear.
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
Set off his sun-burn'd face:
Old England's sign, St. George's cross,
His barret-cap did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.
His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reach'd scantily to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbish'd sheaf bore he;
His buckler, scarce in breadth a span,
No larger fence had he;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee:
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

XVIII.
He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."—

XIX.
"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;
And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow!"—

XX.
"Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep good order;
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou’lt make them work upon the Border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father’s son.”

XXI.

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seem’d to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinch’d, and beat, and overthrow;
Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin’s silken tire,
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,
And wofully scorch’d the hackbuteer.
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guess’d,
That the young Baron was possess’d!

XXII.

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispell’d;
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wonder’d to find him lie,
On the stone threshold stretch’d along;
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong;
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the Book had read;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch’d the blood; 41
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;
But she has ta’en the broken lance,
And wash’d it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o’er and o’er. 42
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene’er she turn’d it round and round,
Twisted as if she gall’d his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound,
Within the course of a night and day.
THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

Full long she toil’d; for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So pass’d the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
E’en the rude watchman, on the tower,
Enjoy’d and bless’d the lovely hour.

Far more fair Margaret loved and bless’d
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute’s soft tone;
Touch’d a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
Her golden hair stream’d free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV.

Is yon the star, o’er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
O, ’tis the beacon-blaze of war!

Scarce could she draw her tighten’d breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The Warder view’d it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river, rung around.
The blast alarm’d the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;
Far downward, in the castle-yard,
Full many a torch and cresset glared;
And helms and plumes, confusedly toss’d;
Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII.

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was redden’d by the torches’ glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud:—
"On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are kindling on Priesthaughswire;—
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the Warder of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise."

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty route,
The horsemen gallop'd forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven;

And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,
Haunted by the lonely earn;
On many a cairn's grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne them for the Border.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal;
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watch-word from the sleepless ward;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.
XXXI.
The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the grey Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile;
Cheer'd the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught.
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said, that there were thousands ten;
And others ween'd that it was nought
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black-mail;
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So pass'd the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.

Ceased the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend—no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
And busied himself the strings withal;
To hide the tear that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.
Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn.

II.
Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime
Its earliest course was doom'd to know;
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stain'd with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid!—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Graeme.

III.
Now over Border, dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.

The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show'd southern ravage was begun.

IV.
Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried—
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!"
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;

It was but last St. Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,
In vain he never twang'd the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower,
That drove him from his Liddel tower;
And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."

V.
While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Enter'd the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,
Could bound like any Billhope stag.
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf was all their train;
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laugh'd to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely form'd, and lean withal;
A batter'd morion on his brow;
A leather jack, as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seem'd newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,  
His hardy partner bore.

VI.
Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show  
The tidings of the English foe:—  
"Belted Will Howard is marching here,  
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,  
And all the German hackbut-men,  
Who have long lain at Askerten:  
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,  
And burn'd my little lonely tower:  
The fiend receive their souls therefor!  
It had not been burnt this year and more.  
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,  
Served to guide me on my flight;  
But I was chased the livelong night.  
Black John or Akeshaw, and Fergus Graeme,  
Fast upon my traces came,  
Until I turn'd at Priesthaugh Scrogg,  
And shot their horses in the bog,  
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—  
I had him long at high despite:  
He drove my cows last Eastern's night."

VII.
Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,  
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;  
As far as they could judge by ken,  
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand  
Three thousand armed Englishmen;  
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,  
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,  
Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.  
There was saddling and mounting in haste,  
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;  
He that was last at the trysting-place  
Was but lightly held of his gaye ladye.

VIII.
From fair St. Mary's silver wave,  
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height.  
His ready lances Thirlestane brave  
Array'd beneath a banner bright.  
The tressured fleur-de-luce he claims,  
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,  
Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,  
The proud distinction grateful gave,  
For faith 'mid feudal jars;  
What time, save Thirlestane alone,  
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none  
Would march to southern wars;  
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,  
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.\(^5^3\)

IX.

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
With many a moss-trooper, came on:
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdie-ston.\(^5^4\)

Wide lay his lands round Oak-wood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England low;
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms,
In youth, might tame his rage for arms;
And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
And still his brows the helmet press'd,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow;
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,\(^5^5\)
Came trooping down the Tod-shawhill;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.

Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
High of heart, and haughty of word,
Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
Homage and seignory to claim:
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot he sought,
Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;
Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."

Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,
But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir;
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI.
The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avenged would he be.
In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke,
Saying—“Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon.”
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merrymen in the mist of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:
“Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head,
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due.
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind, Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind.”

XII.
Louder the Beattison laugh'd in scorn;
“Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot, To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot.”
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,
That the dun deer started at fair Craikcross;
He blew again so loud and clear, Through the grey mountain-mist there did lances appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answer'd from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances broke!
Branksome—At the present time.
For each scornful word the Galliard had said,
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through;
Where the Beattisons' blood mix'd with the rill,
The Galliard's-Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII.
Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name;
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouselie to Chesterglen,
Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.\(^5\)
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.

"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him
his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

XIV.
Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed
the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine!"

\(^5\) The name Bellenden is noted in the text, indicating a place mentioned in the poem. The ellipsis suggests that the list of warriors and places is not complete. The text indicates a lament for the loss of Beattison men, with a focus on the Galliard's bravery and the Scotts' scattering of the Beattison clan. The following sections reflect on the gathering of warriors and the Ladye's action in selecting her son for battle, highlighting themes of valor, pride, and loyalty.
XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon heal'd again,
Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain;
And Wat of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs, from below,
Proclaim'd the approaching southern foe.

Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm, and shield, and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand:
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."
XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow,
The mercenary, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight, in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, own'd no lord.
They were not arm'd like England's sons,
But bore the levin-darting guns;
Buff coats, all frounced and 'broider'd o'er,
And morsing-horns and scarfs they wore;
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;
All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX.

But louder still the clamour grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear,
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;
With favour in his crest, or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthen'd lines display;
Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

XX.

Now every English eye, intent
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
So near they were, that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan;
Falcon and culver, on each tower,
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
And flashing armour frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head,
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reek'd, like a witch's caldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breastplate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with chasen'd fire,
to prance,
And, high curvetting, slow advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand
Display'd a peeled willow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.
When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow, and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads you sith return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest,
As scare one swallow from her nest,
St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."

XXIII.

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:

"May't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant - at - arms shall show
Both why we came, and when we go."
The message sped, the noble Dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
The lion argent deck'd his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason's pain.
XXV.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high;
 Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;
Then, deep within her sobbing breast
She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
Unalter'd and collected stood,
And thus replied, in dauntless mood:

XXVI.

"Say to your Lords of high emprize,
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain;\(^{59}\)
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him
kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,\(^{60}\)
When English blood swell'd
Anram's ford;\(^{61}\)
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine;
Through me no friend shall meet his doom
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII.

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame;
His bugle Wat of Harden blew; Pensils and pennons wide were flung, To heaven the Border slogan rung, ``St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!'' The English war-cry answer'd wide, And forward bent each southern spear; Each Kendal archer made a stride, And drew the bowstring to his ear; Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown:— But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown, A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

XXVIII. "Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said, "What treason has your march betray'd? What make you here, from aid so far, Before you walls, around you war? Your foemen triumph in the thought, That in the toils the lion's caught. Already on dark Ruberslaw The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw; The lances, waving in his train, Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain; And on the Liddel's northern strand, To bar retreat to Cumberland, Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good, Beneath the eagle and the rood; And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale, Have to proud Angus come; And all the Merse and Lauderdale Have risen with haughty Home. An exile from Northumberland, In Liddesdale I've wander'd long; But still my heart was with merry England, And cannot brook my country's wrong; And hard I've spurr'd all night, to show The mustering of the coming foe."

XXIX. "And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried; "For soon yon crest, my father's pride, That swept the shores of Judah's sea, And waved in gales of Galilee, From Branksome's highest towers display'd, Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!— Level each harquebuss on row; Draw, merry archers, draw the bow; Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry, Dacre for England, win or die!"

XXX. "Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear, Nor deem my words the words of fear: For who, in field or foray slack, Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?"
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight, and, if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI.
Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he staid,
And slow and sullenly obey'd.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.
The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said:—
"If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain:
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unarm'd,
In peaceful march, like meu unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII.
Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage giansay'd;
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
How tardy was the Regent's aid:
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
40

Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV.

I know right well, that, in their lay,
Full many minstrels sing and say,
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, when as the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial Harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause,
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong;
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him,
Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died!—his scholars, one by one,
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled;
In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well-pleased; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear:
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled then, well-pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

Call it not vain:—they do not err,
Who say, that when the Poet dies,
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
And celebrates his obsequies:
Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone,
For the departed Bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks, in deeper groan, reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II.

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain.
The Chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguish'd lie,
His place, his power, his memory die:
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill:
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
Bright spears, above the columns dun,
Glanced momentary to the sun;
And feudal banners fair display'd
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
Their men in battle-order set;
And Swinton laid the lance in rest,
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
Nor list I say what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar,
And Hepburn's mingled banners come,
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
And told them,—how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta’en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Ladye pray’d them dear,
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England’s noble Lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary Seneschal
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubb’d, more bold in fight;
Nor, when from war and armour free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.
Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
How these two hostile armies met?
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot’s strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasp’d,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasp’d,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised, and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day;
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.69

VII.
Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers, now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day:
But yet on Branksome’s towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun’s declining ray.

VIII.
The blithsome signs of wassel gay
Decay’d not with the dying day;
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome’s lordly hall,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang;
With merry harp and beakers’ clang:
And frequent, on the darkening plain,
Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
As bands, their stragglers to regain,
Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
And revellers, o’er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas or Dacre’s conquering name.

IX.
Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamours died:
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
No sound but Teviot’s rushing tide;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell;
And save, where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer’s sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toil’d there,
Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
The lists’ dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow’s dawn.

X.
Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the Dame’s reproving eye;
Nor mark’d she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh;
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot’s love,
And many a bold ally.—
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay:
By times, from silken couch she rose;
While yet the banner’d hosts repose,
She view’d the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.
She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower’s tall shadow lay;
Where coursers’ clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII.
Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage:
But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.
Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring this meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;
And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow, and sin, and shame;
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle ladye bright,
Disgrace, and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave us Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV.
Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port aroused each clan;
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast,
About the knight each favour'd most.

XV.
Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim,
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestaine:
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;
But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.
When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walk'd,
And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slash'd and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.
Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:
White was her wimple, and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.
XVIII.

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he long'd to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Heralds spoke:

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause!"

XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat;
And that, so help him God above!
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
'He lies most foully in his throat.'"

LORD DACRE.

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
Sound trumpets!"—

LORD HOME.

"God defend the right!"—
Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI.

III would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood pour'd down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight!
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.—

XXII.
'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!—
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII.
In haste the holy Friar sped;—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran;
Unmindful of the shouts on high,
That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man;
Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV.
As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the throng'd array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard look'd around,
As dizzy, and in pain;
And all, upon the armed ground,
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed;
Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"—
His plumed helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbb'd at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard, said—
—For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united pray'd
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd me.
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free."—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand;
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she:
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company."—

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he join'd the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII.
William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.

Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartilie:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:
And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;
Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,
Though half disguised with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made.

XXIX.
"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
I ween, my deadly enemy;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die:
Yet rest thee God! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear!
'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st st,
Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray! 72
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

XXX.
So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On level'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

The harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous
Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful
hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was
dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so
high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still, that scornful
jeer
Mispriest the land he loved so
dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel
strain.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

Breathes there the man, with
soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native
land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within
him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath
turn'd,
From wandering on a foreign
strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark
him well;
For him no Minstrel raptures
swell;
High though his titles, proud his
name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can
claim;
Despite those titles, power, and
pelf,
The wretch, concentrated all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down

To the vile dust, from whence he
sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and un-
sung.

II.

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy
wood,
Land of the mountain and the
flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal
hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged
strand!
Still, as I view each well-known
scene,
Think what is now, and what
hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and
streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's streams still let me
stray,
Though none should guide my
feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick
break,
Although it chill my wither'd
cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
Though there, forgotten and
alone,
The Bard may draw his parting
groan.

III.

Not scorn'd like me! to Branks-
some Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive
call;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan,
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now, for every merry mate,
Rose the portcullis' iron grate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.
Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendour of the spousal rite,
How muster'd in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furr'd with miniver;
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek;
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V.
Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh;
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she fear'd each holy place.
False slanders these:—I trust right well
She wrought not by forbidden spell; 73
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour:
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art.
But this for faithful truth I say,
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist 74
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.
The spousal rites were ended soon:
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train, 75
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,
The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.
The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill; 76
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove, 77 and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drench'd in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.
The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;
While shout the riders every one;
Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan.
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.⁷³

IX.
The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore, it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest,
With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
Told, how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,
And board and flagons overturn'd.
Riot and clamour wild began;
Back to the hall the Urchin ran;
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X.
By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name:⁷⁹
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the Land Debateable;
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI.
ALBERT GRÆME.
It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,⁸⁰)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.
Blithely they saw the rising sun,  
    When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;  
But they were sad ere day was done,  
    Though Love was still the lord of all.

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,  
    Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;  
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,  
    For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,  
    Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,  
And he swore her death, ere he would see  
    A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,  
    (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)  
Pray for their souls who died for love,  
    For Love shall still be lord of all!

As ended Albert’s simple lay,  
    Arose a bard of loftier port;  
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,  
    Renown’d in haughty Henry’s court:

There rung thy harp, unrivall’d long,  
    Fitztraver of the silver song!  
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—  
    Who has not heard of Surrey’s fame?  
His was the hero’s soul of fire,  
    And his the bard’s immortal name,  
And his was love, exalted high  
    By all the glow of chivalry.

XIII.

They sought, together, climes afar,  
    And oft, within some olive grove,  
When even came with twinkling star,  
    They sung of Surrey’s absent love.

His step the Italian peasant stay’d;  
    And deem’d, that spirits from on high,  
Round where some hermit saint was laid,  
    Were breathing heavenly melody;  
So sweet did harp and voice combine,  
    To praise the name of Geraldine.
Fitztraver! O what tongue may say
   The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
   Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
   Windsors' green glades, and courtly bowers.
And faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favourite he,
   And chief of all his minstrelsy.

'Twas All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
   Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
   A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might:
   On cross, and character, and talisman,
   And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:
   For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
   Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
   And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy.
   Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
   Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem
   To form a lordly and a lofty room,
   Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
   Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
   And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
   The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom stray'd her 
dazzel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for 
love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she 
lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet 
eburnine,
Some strain that seem'd her 
inmost soul to find:—
That favour'd strain was 
Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the 
Lady Geraldine.

XX.

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the 
lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision 
all away—
So royal envy roll'd the murky 
storm
O'er my beloved Master's 
glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! 
Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's 
latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic 
sway,
The gory bridal bed, the 
plunder'd shrine,
The murder'd Surrey's blood, the 
tears of Geraldine!

XXI.

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, 
prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song; 
These hated Henry's name as 
death,
And those still held the ancient 
faith.—

Then, from his seat, with lofty 
air,
Rose Harold, bard of brave St. 
Clair;
St. Clair, who, feasting high at 
Home,
Had with that lord to battle 
come.
Harold was born where restless 
seas
Howl round the storm-swept 
Orcades; 82
Where erst St. Clairs held princely 
sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and 
bay;—
Still nods their palace to its fall, 
Thy pride and sorrow, fair 
Kirkwall!—83
Thence oft he mark'd fierce 
Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave; 
And watch'd, the whilst, with 
visage pale,
And throbbing heart, the strug-
gling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild 
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful 
In these rude isles might fancy 
cull;
For thither came, in times afar, 
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving 
war,
The Norsemen, train'd to spoil 
and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the raven's 
food;
Kings of the main their leaders 
brave,
Their barks the dragons of the 
wave.
And there, in many a stormy vale,  
The Scald had told his wondrous tale;  
And many a Runic column high  
Had witness'd grim idolatry.  
And thus had Harold, in his youth,  
Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,—  
Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curl'd,  
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;  
Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell  
Maddens the battle's bloody swell;  
Of Chiefs, who, guided through the gloom  
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,  
Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,  
Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,  
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,  
And bade the dead arise to arms!  
With war and wonder all on flame,  
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,  
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,  
He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;  
Yet something of the Northern spell  
Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.  
HAROLD.  
O listen, listen, ladies gay!  
No haughty feat of arms I tell;  
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,  
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.  

—"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!  
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!  
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,  
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.  

"The blackening wave is edged with white:  
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly;  
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,  
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.  

"Last night the gifted Seer did view  
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;  
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:  
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"—

"'Tis not because Lord Linde-say's heir  
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,  
But that my ladye-mother there  
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.  

"'Tis not because the ring they ride,  
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,  
But that my sire the wine will chide,  
If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle."—

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,  
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,  
And redder than the bright moon-beam.  

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,  
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;  
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,  
And seen from cavern'd Haw-thornden.  

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,  
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,  
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,  
Sheathed in his iron panoply.  

Seem'd all on fire within, around,  
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;  
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,  
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.  

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,  
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—  
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh  
The lordly line of high St. Clair.  

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold  
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;  
Each one the holy vault doth hold—  
But the sea holds lovely Rosabella!  

And each St. Clair was buried there,  
With candle, with book, and with knell;  
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,  
The dirge of lovely Rosabella.  

XXIV.  
So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,  
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd hall,  
Though, long before the sinking day,  
A wondrous shade involved them all:  
It was not eddying mist or fog,  
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;  
Of no eclipse had sages told;  
And yet, as it came on apace,  
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,  
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.  
A secret horror check'd the feast,  
And chill'd the soul of every guest;  
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,  
She knew some evil on the blast;  
The elvish page fell to the ground,  
And, shuddering, mutter'd,  "Found! found! found!"  

XXV.  
Then sudden, through the darken'd air,  
A flash of lightning came;  
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,  
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophiesd beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests’ bedazzled band
Resistless flash’d the levin-brand,
And fill’d the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elvish page it broke.

It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismay’d the brave, appall’d the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.

When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI.
Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all;
That dreadful voice was heard by some,
Cry, with loud summons, “Gylbin, come!”
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.

The guests in silence pray’d and shook,
And terror dimm’d each lofty look.
But none of all the astonish’d train
Was so dismay’d as Deloraine;
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
’Twas fear’d his mind would ne’er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.

At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint, and shuddering cold—
That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp’d around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
And knew—but how it matter’d not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII.
The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard wondrous tale;
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael’s restless sprite.
Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd:
Some to St. Modan made their vows,
Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to our Ladye of the Isle;
Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd.
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII.
Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Bless'd Teviot's Flower, and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX.
With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath, 
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthen'd row:
No lordly look, nor martial stride,
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
To the high altar's hallow'd side,
And there they knelt them down:
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the letter'd stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnish'd niche around,
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX.
And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy Fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper and host, and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourish'd fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
And bless'd them as they kneel'd;
With holy cross he sign'd them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burthen of the song,—

*Dies iræ, dies illa,*
*Solvet sæclum in favilla;*
While the pealing organ rung;
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung.

XXXI.

HYMN FOR THE DEAD.

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shriveling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

Hush'd is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No; close beneath proud Newark's tower,
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Hareheadshaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak.
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing' achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day:
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.
MARMION.

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD, IN SIX CANTOS.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY LORD MONTAGU,

&c. &c. &c.

THIS ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the Public have honoured with some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of Marmion must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of The Lay of the Last Minstrel, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September, 1513.

Ashiestiel, 1808.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, ESQ.

Ashiestiel, Ettrick Forest.

November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled Greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
Chancel and East Window, Melrose Abbey.
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn’s glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;
Away hath pass’d the heather-bell
That bloom’d so rich on Needpath-fell;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To shelter’d dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The wither’d sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon’s rill:
The shepherd shifts his mantle’s fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold;
His dogs, no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy’s vanished flower;
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy’s flower
Again shall paint your summer bower;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round,
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.
But oh! my country’s wintry state
What second spring shall renovate?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise;
The mind that thought for Britain’s weal,
The hand that grasp’d the victor steel?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows;
But vainly, vainly may he shine,
Where glory weeps o’er Nelson’s shrine;
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
That shrouds, O Pitt, thy hallowed tomb!
Deep graved in every British heart,
O never let those names depart!
Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
Who victor died on Gadite wave;
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given.
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launch'd that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar;
Who, born to guide such high emprise,
For Britain's weal was early wise;
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave!
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,
The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,
Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm, to aid the freeman's laws.

Had'st thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand;
By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne:
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
Each call for needful rest repell'd,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way!
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
But still, upon the hallow'd day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
He, who preserved them, Pitt, lies here!
Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
Because his rival slumbers nigh;
Nor be thy requiescat dumb,
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
For talents mourn, untimely lost,
When best employ'd, and wanted most;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound;
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
They sleep with him who sleeps below:
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
And sacred be the last long rest.

Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke agen,
"All peace on earth, good-will to men;"
If ever from an English heart,
O, here let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record, that Fox a Briton died!

When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave,
Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
The sullied olive-branch return'd,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nail'd her colours to the mast!
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honour'd grave,
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endow'd,
How high they soar'd above the crowd!
Their's was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Look'd up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of Pitt and Fox alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these, 
The wine of life is on the lees. 
Genius, and taste, and talent gone, 
For ever tomb'd beneath the stone, 
Where — taming thought to human pride! — 
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side. 

Drop upon Fox's grave the tear, 
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier; 
O'er Pitt's the mournful requiem sound, 
And Fox's shall the notes rebound. 
The solemn echo seems to cry, — 
"Here let their discord with them die. 
Speak not for those a separate doom, 
Whom Fate made Brothers in the tomb; 
But search the land of living men, 
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries 
Of dying Nature bid you rise; 
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce 
The leaden silence of your hearse; 
Then, O, how impotent and vain 
This grateful tributary strain! 
Though not unmark'd from northern clime, 
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme: 
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung; 
The Bard you deign'd to praise, 
your deathless names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay a while, 
My wilder'd fancy still beguile! 

From this high theme how can I part, 
Ere half unloaded is my heart! 
For all the tears e'er sorrow drew, 
And all the raptures fancy knew, 
And all the keener rush of blood, 
That throbs through bard in bard-like mood, 
Were here a tribute mean and low, 
Though all their mingled streams could flow— 
Woe, wonder, and sensation high, 
In one spring-tide of ecstasy! — 
It will not be — it may not last— 
The vision of enchantment's past: 
Like frostwork in the morning ray, 
The fancied fabric melts away; 
Each Gothic arch, memorial-stone, 
And long, dim, lofty aisle, are gone; 
And, lingering last, deception dear, 
The choir's high sounds die on my ear. 
Now slow return the solitary down, 
The silent pastures bleak and brown, 
The farm begirt with copsewood wild, 
The gambols of each frolic child, 
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone 
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run, 
Thus Nature disciplines her son: 
Meeter, she says, for me to stray, 
And waste the solitary day, 
In plucking from yon fen the reed, 
And watch it floating down the Tweed; 
Or idly list the shrilling lay, 
With which the milkmaid cheers her way,
Marking its cadence rise and fail,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale:
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd’s tale to learn;
Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one, who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learn’d taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell,
(For few have read romance so well,)
How still the legendary lay
O’er poet’s bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity’s sake;
As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana’s fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons’ force,
Holds converse with the unburied corpse;\(^9^1\)
Or when, Dame Ganore’s grace to move,
(Alas, that lawless was their love!) He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights; or when,
A sinful man, and unconfess’d,
He took the Sangreal’s holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.\(^9^2\)

The mightiest chiefs of British song:
Scorn’d not such legends to prolong:
They gleam through Spenser’s elfin dream,
And mix in Milton’s heavenly theme;
And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,\(^9^3\)
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength,
and marr’d the lofty line.

Warm’d by such names, well may we then,
Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance
In the fair fields of old romance;
Or seek the moated castle’s cell,
Where long through talisman and spell,
While tyrants ruled, and damsels wept,
Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept:
There sound the harpings of the North,
Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick again,
In all his arms, with all his train,
Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and scarf,
Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
And wizard with his wand of might,
And errant maid on palfrey white.
Around the Genius weave their spells,
Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells;
Mystery, half-veil'd and half-reveal'd;
And Honour, with his spotless shield;
Attention, with fix'd eye; and Fear,
That loves the tale she shrinks to hear;
And gentle Courtesy; and Faith,
Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death;
And Valour, lion-mettled lord,
Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
A worthy meed may thus be won;
Ytene's oaks — beneath whose shade
Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold, And that Red King, who, while of old,
Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
Ytene's oaks have heard again Renew'd such legendary strain; For thou hast sung, how He of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana, foil'd in fight
The Necromancer's felon might; And well in modern verse hast wove
Partenopex's mystic love: Hear, then, attentive to my lay, A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST.
The Castle.

I.

Day set on Norham's castled steep, And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep, And Cheviot's mountains lone: The battled towers, the donjon keep, The loophole grates, where captives weep, The flanking walls that round it sweep, In yellow lustre shone. The warriors on the turrets high, Moving athwart the evening sky, Seem'd forms of giant height: Their armour, as it caught the rays, Flash'd back again the western blaze, In lines of dazzling light.

II.

Saint George's banner, broad and gay, Now faded, as the fading ray Less bright, and less, was flung; The evening gale had scarce the power To wave it on the Donjon Tower, So heavily it hung.
The scouts had parted on their search, The Castle gates were barr'd; Above the gloomy portal arch, Timing his footsteps to a march, The Warder kept his guard; Low humming, as he paced along, Some ancient Border gathering song.
III.
A distant trampling sound he hears;
He looks abroad, and soon appears,
O'er Horncliff-hill a plump of spears,
Beneath a pennon gay;
A horseman, darting from the crowd,
Like lightning from a summer cloud,
Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
Before the dark array.
Beneath the sable palisade,
That closed the Castle barricade,
His bugle horn he blew;
The warder hasted from the wall,
And warn'd the Captain in the hall,
For well the blast he knew;
And joyfully that knight did call,
To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.
"Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
Bring pasties of the doe,
And quickly make the entrance free,
And bid my heralds ready be,
And every minstrel sound his glee,
And all our trumpets blow;
And, from the platform, spare ye not
To fire a noble salvo-shot;
Lord MARMION waits below!"

Then to the Castle's lower ward
Sped forty yeomen tall,
The iron-studded gates unbarr'd,
Raised the portcullis' ponderous guard,
The lofty palisade unsparr'd
And let the drawbridge fall.

V.
Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode,
Proudly his red-roan charger trode,
His helm hung at the saddle-bow;
Well by his visage you might know
He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
And had in many a battle been;
The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
A token true of Bosworth field;
His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire;
Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
Did deep design and counsel speak.
His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
His thick mustache, and curly hair,
Coal-black, and grizzled here and there,
But more through toil than age;
His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb,
Show'd him no carpet knight so trim,
But in close fight a champion grim,
In camps a leader sage.
VI.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel; But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd;
Amid the plumage of the crest,
A falcon hover'd on her nest,
With wings outspread, and forward breast;
E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
Soar'd sable in an azure field:
The golden legend bore aright,
Who checks at me, to death is right. 98
Blue was the charger's broider'd rein;
Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane;
The knightly housing's ample fold
Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
Of noble name, and knightly sires;
They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim;
For well could each a war-horse tame,
Could draw the bow, the sword could sway,
And lightly bear the ring away;
Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
And frame love-ditties passing rare,
And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
With halbert, bill, and battle-axe:
They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong,
And led his sumpter-mules along;
And ambling palfrey, when at need
Him listed ease his battle-steed.
The last and trustiest of the four,
On high his forky pennon bore;
Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
With falcons broider'd on each breast,
Attended on their lord's behest.
Each, chosen for an archer good,
Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
And far a cloth-yard shaft could send;
Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
And at their belts their quivers rung.
Their dusty palfreys, and array,
Show'd they had march'd a weary way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
The soldiers of the guard,
With musket, pike, and morion,
To welcome noble Marmion,
Stood in the Castle-yard;
Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
The gunner held his linstock yare,
For welcome-shot prepared:
Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
As then through all his turrets rang,
Old Norham never heard.

They hail'd him Lord of Fontenay,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town; 99
And he, their courtesy to requite,
Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
All as he lighted down.

"Now, largesse, largesse, 100 Lord Marmion,
Knight of the crest of gold!
A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
Ne'er guarded heart so bold."

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
Where the guests stood all aside,
And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
And the heralds loudly cried,
—"Room, lordings, room for Lord Marmion,
With the crest and helm of gold!
Full well we know the trophies won
In the lists at Cottiswold:
There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
To him he lost his lady-love,
And to the King his land.
Ourselves beheld the listed field,
A sight both sad and fair;
We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
And saw his saddle bare;
We saw the victor win the crest
He wears with worthy pride;
And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
His foeman's scutcheon tied.
Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
Room, room, ye gentles gay,
For him who conquer'd in the right,
Marmion of Fontenaye!"

XIII.

Then stepp'd to meet that noble Lord,
Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
And Captain of the Hold.\(^{10}\)
He led Lord Marmion to the dean,
Raised o'er the pavement high,
And placed him in the upper place—
They feasted full and high:
The whiles a Northern harper rude
Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
"How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys all,"\(^{2}\)
Stout Willimondswick,
And Hardriding Dick,
And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall,
Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw."
Scantily Lord Marmion's ear could brook
The harper's barbarous lay;
Yet much he praised the pains he took,
And well those pains did pay:
For lady's suit, and minstrel's strain,
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV.

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
"Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well;
Seldom hath pass'd a week but giust
Or feat of arms befell:
The Scots can rein a mettled steed;
And love to couch a spear;—
Saint George! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbours near.
Then stay with us a little space,
Our northern wars to learn;
I pray you, for your lady's grace!"
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.
The Captain mark'd his alter'd look,
And gave a squire the sign;
A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
And crown'd it high in wine.
"Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion:
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that page of thine,
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often mark'd his cheeks were wet,
With tears he fain would hide:
His was no rugged horse-boy’s hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed;
But meeter seem’d for lady fair,
To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead:
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold,
His bosom—when he sigh’d,
The russet doublet’s rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady’s bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?”

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest;
He roll’d his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppress’d,
Yet made a calm reply:
“Thou thought’st so goodly fair,
He might not brook the northern air;
More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
I left him sick in Lindisfarn:
Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
Why does thy lovely lady gay
Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
Gone on some pious pilgrimage?”

He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
Whisper’d light tales of Heron’s dame.

XVII.

Unmark’d, at least unreck’d, the taunt,
Careless the Knight replied,
“No bird, whose feathers gaily flaunt,
Delights in cage to bide:
Norham is grim and grated close,
Hemm’d in by battlement and fosse,
And many a darksome tower;
And better loves my lady bright
To sit in liberty and light,
In fair Queen Margaret’s bower.
We hold our greyhound in our hand,
Our falcon on our glove;
But where shall we find leash or band,
For dame that loves to rove?
Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
She’ll stoop when she has tired her wing.”—

XVIII.

“Nay, if with Royal James’s bride
The lovely Lady Heron bide,
Behold me here a messenger,
Your tender greetings prompt to bear;
For, to the Scottish court address’d,
I journey at our King’s behest,
And pray you, of your grace, provide
For me, and mine, a trusty guide.
I have not ridden in Scotland since
James back’d the cause of that mock prince,
Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
Then did I march with Surrey's power,
What time we razed old Ayton tower." 103

XIX.
"For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
Norham can find you guides enow;
For here be some have prick'd as far,
On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar;
Have drunk the monks of St. Bothan's ale,
And driven the beeves of Lauderdale;
Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
And given them light to set their hoods." 104

XX.
"Now, in good sooth," Lord Marmion cried,
"Were I in warlike wise to ride,
A better guard I would not lack,
Than your stout forayers at my back;
But, as in form of peace I go,
A friendly messenger, to know,
Why through all Scotland, near and far,
Their King is mustering troops for war,
The sight of plundering Border spears
Might justify suspicious fears,
And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
Break out in some unseemly broil:
A herald were my fitting guide;
Or friar, sworn in peace to bide;
Or pardonner, or travelling priest,
Or strolling pilgrim, at the least."

XXI.
The Captain mused a little space,
And pass'd his hand across his face.
—"Fain would I find the guide you want,
But ill may spare a pursuivant,
The only men that safe can ride
Mine errands on the Scottish side:
And though a bishop built this fort,
Few holy brethren here resort;
Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
Since our last siege, we have not seen:
The mass he might not sing or say,
Upon one stinted meal a-day;
So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
And pray'd for our success the while.
Our Norham vicar, woe betide.
Is all too well in case to ride;
The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
The wildest war-horse in your train;
But then, no spearman in the hall
Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
Friar John of Tillmouth were the man:
A blithesome brother at the can,
A welcome guest in hall and bower,
He knows each castle, town, and tower,
In which the wine and ale is good,
'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
But that good man, as ill befalls,
Hath seldom left our castle walls,
Since, on the vigil of St. Bede,
In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,
To teach Dame Alison her creed.
Old Bughtrig found him with his wife;
And John, an enemy to strife,
Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.
The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
That, if again he venture o'er,
He shall shrieve penitent no more.
Little he loves such risks, I know;
Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
Carved to his uncle and that lord,
And reverently took up the word.
"Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
If harm should hap to brother John.
He is a man of mirthful speech,
Can many a game and gambol teach:
Full well at tables can he play,
And sweep at bowls the stake away.
None can a lustier carol bawl,
The needfulest among us all,
When time hangs heavy in the hall,
And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
And we can neither hunt, nor ride
A foray on the Scottish side.
The vow'd revenge of Bughtrig rude,
May end in worse than loss of hood.

Let Friar John, in safety, still
In chimney-corner snore his fill,
Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill:
Last night, to Norham there came one,
Will better guide Lord Marmion."
"Nephew," quoth Heron, "by my fay,
Well hast thou spoke; say forth thy say."

XXIII.

"Here is a holy Palmer come,
From Salem first, and last from Rome;
One, that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
And visited each holy shrine,
In Araby and Palestine;
On hills of Armenie hath been,
Where Noah's ark may yet be seen;
By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
Which parted at the prophet's rod;
In Sinai's wilderness he saw
The Mount, where Israel heard the law,
'Mid thunder-dint, and flashing levin,
And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
He shows Saint James's cockleshell;
Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell;
And of that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling or each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God."
XXIV.

"To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd.
He knows the passes of the North,
And seeks far shrines beyond the Forth;
Little he eats, and long will wake,
And drinks but of the stream or lake.
This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,
As little as the wind that blows,
And warms itself against his nose,
Kens he, or cares, which way he goes."

XXV.

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,
"Full loth were I, that Friar John,
That venerable man, for me,
Were placed in fear or jeopardy.
If this same Palmer will me lead
From hence to Holy-Rood,
Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
With angels fair and good.
I love such holy ramblers; still
They know to charm a weary hill,
With song, romance, or lay:
Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
Some lying legend, at the least,
They bring to cheer the way."

XXVII.

"Let pass," quoth Marmion; "by my fay,
This man shall guide me on my way,
Although the great arch-fiend and he
Had sworn themselves of company.
So please you, gentle youth, to call
This Palmer to the Castle-hall."
The summon'd Palmer came in place:
His sable cowl o'erhung his face;
In his black mantle was he clad,
With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
On his broad shoulders wrought;
The scallop shell his cap did deck;
The crucifix around his neck Was from Loretto brought;
His sandals were with travel tore,
Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
The faded palm-branch in his hand Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
Or had a statelier step withal,
   Or look'd more high and keen;
For no saluting did he wait,
But strode across the hall of state,
And fronted Marmion where he sate,
   As he his peer had been.
But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
And when he struggled at a smile,
His eye look'd haggard wild:
Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
If she had been in presence there,
In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
   She had not known her child.
Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
Soon change the form that best we know—
For deadly fear can time outgo,
   And blanch at once the hair;

Hard toil can roughen form and face,
And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
   More deeply than despair.
Happy whom none of these befall,
But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
The Palmer took on him the task,
So he would march with morning tide,
To Scottish court to be his guide.
"But I have solemn vows to pay,
And may not linger by the way,
To fair St. Andrews bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound;\textsuperscript{109}
Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
   And the crazed brain restore:\textsuperscript{110}
Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
Could back to peace my bosom bring,
   Or bid it throb no more!"

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
Where wine and spices richly steep,
In massive bowl of silver deep,
The page presents on knee.
Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
The Captain pledged his noble guest,
The cup went through among the rest,
Who drain'd it merrily;
Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
Though Selby press'd him courteously.
This was a sign the feast was o'er;
It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
The minstrels ceased to sound.
Soon in the castle nought was heard.

XXXI.
With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
And first the chapel doors unclose;
Then, after morning rites were done,
(A hasty mass from Friar John,) And knight and squire had broke their fast,
On rich substantial repast,
Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse:
Then came the stirrup-cup in course:
Between the Baron and his host,
No point of courtesy was lost;
High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid,
Solemn excuse the Captain made,
Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
That noble train, their Lord the last.
Then loudly rung the trumpet call;
Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
And shook the Scottish shore;

Around the castle eddied slow,
Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
And hid its turrets hoar;
Till they roll'd forth upon the air, And met the river breezes there,
Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

TO THE
REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A.M.
Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.
The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourish'd once a forest fair, When these waste glens with copse were lined,
And peopled with the hart and hind.
Yon Thorn—perchance whose prickly spears Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green comperees—
Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough;
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook!

"Here, in my shade," methinks he'd say,
"The mighty stag at noon-tide lay:
The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
(The neighbouring dingle bears his name,)
With lurching step around me prowl,
And stop, against the moon to howl;
The mountain-boar, on battle set,
His tusks upon my stem would whet;
While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
Have bounded by, through gay green-wood.
Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals muster'd round,
With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
And I might see the youth intent,
Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
And through the brake the rangers stalk,
And falconers hold the ready hawk;

And foresters, in green-wood trim;
Lead in the leash the gazehounds grim,
Attentive, as the bratchet's bay
From the dark covert drove the prey,
To slip them as he broke away.
The startled quarry bounds amain,
As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;
Whistles the arrow from the bow,
Answers the harquebuss below;
While all the rocking hills reply,
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunters' cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud hunttings, many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow,
But not more blithe that silvan court,
Than we have been at humbler sport;
Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the same.
Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
O'er holt or hill there never flew,
From slip or leash there never sprang,
More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
Nor 'dull, between each merry chase,
Pass'd by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic and in Gothic lore:
We mark'd each memorable scene,
And held poetic talk between;
Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along;
But had its legend or its song.
All silent now—for now are still
Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!
No longer, from thy mountains dun,
The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
And while his honest heart glows warm,
At thought of his paternal farm,
Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
Fair as the elves whom Janet saw
By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;
No youthful Baron's left to grace
The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
And ape, in manly step and tone,
The majesty of Oberon:
And she is gone, whose lovely face
Is but her least and lowest grace;
Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given,
To show our earth the charms of Heaven,
She could not glide along the air,
With form more light, or face more fair.
No more the widow's deafen'd ear
Grows quick that lady's step to hear:
At noontide she expects her not,
Nor busies her to trim the cot;
Pensive she turns her humming wheel,
Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal;
Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair,—which hills so closely bind,
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil,—
Her long-descended lord is gone,
And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side, with what delight
They press'd to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I call'd his ramparts holy ground!
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs.
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot, long endure;
Condemn'd to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar.
Yet cherish the remembrance still,
Of the lone mountain, and the rill;
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently.
But, well I hope, without a sigh.

On the free hours that we have spent
Together, on the brown hill's bent.
When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impress'd.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake; Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
A abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing conceal'd might lie;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness:
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
But well I ween the dead are near;
For though, in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
And fate had cut my ties to life,
Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell,
And rear again the chaplain's cell,
Like that same peaceful hermitage,
Where Milton long'd to spend his age.
'Twere sweet to mark the setting day,
On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
And, as it faint and feeble died
On the broad lake, and mountain's side,
To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;"
Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey;"
Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,
And think on Yarrow's faded Flower:
And when that mountain-sound I heard,
Which bids us be for storm prepared,
The distant rustling of his wings,
As up his force the Tempest brings,
'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
To sit upon the Wizard's grave;
That Wizard Priest's, whose bones are thrust
From company of holy dust;"
And deem each hour to musing given,
A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
Such peaceful solitudes displease:
He loves to drown his bosom’s jar
Amid the elemental war:
And my black Palmer’s choice had been
Some ruder and more savage scene,
Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene.\[^{115}\]
There eagles scream from isle to shore;
Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
O’er the black waves incessant driven,
Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
Through the rude barriers of the lake,
Away its hurrying waters break,
Faster and whiter dash and curl,
Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
Thunders the viewless stream below,
Diving, as it condemn’d to lave
Some demon’s subterranean cave,
Who, prison’d by enchanter’s spell,
Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
And well that Palmer’s form and mien
Had suited with the stormy scene,
Just on the edge, straining his ken
To view the bottom of the den,
Where, deep deep down, and far within,
Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
And wheeling round the Giant’s Grave,
White as the snowy charger’s tail,
Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,
To many a Border theme has rung:
Then list to me, and thou shalt know
Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

CANTO SECOND.
The Convent.

I.

The breeze, which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle roll’d,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the Hold.
It curl’d not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby’s cloister’d pile,\[^{116}\]
Bound to St. Cuthbert’s Holy Isle,\[^{117}\]
It bore a bark along.
Upon the gale she stoop’d herside,
And bounded o’er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
  Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight;
For, on the deck, in chair of state,
The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II.
'Twas sweet to see these holy maids,
Like birds escaped to green-wood shades,
Their first flight from the cage,
How timid, and how curious too,
For all to them was strange and new,
And all the common sights they view,
Their wonderment engage.
One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
With many a benedicite;
One at the rippling surge grew pale,
And would for terror pray;
Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,
Rear'd o'er the foaming spray;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disorder'd by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist.

Light was each simple bosom there,
Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

III.
The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood,
Ere upon life she cast a look,
Or knew the world that she forsook.
Fair too she was, and kind had been
As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
For her a timid lover sigh,
Nor knew the influence of her eye.
Love, to her ear, was but a name,
Combined with vanity and shame;
Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
Bounded within the cloister wall:
The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
Was of monastic rule the breach;
And her ambition's highest aim
To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
For this she gave her ample dower,
To raise the convent's eastern tower;
For this, with carving rare and quaint,
She deck'd the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems emboss'd.
The poor her Convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.
IV.
Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform’d on Benedictine school;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quench’d the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
Though vain of her religious sway.
She loved to see her maids obey.
Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
Sad was this voyage to the dame;
Summon’d to Lindisfarne, she came,
There, with Saint Cuthbert’s Abbot old,
And Tynemouth’s Prioress, to hold
A chapter of Saint Benedict,
For inquisition stern and strict,
On two apostates from the faith,
And, if need were, to doom to death.

V.
Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
Save this, that she was young and fair;
As yet a novice unprofess’d,
Lovely and gentle, but distress’d.
She was betroth’d to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonour’d fled.
Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
To one, who loved her for her land:
Herself, almost heart-broken now,
Was bent to take the vestal vow,
And shroud, within Saint Hilda’s gloom,
Her blasted hopes and wither’d bloom.

VI.
She sate upon the galley’s prow,
And seem’d to mark the waves below;
Nay, seem’d, so fix’d her look and eye,
To count them as they glided by.
She saw them not—’twas seeming all—
Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
A sun-scorch’d desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur’d there;
There saw she, where some careless hand
O’er a dead corpse had heap’d the sand,
To hide it till the jackals come,
To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
See what a woful look was given,
As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII.
Lovely, and gentle, and distress’d—
These charms might tame the fiercest breast:
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontroll’d,
The shaggy monarch of the wood,
Before a virgin, fair and good,
Hath pacified his savage mood.
But passions in the human frame,
Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
With sordid avarice in league,
Had practised with their bowl
and knife,
Against the mourner's harmless life.
This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
Prison'd in Cuthbert's islet grey.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland;
Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They pass'd the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
To the good Saint who own'd the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,
And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next, they cross'd themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,

Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar,
On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way;
Twice every day, the waves efface
Of staves and sandall'd feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The Castle with its battled walls,
The ancient Monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,
With massive arches broad and round,
That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley'd walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had pour'd his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilt in a later style,
Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And moulder'd in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.
Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
And with the sea-wave and the wind,
Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
And made harmonious close;

Then, answering from the sandy shore,
Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar,
According chorus rose:
Down to the haven of the Isle,
The monks and nuns in order file,
From Cuthbert's cloisters grim;
Banner, and cross, and relics there,
To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare;
And, as they caught the sounds on air,
They echoed back the hymn.
The islanders, in joyous mood,
Rush'd emulously through the flood,
To hale the bark to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And bless'd them with her hand.

XII.
Suppose we now the welcome said,
Suppose the Convent banquet made:
All through the holy dome,
Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
Wherever vestal maid might pry,
Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
The stranger sisters roam:
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there, even summer night is chill.
Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
The rival merits of their saint,
A theme that ne'er can tire
A holy maid; for, be it known,
That their saint's honour is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting
told,
How to their house three Barons bold
Must menial service do;¹¹⁸
While horns blow out a note of shame,
And monks cry "Fye upon your name!"
In wrath, for loss of silvan game,
Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."—
"This, on Ascension-day, each year,
While labouring on our harbour-pier,
Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."
They told, how in their convent-cell
A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled;¹¹⁹
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray'd;
Themselves, within their holy bound,
Their stony folds had often found.
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail,¹²⁰
And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
They do their homage to the saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail,
To vie with these in holy tale;
His body's resting-place, of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told;¹²¹
How, when the rude Dane burn'd their pile,
The monks fled forth from Holy Isle;
O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore.
They rested them in fair Melrose;
But though, alive, he loved it well,
Not there his relics might repose;
For, wondrous tale to tell!
In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
A ponderous bark for river tides,
Yet light as gossamer it glides,
Downward to Tilmouth cell.
Nor long was his abiding there,
For southward did the saint repair;
Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
Hail'd him with joy and fear;
And, after many wanderings past,
He chose his lordly seat at last,
Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
Looks down upon the Wear:
There, deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
His relics are in secret laid;
But none may know the place,
Save of his holiest servants three,
Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.
Who may his miracles declare!
Even Scotland's dauntless king,
And heir,
(Although with them they led
Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,
And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale,)
Before his standard fled. 122
'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again, 123
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.
But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If, on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name: 124
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound;
A deaden'd clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm
And night were closing round.
But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.
While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.
It was more dark and lone that vault,
Than the worst dungeon cell:
Old Colwulf 125 built it, for his fault,
In penitence to dwell,
When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.
This den, which, chilling every sense
Of feeling, hearing, sight,
Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,
Excluding air and light,
Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made
A place of burial for such dead,
As, having died in mortal sin,
Might not be laid the church within.
'Twas now a place of punishment;
Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,
As reach'd the upper air,
The hearers bless'd themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII.
But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle
Some vague tradition go,
Few only, save the Abbot, knew
Where the place lay; and still more few
Were those, who had from him the clew
To that dread vault to go.
Victim and executioner
Were blindfold when transported there.
In low dark rounds the arches hung,
From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
Were all the pavement of the floor;
The mildew-drops fell one by one, With tinkling plash, upon the stone.
A cresset, in an iron chain, Which served to light this drear domain.
With damp and darkness seem'd to strive,
As if it scarce might keep alive; And yet it dimly served to show The awful conclave met below.

XIX.
There, met to doom in secrecy, Were placed the heads of convents three:
All servants of Saint Benedict, The statutes of whose order strict
On iron table lay; In long black dress, on seats of stone,
Behind were these three judges shown
By the pale cresset's ray:
The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,
Sat for a space with visage bare,
Until, to hide her bosom's swell, And tear-drops that for pity fell, She closely drew her veil:
Yon shrouded figure, as I guess, By her proud mien and flowing dress, Is Tynemouth's haughty prioress,126 And she with awe looks pale: And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight Has long been quench'd by age's night, Upon whose wrinkled brow alone, Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is shown Whose look is hard and stern,— Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style; For sanctity call'd, through the isle, The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.
Before them stood a guilty pair; But, though an equal fate they share, Yet one alone deserves our care. Her sex a page's dress belied; The cloak and doublet, loosely tied, Obscured her charms, but could not hide. Her cap down o'er her face she drew; And, on her doublet breast, She tried to hide the badge of blue, Lord Marmion's falcon crest. But, at the Prioress' command, A Monk undid the silken band, That tied her tresses fair, And raised the bonnet from her head, And down her slender form they spread, In ringlets rich and rare.
Constance de Beverley they know,  
Sister profess'd of Fontevraud,  
Whom the church number'd with the dead,  
For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view,
(Although so pallid was her hue,
It did a ghastly contrast bear
To those bright ringlets glistening fair,)
Her look composed, and steady eye,
Bespoke a matchless constancy;
And there she stood so calm and pale,
That, but her breathing did not fail,
And motion slight of eye and head,
And of her bosom, warranted
That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
You might have thought a form of wax,
Wrought to the very life, was there;
So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
Such as does murder for a meed;
Who, but of fear, knows no control,
Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
Feels not the import of his deed;
One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
Beyond his own more brute desires.

Such tools the Tempter ever needs,
To do the savagest of deeds;
For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
One fear with them, of all most base,
The fear of death,—alone finds place.
This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
His body on the floor to dash,
And crouch, like hound beneath the lash;
While his mute partner, standing near,
Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
Well might her paleness terror speak!
For there were seen in that dark wall,
Two niches, narrow, deep and tall;—
Who enters at such grisly door,
Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
In each a slender meal was laid,
Of roots, of water, and of bread:
By each, in Benedictine dress,
Two haggard monks stood motionless;
Who, holding high a blazing torch,
Show'd the grim entrance of the porch:
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.
These executioners were chose,
As men who were with mankind foes,
And with despite and envy fired,
Into the cloister had retired;
Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
Strove, by deep penance, to efface
Of some foul crime the stain;
For, as the vassals of her will,
Such men the Church selected still,
As either joy'd in doing ill,
Or thought more grace to gain,
If, in her cause, they wrestled down
Feelings their nature strove to own.
By strange device were they brought there,
They knew not how, nor knew not where.

XXV.
And now that blind old Abbot rose,
To speak the Chapter's doom,
On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb; 
But stopp'd, because that woful Maid,
Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd.
Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain;
Her accents might no utterance gain;
Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
From her convulsed and quivering lip;
'Twixt each attempt all was so still,
You seem'd to hear a distant rill—
'Twas ocean's swells and falls;
For though this vault of sin and fear
Was to the sounding surge so near,
A tempest there you scarce could hear,
So massive were the walls.

XXVI.
At length, an effort sent apart
The blood that curdled to her heart,
And light came to her eye,
And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
Like that left on the Cheviot peak,
By Autumn's stormy sky;
And when her silence broke at length,
Still as she spoke she gather'd strength,
And arm'd herself to bear.
It was a fearful sight to see
Such high resolve and constancy,
In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.
"I speak not to implore your grace,
Well know I, for one minute's space
Successless might I sue;

Nor do I speak your prayers to gain;
For if a death of lingering pain,
To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
Vain are your masses too.
I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil;
For three long years I bow'd my pride,
A horse-boy in his train to ride;
And well my folly's meed he gave,
Who forfeited, to be his slave,
All here, and all beyond the grave.
He saw young Clara's face more fair,
He knew her of broad lands the heir,
Forgot his vows, his faith foreswore,
And Constance was beloved no more.
'Tis an old tale, and often told;
But did my fate and wish agree,
Ne'er had been read, in story old,
Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me!

XXVIII.

"The King approved his favourite's aim;
In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attains that rival's fame
With treason's charge—and on they came,
In mortal lists to fight.

Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are pray'd,
Their lances in the rest are laid,
They meet in mortal shock;
And, hark! the throng, with thundering cry,
Shout, 'Marmion, Marmion! to the sky,
De Wilton to the block!'
Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide
When in the lists two champions ride,
Say, was Heaven's justice here?
When, loyal in his love and faith,
Wilton found overthrow or death,
Beneath a traitor's spear?
How false the charge, how true he fell,
This guilty packet best can tell."

Then drew a packet from her breast,
Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest.

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid;
To Whitby's convent fled the maid,
The hated match to shun.
'Ho! shifts she thus?' King Henry cried,
'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
If she were sworn a nun.'
One way remain'd—the King's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
For Clara and for me:
This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
And, by his drugs, my rival fair
A saint in heaven should be.
But ill the dastard kept his oath,
Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX.
"And now my tongue the secret tells,
Not that remorse my bosom swells,
But to assure my soul that none
Shall ever wed with Marmion.
Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
This packet, to the King convey'd,
Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
Although my heart that instant broke.—
Now, men of death, work forth your will,
For I can suffer, and be still;
And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI.
"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome!
If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
Full soon such vengeance will he take,
That you shall wish the fiery Dane
Had rather been your guest again.

XXXII.
Fix'd was her look, and stern her air:
Back from her shoulders stream'd her hair;
The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head;
Her figure seem'd to rise more high;
Her voice, despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appall'd the astonish'd conclave sate;
With stupid eyes, the men of fate
Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listen'd for the avenging storm;
The judges felt the victim's dread;
No hand was moved, no word was said,
Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
Raising his sightless balls to heaven:

"Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
Sinful brother, part in peace!"
From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
Of execution too, and tomb,
Paced forth the judges three;
Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
The butcher-work that there befell,
When they had glided from the well
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
That conclave to the upper day;
But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
They heard the shriekings of despair,
And many a stifled groan:
With speed their upward way they take,
(Such speed as age and fear can make,)
And cross'd themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on:
Even in the vesper’s heavenly tone,
They seem’d to hear a dying groan,
And bade the passing knell to toll
For welfare of a parting soul.
Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
Northumbrian rocks in answer rung;
To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
His beads the wakeful hermit told,
The Bamborough peasant raised his head,
But slept ere half a prayer he said;

So far was heard the mighty knell,
The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
Listed before, aside, behind,
Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

WILLIAM ERSKINE, ESQ.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

Like April morning clouds, that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's chequer'd scene of joy and sorrow;
Like streamlet of the mountain north,
Now in a torrent racing forth,
Now winding slow its silver train,
And almost slumbering on the plain;
Like breezes of the autumn day,
Whose voice inconstant dies away,
And ever swells again as fast,
When the ear deems its murmur past;
Thus various, my romantic theme
Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
Of Light and Shade's inconstant race;
Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
Weaving its maze irregular;
And pleased, we listen as the breeze
Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees;
Then, wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
Flow on, flow unconfined, my Tale!

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell
I love the license all too well,
In sounds now lowly, and now strong,
To raise the desultory song?—
Oft, when 'mid such capricious chime,
Some transient fit of lofty rhyme
To thy kind judgment seem'd excuse
For many an error of the muse,
Oft hast thou said, "If, still mis-spent,
Thine hours to poetry are lent,
Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
Quaff from the fountain at the source;
Approach those masters, o'er whose tomb
Immortal laurels ever bloom:
Instructive of the feeble bard,
Still from the grave their voice is heard;
From them, and from the paths they show'd,
Choose honour'd guide and practised road;

Nor ramble on through brake and maze,
With harpers rude of barbarous days.

"Or deem'st thou not our later time
Yields topic meet for classic rhyme?
Hast thou no elegiac verse
For Brunswick's venerable hearse?
What! not a line, a tear, a sigh,
When valour bleeds for liberty?—
Oh, hero of that glorious time,
When, with unrivall'd light sublime—
Though martial Austria, and though all
The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her foes—
The star of Brandenburgh arose!
Thou couldst not live to see her beam
For ever quench'd in Jena's stream.
Lamented Chief!—it was not given
To thee to change the doom of Heaven,
And crush that dragon in its birth,
Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
Lamented Chief!—not thine the power,
To save in that presumptuous hour,
When Prussia hurried to the field,
And snatch'd the spear, but left the shield!
Valour and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die
Ill had it seem'd thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For prencedoms rest, and scutcheons riven,
And birthrights to usurpers given;
Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
And witness woes thou couldst not heal!
On thee relenting Heaven bestows
For honour'd life an honour'd close;
And when revolves, in time's sure change,
The hour of Germany's revenge,
When, breathing fury for her sake,
Some new Arminius shall awake,
Her champion, ere he strike,
shall come
To whet his sword on BrunswicK's tomb.

"Or of the Red-Cross hero teach,
Dauntless in dungeon as on breach:
Alike to him the sea, the shore,
The brand, the bridle, or the oar:
Alike to him the war that calls
Its votaries to the shatter'd walls,
Which the grim Turk, besmear'd with blood,
Against the Invincible made good;
Or that, whose thundering voice could wake
The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ, and metal'd Swede,
On the warp'd wave their death-game play'd;
Or that, where Vengeance and Affright
Howl'd round the father of the fight,
Who snatch'd, on Alexandria's sand,
The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.

"Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
Restore the ancient tragic line,
And emulate the notes that rung
From the wild harp, which silent hung
By silver Avon's holy shore,
Till twice an hundred years roll'd o'er;
When she, the bold Enchantress, came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
And swept it with a kindred measure,
Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
Awakening at the inspired strain,
Deem'd their own Shakspeare lived again."

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging,
With praises not to me belonging,
In task more meet for mightiest powers,
Wouldst thou engage my thriftless hours.
But say, my Erskine, hast thou weigh'd
That secret power by all obey'd,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source conceal'd or undefined;
Whether an impulse, that has birth
Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
One with our feelings and our powers,
And rather part of us than ours;
Or whether fitler term'd the sway
Of habit, form'd in early day?
Howe'er derived, its force confest
Rules with despotic sway the breast,
And drags us on by viewless chain,
While taste and reason plead in vain.
Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
He seeks not eager to inhale
The freshness of the mountain gale,
Content to rear his whiten'd wall
Beside the dank and dull canal?
He'll say, from youth he loved to see
The white sail gliding by the tree.
Or see yon weatherbeaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tatter'd plaid and rugged cheek
His northern clime and kindred speak;
Through England's laughing meads he goes,
And England's wealth around him flows;
Ask, if it would content him well,
At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these will he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range:
Not for fair Devon's meads forsake
Bennevis grey, and Garry's lake.

Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower.
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claim'd homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honey-suckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapeine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl,
Methought that still with trump and clang,
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seam'd with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretch'd at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war display'd;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scatter'd Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brighten'd at our evening fire!
From the thatch'd mansion's grey-hair'd Sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Show'd what in youth its glance had been;
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable Priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint;
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caress'd.

For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
Nay, Erskine, nay—On the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the eglandine:
Nay, my friend, nay—Since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigour to my lays;
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flatten'd thought, or cumbrous line;
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrain'd, my Tale!

CANTO THIRD.
The Hostel, or Inn.

I.
The livelong day Lord Marmion rode:
The mountain path the Palmer show'd,
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road,
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely fail'd to bar their way.

Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down;
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the black-cock rose;
Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
Nor waited for the bending bow;
And when the stony path began,
By which the naked peak they wan,
Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
The noon had long been pass'd before
They gain'd the height of Lammermoor;
Thence winding down the northern way
Before them, at the close of day,
Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
To spend the hospitable hour.
To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone;
His cautious dame, in bower alone,
Dreaded her castle to unclose,
So late, to unknown friends or foes.
On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein:
The village inn seem'd large, though rude;
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.
Down from their seats the horsemen sprung;
With jingling spurs the courtyard rung;
They bind their horses to the stall,
For forage, food, and firing call;
And various clamour fills the hall:
Weighing the labour with the cost,
Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon, by the chimney's merry blaze,
Through the rude hostel might you gaze;
Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
The rafters of the sooty roof
Bore wealth of winter cheer;
Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store,
And gammons of the tusky boar,
And savoury haunch of deer.
The chimney arch projected wide;
Above, around it, and beside,
Were tools for housewives' hand;
Nor wanted, in that martial day,
The implements of Scottish fray,
The buckler, lance, and brand.
Beneath its shade, the place of state,
On oaken settle Marmion sate,
And view'd around the blazing hearth.
His followers mix in noisy mirth;
Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deign'd to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May;
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From India's fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.
VI.
By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke, save when in comrade’s ear
Some yoeman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whisper’d forth his mind:
"Saint Mary! saw’st thou e’er such sight?
How pale his cheek, his eye how bright,
Whene’er the firebrand’s fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl!
Full on our Lord he sets his eye;
For his best palfrey, would not I
Endure that sullen scowl."

VII.
But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quell’d their hearts, who saw
The ever-varying fire-light show
That figure stern and face of woe,
Now call’d upon a squire:
"Fitz-Eustace, know’st thou not some lay,
To speed the lingering night away?
We slumber by the fire."

VIII.
"So please you," thus the youth rejoin’d,
"Our choicest minstrel’s left behind.
Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustom’d Constant’s strains to hear.
The harp full deftly can he strike,
And wake the lover’s lute alike;
To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,
No nightingale her love-lorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate’er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavish’d on rocks, and billows stern,
Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
Now must I venture, as I may,
To sing his favourite roundelay."

IX.
A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
The air he chose was wild and sad;
Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
Rise from the busy harvest band,
When falls before the mountaineer,
On Lowland plains, the ripen’d ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong;
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listen’d, and stood still,
As it came soften’d up the hill,
And deem’d it the lament of men
Who languish’d for their native glen;
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehanna's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumber'd brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
Recall'd fair Scotland's hills again!

X.

SONG.

Where shall the lover rest,
Whom the fates sever
From his true maiden's breast,
Parted for ever?
Where, through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die,
Under the willow.

Chorus.

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

Chorus.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XI.

Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her?

In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

Chorus.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it,—
Never, O never!

Chorus.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
And silence sunk on all around.
The air was sad; but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plain'd as if disgrace and ill,
And shameful death, were near.
He drew his mantle past his face,
Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space,
Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wish'd to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.
XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear, for their scourge, mean villains have,
Thou art the torturer of the brave!
Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
Even while they writhe beneath the smart
Ot civil conflict in the heart.
For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said,—
"Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul?
Say, what may this portend?"—
Then first the Palmer silence broke,
(The livelong day he had not spoke,)
"The death of a dear friend." 129

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
Ne'er changed in worst extremity;
Marmion, whose soul could scantily brook,
Even from his King, a haughty look;
Whose accent of command control'd,
In camps, the boldest of the bold—

Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now,
Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow;
For either in the tone,
Or something in the Palmer's look,
So full upon his conscience strook,
That answer he found none.
Thus oft it haps, that when within
They shrink at sense of secret sin,
A feather daunts the brave;
A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
And proudest princes vail their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter!—By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betray'd.
Not that he augur'd of the doom,
Which on the living closed the tomb:
But, tired to hear the desperate maid
Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid;
And wroth, because in wild despair,
She practised on the life of Clare;
Its fugitive the Church he gave,
Though not a victim, but a slave;
And deem'd restraint in convent strange
Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge.
Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
Held Romish thunders idle fear,
Secure his pardon he might hold,
For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
Thus judging, he gave secret way,  
When the stern priests surprised  
their prey;  
His train but deem'd the favourite  
page  
Was left behind, to spare his age;  
Or other if they deem'd, none dared  
To mutter what he thought and heard:  
Woe to the vassal, who durst pry  
Into Lord Marmion's privacy!

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deem'd her well,  
And safe secured in distant cell;  
But, waken'd by her favourite lay,  
And that strange Palmer's boding say,  
That fell so ominous and drear,  
Full on the object of his fear,  
To aid remorse's venom'd throes,  
Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose;  
And Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,  
All lovely on his soul return'd;  
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,  
She left her convent's peaceful wall,  
Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,  
Dreading alike escape, pursuit,  
Till love, victorious o'er alarms,  
Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

"Alas!" he thought, "how changed that mien!  
How changed these timid looks have been,  
Since years of guilt, and of disguise,  
Have steel'd her brow, and arm'd her eyes!  
No more of virgin terror speaks  
The blood that mantles in her cheeks;  
Fierce, and unfeminine, are there,  
Frenzy for joy, for grief despair;  
And I the cause—for whom were given  
Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven!—  
Would," thought he, as the picture grows,  
"I on its stalk had left the rose!  
Oh, why should man's success remove  
The very charms that wake his love!—  
Her convent's peaceful solitude  
Is now a prison harsh and rude;  
And, pent within the narrow cell,  
How will her spirit chafe and swell!  
How brook the stern monastic laws!  
The penance how—and I the cause!—  
Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse!"—  
And twice he rose to cry, "To horse!"—  
And twice his Sovereign's mandate came,  
Like damp upon a kindling flame;  
And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge  
She should be safe, though not at large?  
They durst not, for their island, shred  
One golden ringlet from her head."
XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
Repentance and reviving love,
Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
I've seen Lord Vennachar obey,
Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard,
And, talkative, took up the word:
"Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
From Scotland's simple land away,
To visit realms afar,
Full often learn the art to know
Of future weal, or future woe,
By word, or sign, or star;
Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
If, knight-like, he despises fear,
Not far from hence;— if fathers old
Aright our hamlet legend told."
These broken words the menials move,
(For marvels still the vulgar love,) And, Marmion giving license cold,
His tale the host thus gladly told:—

XIX.

THE HOST'S TALE.

"A Clerk could tell what years have flown
Since Alexander fill'd our throne,
(Third monarch of that warlike name,) And eke the time when here he came
To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord:
A braver never drew a sword;
A wiser never, at the hour
Of midnight, spoke the word of power:
The same, whom ancient records call
The founder of the Goblin-Hall.130
I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
Gave you that cavern to survey.
Of lofty roof, and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies:
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,
There never toil'd a mortal arm,
It all was wrought by word and charm;
And I have heard my grandsire say,
That the wild clamour and affray Of those dread artisans of hell, Who labour'd under Hugo's spell, Sounded as loud as ocean's war, Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

"The King Lord Gifford's castle sought, Deep labouring with uncertain thought; Even then he muster'd all his host, To meet upon the western coast: For Norse and Danish galleys plied Their oars within the frith of Clyde. There floated Haco's banner trim,131 Above Norweyan warriors grim, Savage of heart, and large of limb; Threatening both continent and isle, Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
And tarried not his garb to change,
But, in his wizard habit strange, came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight;
His mantle lined with fox-skins white;
His high and wrinkled forehead bore
A pointed cap, such as of yore clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore:
His shoes were mark'd with cross and spell,
Upon his breast a pentacle;
His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
Bore many a planetary sign,
Combust, and retrograde, and trine;
And in his hand he held prepared,
A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.
"Dire dealings with the fiendish race
Had mark'd strange lines upon his face;
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seem'd and dim,
As one unused to upper day;
Even his own menials with dismay beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly Sire,
In his unwonted wild attire;
Unwonted, for traditions run,
He seldom thus beheld the sun.
'I know,' he said—his voice was hoarse,
And broken seem'd its hollow force,—
'I know the cause, although untold,
Why the King seeks his vassal's hold:
Vainly from me my liege would know
His kingdom's future weal or woe;
But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
His courage may do more than art.

XXII.
"'Of middle air the demons proud,
Who ride upon the racking cloud, Can read, in fix'd or wandering star,
The issue of events afar;
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controll'd.
Such late I summon'd to my hall;
And though so potent was the call,
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deem'd a refuge from the spell,
Yet, obstinate in silence still,
The haughty demon mocks my skill.
But thou—who little know'st thy might,
As born upon that blessed night
When yawning graves, and dying groan,
Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrown,—
With untaught valour shalt compel
Response denied to magic spell.'
'Gramercy,' quoth our Monarch free,  
'Place him but front to front with me,  
And, by this good and honour'd brand,  
The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,  
Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,  
The demon shall a buffet bide.'  
His bearing bold the wizard view'd,  
And thus, well pleased, his speech renew'd:—  
'There spoke the blood of Malcolm!—mark:  
Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,  
The rampart seek, whose circling crown  
Crests the ascent of yonder down:  
A southern entrance shalt thou find;  
There halt, and there thy bugle wind,  
And trust thine elfin foe to see,  
In guise of thy worst enemy:  
Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—  
Upon him! and Saint George to speed!  
If he go down, thou soon shalt know  
Whate'er these airy sprites can show;—  
If thy heart fail thee in the strife,  
I am no warrant for thy life.'

XXIII.

'Soon as the midnight bell did ring,  
Alone, and arm'd, forth rode the King  
To that old camp's deserted round:  
Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,  
Left hand the town,—the Pictish race,  
The trench, long since, in blood did trace;  
The moor around is brown and bare,  
The space within is green and fair.  
The spot our village children know,  
For there the earliest wild-flowers grow;  
But woe betide the wandering wight,  
That treads its circle in the night!  
The breadth across, a bowshot clear,  
Gives ample space for full career:  
Opposed to the four points of heaven,  
By four deep gaps are entrance given.  
The southernmost our Monarch past,  
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;  
And on the north, within the ring,  
Appear'd the form of England's King,  
Who then, a thousand leagues afar,  
In Palestine waged holy war:  
Yet arms like England's did he wield,  
Alike the leopards in the shield,  
Alike his Syrian courser's frame,  
The rider's length of limb the same:  
Long afterwards did Scotland know,  
Fell Edward was her deadliest foe.
XXIV.

"The vision made our Monarch start,
But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
And in the first career they ran,
The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;
Yet did a splinter of his lance
Through Alexander's visor glance,
And razed the skin—a puny wound.
The King, light leaping to the ground,
With naked blade his phantom foe
Compell'd the future war to show.
Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
Where still gigantic bones remain,
Memorial of the Danish war;
Himself he saw, amid the field,
On high his brandish'd war-axe wield,
And strike proud Haco from his car,
While all around the shadowy Kings
Denmark's grim ravens cower'd their wings.
'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
Remoter visions met his sight,
Foreshowing future conquests far,
When our sons' sons wage northern war;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Redden'd the midnight sky with fire,
And shouting crews her navy bore,
Triumphant, to the victor shore.
Such signs may learned clerks explain,
They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

"The joyful King turn'd home again,
Headed his host, and quell'd the Dane;
But yearly, when return'd the night
Of his strange combat with the sprite,
His wound must bleed and smart;
Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
The penance of your start.'
Long since, beneath Dunfermline's nave,
King Alexander fills his grave,
Our Lady give him rest!
Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin Warrior doth wield,
Upon the brown hill's breast;\(^{135}\)
And many a knight hath proved his chance,
In the charm'd ring to break a lance,
But all have foully sped;
Save two, as legends tell, and they Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay.—
Gentles, my tale is said."

XXVI.

The quaighs were deep, the liquor strong,
And on the tale the yeoman-throng
Had made a comment sage and long,
But Marmion gave a sign:
And, with their lord, the squires retire;
The rest, around the hostel fire,
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppress'd with toil and ale, they snore:
The dying flame, in fitful change,
Threw on the group its shadows strange.

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay;
Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
The foldings of his mantle green:
Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
Of sport by thicket, or by stream.
Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
A cautious tread his slumber broke,
And, close beside him, when he woke,
In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
Stood a tall form, with nodding plume;
But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
His master Marmion's voice he knew.

XXVIII.

—"Fitz-Eustace! rise, I cannot rest;
Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
And graver thoughts have chafed my mood:
The air must cool my feverish blood;
And fain would I ride forth, to see
The scene of elfin chivalry.
Arise, and saddle me my steed;
And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves;
I would not, that the prating knaves
Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
That I could credit such a tale."
Then softly down the steps they slid,
Eustace the stable door undid,
And, darkling, Marmion's steed array'd,
While, whispering, thus the Baron said:—

XXIX.

"Did'st never, good my youth, hear tell,
That on the hour when I was born,
Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
Down from his steed of marble fell,
A weary wight forlorn?
The flattering chaplains all agree,
The champion left his steed to me.
I would, the omen's truth to show,
That I could meet this Elfin Foe!
Blithe would I battle, for the right
To ask one question at the sprite:—
Vain thought! for elves, if elves there be,
An empty race, by fount or sea,
To dashing waters dance and sing,
Or round the green oak wheel their ring.
Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX

Fitz-Eustace followed him abroad,
And mark’d him pace the village road,
And listen’d to his horse’s tramp,
Till, by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seem’d, in the squire’s eyes,
That one, so wary held, and wise,—
Of whom ’twas said, he scarce received
For gospel, what the church believed,—
Should, stirr’d by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Array’d in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind;
Weary’d from doubt to doubt to flee,
We welcome fond credulity,
Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
But, patient, waited till he heard,
At distance, prick’d to utmost speed,
The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
Come townward rushing on;
First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
Then, clattering on the village road,—
In other pace than forth he yode,
Return’d Lord Marmion.
Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, wellnigh he fell;
To the squire’s hand the rein he threw,
And spoke no word as he withdrew:
But yet the moonlight did betray,
The falcon-crest was soil’d with clay;
And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
By stains upon the charger’s knee,
And his left side, that on the moor
He had not kept his footing sure.
Long musing on these wondrous signs,
At length to rest the squire reclines,
Broken and short; for still, between,
Would dreams of terror intervene:
Eustace did ne’er so blithely mark
The first notes of the morning lark.
INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH.

TO

JAMES SKENE, ESQ.

Ashestiel, Ettrick Forest.

An ancient Minstrel sagely said, "Where is the life which late we led?"
That motley clown in Arden wood,
Whom humorous Jacques with envy view'd,
Not even that clown could amplify,
On this trite text, so long as I.
Eleven years we now may tell,
Since we have known each other well;
Since, riding side by side, our hand
First drew the voluntary brand;
And sure, through many a varied scene,
Unkindness never came between.
Away these winged years have flown,
To join the mass of ages gone;
And though deep mark'd, like all below,
With chequer'd shades of joy and woe;
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Mark'd cities lost, and empires changed,
While here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
Fever'd the progress of these years,
Yet now, days, weeks, and months, but seem
The recollection of a dream,
So still we glide down to the sea
Of fathomless eternity.

Even now it scarcely seems a day,
Since first I tuned this idle lay;
A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now, November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspir'd my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
Their vex'd boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights, and Ettrick Pen,
Have donn'd their wintry shrouds again:
And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mix'd with the rack, the snow mists fly;
The shepherd, who in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen;—
He who, outstretch'd the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
View'd the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumber'd o'er his tatter'd book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessen'd tide;—
At midnight now, the snowy plain
Finds sterner labour for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun,
Through heavy vapours dark and dun;
When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
Against the casement's tinkling pane;
The sounds that drive wild deer, and fox,
To shelter in the brake and rocks,
Are warnings which the shepherd ask
To dismal and to dangerous task.
Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
The blast may sink in mellowing rain;
Till, dark above, and white below,
Decided drives the flaky snow,
And forth the hardy swain must go.
Long, with dejected look and whine,
To leave the hearth his dogs repine;
Whistling and cheering them to aid,
Around his back he wreathes the plaid:

His flock he gathers, and he guides,
To open downs, and mountain-sides,
Where fiercest though the tempest blow,
Least deeply lies the drift below.
The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
Stiffens his locks to icicles;
When red hath set the beamless sun,
Oft he looks back, while streaming far,
His cottage window seems a star,—
Loses its feeble gleam,—and then
Turns patient to the blast again,
And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep.
If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
Benumbing death is in the gale:
His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
Close to the hut, no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,
The morn may find the stiffen'd swain:
The widow sees, at dawning pale,
His orphans raise their feeble wail:
And, close beside him, in the snow,
Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
Couches upon his master's breast,
And licks his cheek to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
His healthy fare, his rural cot,
His summer couch by greenwood tree,
His rustic kirk's loud revelry,
His native hill-notes, tuned on high,
To Marion of the blithesome eye;
His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
And all Arcadia's golden creed?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
Of human life the varying scene?
Our youthful summer oft we see
Dance by on wings of game and glee,
While the dark storm reserves its rage,
Against the winter of our age:
As he, the ancient Chief of Troy,
His manhood spent in peace and joy;
But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
Call'd ancient Priam forth to arms.

Then happy those, since each must drain
His share of pleasure, share of pain,—
Then happy those, beloved of Heaven,
To whom the mingled cup is given;
Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
Whose joys are chasten'd by their grief.
And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
When thou of late, wert doom'd to twine,—
Just when thy bridal hour was by,—
The cypress with the myrtle tie.
Just on thy bride her Sire had smiled,
And bless'd the union of his child,

When love must change its joyous cheer,
And wipe affection's filial tear.
Nor did the actions next his end,
Speak more the father than the friend:
Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
The tribute to his Minstrel's shade;
The tale of friendship scarce was told,
Ere the narrator's heart was cold—
Far may we search before we find
A heart so manly and so kind!
But not around his honour'd urn,
Shall friends alone and kindred mourn;
The thousand eyes his care had dried,
Pour at his name a bitter tide;
And frequent falls the grateful dew,
For benefits the world ne'er knew.
If mortal charity dare claim
The Almighty's attributed name,
Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
"The widow's shield, the orphan's stay."
Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
My verse intrudes on this sad theme;
For sacred was the pen that wrote,
"Thy father's friend forget thou not:
And grateful title may I plead,
For many a kindly word and deed,
To bring my tribute to his grave:
'Tis little—but 'tis all I have.
To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
Recalls our summer walks again;
When, doing nought,—and, to speak true,
Not anxious to find aught to do,—
The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
While oft our talk its topic changed,
And, desultory as our way,
Ranged, unconfined, from grave to gay.
Even when it flagg'd, as oft will chance,
No effort made to break its trance,
We could right pleasantly pursue
Our sports in social silence too;
Thou gravely labouring to portray
The blighted oak's fantastic spray;
I spelling o'er, with much delight,
The legend of that antique knight,
Tirante by name, yclep'd the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
Jealous, each other's motions view'd,
And scarce suppress'd their ancient feud.
The laverock whistled from the cloud;
The stream was lively, but not loud;
From the white thorn the Mayflower shed
Its dewy fragrance round our head:
Not Ariel lived more merrily
Under the blossom'd bough, than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
When Winter stript the summer's bowers.
Careless we heard, what now I hear,
The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
When fires were bright, and lamps beam'd gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay;
And he was held a laggard soul,
Who shunn'd to quaff the sparkling bowl.
Then he, whose absence we deplore,
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer miss'd, bewail'd the more;
And thou, and I, and dear-loved R——,
And one whose name I may not say,—
For not Mimosa's tender tree
Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,—
In merry chorus well combined,
With laughter drown'd the whistling wind.
Mirth was within; and Care without
Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
Not but amid the buxom scene
Some grave discourse might intervene—
Of the good horse that bore him best,
His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest:
For, like mad Tom's, our chiefest care,
Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.
Such nights we've had; and, though the game
Of manhood be more sober tame,
And though the field-day, or the drill,
Seem less important now—yet still
Such may we hope to share again.
The sprightly thought inspires my strain!
And mark, how, like a horseman true,
Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

CANTO FOURTH.

The Camp.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
The first notes of the merry lark.
The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
And loudly Marmion's bugsblew,
And with their light and lively call,
Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
Whistling they came, and free of heart,
But soon their mood was changed;
Complaint was heard on every part,
Of something disarranged.
Some clamour'd loud for armour lost;
Some brawl'd and wrangled with the host;
"By Becket's bones," cried one,
"I fear,
That some false Scot has stolen my spear!"—

Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
Found his steed wet with sweat and mire;
Although the rated horse-boy sware,
Last night he dress'd him sleek and fair.
While chafed the impatient squire like thunder,
Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
"Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
Bevis lies dying in his stall:
To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
Of the good steed he loves so well?"
Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
The charger panting on his straw;
Till one, who would seem wisest, cried,—
"What else but evil could betide,
With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
Better we had through mire and bush
Been lantern-led by Friar Rush."¹³

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guess'd,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous plaints suppress'd;
He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
And did his tale display
Simply as if he knew of nought
To cause such disarray.
Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
Nor marvell’d at the wonders told,—
Pass’d them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.
Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckon’d with their Scottish host;
And, as the charge he cast and paid,
“Ill thou deserv’st thy hire,” he said;
“Dost see, thou knave, my horse’s plight?
Fairies have ridden him all the night,
And left him in a foam!
I trust that soon a conjuring band,
With English cross, and blazing brand,
Shall drive the devils from this land,
To their infernal home:
For in this haunted den, I trow,
All night they trample to and fro.”—
The laughing host look’d on the hire,—
“Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou comest among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo.”—
Here stay’d their talk,—for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.

The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journey’d all the morning day.

IV.
The green-sward way was smooth and good,
Through Humbie’s and through Saltoun’s wood;
A forest glade, which, varying still,
Here gave a view of dale and hill,
There narrower closed, till over head
A vaulted screen the branches made.
“A pleasant path,” Fitz-Eustace said;
“Such as where errant-knights might see
Adventures of high chivalry;
Might meet some damsels flying fast,
With hair unbound, and looks aghast;
And smooth and level course were here,
In her defence to break a spear.
Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells;
And oft, in such, the story tells,
The damsels kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion’s meed.”
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion’s mind:
Perchance to show his lore design’d;
For Eustace much had pored
Upon a huge romantic tome,
In the hall window of his home,
Imprinted at the antique dome
Of Caxton, or De Worde.
Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
For Marmion answer'd nought again.

V.
Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolong'd by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far;
Each ready archer grasp'd his bow,
But by the flourish soon they knew,
They breathed no point of war.
Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
Some opener ground to gain;
And scarce a furlong had they rode,
When thinner trees, receding, show'd
A little woodland plain.
Just in that advantageous glade,
The halting troop a line had made,
As forth from the opposing shade
Issued a gallant train.

VI.
First came the trumpets, at whose clang
So late the forest echoes rang;
On prancing steeds they forward press'd,
With scarlet mantle, azure vest;
Each at his trump a banner wore,
Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore:
Heralds and pursuivants, by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Rothsay, came,
In painted tabards, proudly showing
Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
Attendant on a King-at-arms,
Whose hand the armorial truncheon held
That feudal strife had often quell'd,
When wildest its alarms.

VII.
He was a man of middle age;
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come;
But in the glances of his eye,
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home;
The flash of that satiric rage,
Which, bursting on the early stage,
Branded the vices of the age,
And broke the keys of Rome.
On milk-white palfrey forth he paced;
His cap of maintenance was graced
With the proud heron-plume.
From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast,
Silk housings swept the ground,
With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
Embroider'd round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
MARMION.

So bright the King's armorial coat,
That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colours, blazon'd brave,
The Lion, which his title gave,
A train, which well be seemed his state,
But all unarm'd, around him wait.
Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse has charms.
Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms! 139

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
Soon as he saw the Lion-King;
For well the stately Baron knew
To him such courtesy was due,
Whom royal James himself had crown'd,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem:
And wet his brow with hallow'd wine,
And on his finger given to shine
The emblematic gem.
Their mutual greetings duly made,
The Lion thus his message said:—
"Though Scotland's King hath deeply swore
Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,
And strictly hath forbid resort
From England to his royal court;
Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
And honours much his warlike fame,
My liege hath deem'd it shame, and lack
Of courtesy, to turn him back;
And, by his order, I, your guide,
Must lodging fit and fair provide,
Till finds King James meet time to see
The flower of English chivalry."

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
Lord Marmion bears it as he may,
The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
Beholding thus his place supplied,
Sought to take leave in vain:
Strict was the Lion-King's command,
That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
Should sever from the train:
"England has here enow of spies
In Lady Heron's witching eyes:"
To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
But fair pretext to Marmion made.
The right hand path they now decline,
And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
Where Crichtoun Castle 140 crowns the bank;
For there the Lion's care assigned
A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
That Castle rises on the steep
Of the green vale of Tyne:
And far beneath, where slow they creep,
From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
Where alders moist, and willows weep,
You hear her streams repine.
The towers in different ages rose;
Their various architecture shows
The builders' various hands;
A mighty mass, that could oppose,
When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI.
Crichtoun! though now thy miry court
But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
Thy turrets rude, and totter'd Keep,
Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
Scutcheons of honour, or pretence,
Quarter'd in old armorial sort,
Remains of rude magnificence.
Nor wholly yet had time defaced
Thy lordly gallery fair;
Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
Adorn thy ruin'd stair.
Still rises unimpair'd below,
The court-yard's graceful portico;
Above its cornice, row and row
Of fair hewn facets richly show
Their pointed diamond form,
Though there but houseless cattle go,
To shield them from the storm.

And, shuddering, still may we explore,
Where oft whilom were captives pent,
The darkness of thy Massy More;
Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
May trace, in undulating line,
The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.
Another aspect Crichtoun show'd,
As through its portal Marmion rode;
But yet 'twas melancholy state
Received him at the outer gate;
For none were in the Castle then,
But women, boys, or aged men.
With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
To welcome noble Marmion, came;
Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
Proffer'd the Baron's rein to hold;
For each man that could draw a sword
Had march'd that morning with their lord,
Earl Adam Hepburn,—he who died 14
On Flodden, by his sovereign's side.
Long may his Lady look in vain!
She ne'er shall see his gallant train,
Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean.
'Twas a brave race, before the name
Of hated Bothwell stain'd their fame.
XIII.
And here two days did Marmion rest,
With every rite that honour claims,
Attended as the King's own guest:
Such the command of Royal James,
Who marshall'd then his land's array,
Upon the Borough-moor that lay.
Perchance he would not foeman's eye
Upon his gathering host should pry,
Till full prepared was every band
To march against the English land.
Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit;
And, in his turn, he knew to prize
Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise.
Train'd in the lore of Rome and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

XIV.
It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walk'd,
And, by the slowly fading light,
Of varying topics talked;
And, unaware, the Herald-bard
Said, Marmion might his toil have spared,
In travelling so far;
For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war;¹⁴¹d And, closer question'd, thus he told
A tale, which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enroll'd:

XV.
SIR DAVID LINDESEY'S TALE.
"Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare
Linlithgow is excelling;
And in its park in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild-buck-bells¹⁴² from ferny brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake,
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is to our sovereign dear
The heaviest month in all the year:
Too well his cause of grief you know,
June saw his father's overthrow.¹⁴³
Woe to the traitors, who could bring
The princely boy against his King!
Still in his conscience burns the sting:
In offices as strict as Lent,
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.
"When last this ruthful month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying;
While, for his royal father's soul,  
The chanters sung, the bells did toll,  
The Bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless king was slain—
In Katharine's aisle the Monarch knelt,
With sackcloth-shirt, and iron belt,
And eyes with sorrow streaming;
Around him in their stalls of state,
The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
Their banners o'er them beam-ing.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafen'd with the jangling knell,
Was watching where the sun-beams fell,
Through the stain'd casement gleaming;
But, while I marked what next befell,
It seem'd as I were dreaming.
Stepp'd from the crowd a ghostly wight,
In azure gown, with cincture white;
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
I pledge to you my knightly word,
That, when I saw his placid grace,  
His simple majesty of face,
His solemn bearing, and his pace  
So stately gliding on,—

Seem'd to me ne'er did limner paint
So just an image of the Saint,
Who propp'd the Virgin in her faint,—
The loved Apostle John!

XVII.

"He stepp'd before the Monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made;
Nor head, nor body, bow'd, nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice, but never tone,
So thrill'd through vein, and nerve, and bone:—
'My mother sent me from afar,
Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
Woe waits on thine array;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warn'd, beware:
God keep thee as he may!'

The wondering Monarch seem'd to seek
For answer, and found none;
And when he raised his head to speak,
The monitor was gone.
The Marshal and myself had cast
To stop him as he outward pass'd;
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanish'd from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies."
While Lindesay told his marvel strange,
The twilight was so pale,
He mark'd not Marmion's colour change,
While listening to the tale;
But, after a suspended pause,
The Baron spoke: — "Of Nature's laws
So strong I held the force,
That never superhuman cause
Could e'er control their course.
And, three days since, had judged your aim
Was but to make your guest your game.
But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught." — He said,
And seem'd to wish his words unsaid:
But, by that strong emotion press'd,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
Even when discovery's pain,
To Lindesay did at length unfold
The tale his village host had told,
At Gifford, to his train.
Nought of the Palmer says he there,
And nought of Constance, or of Clare;
The thoughts, which broke his sleep, he seems
To mention but as feverish dreams.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couch'd my head:
Fantastic thoughts return'd;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burn'd.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reach'd the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I pass'd through,
And halted, and my bugle blew.
Methought an answer met my ear,
Yet was the blast so low and drear,
So hollow, and so faintly blown,
It might be echo of my own.

"Thus judging, for a little space
I listen'd, ere I left the place;
But scarce could trust my eyes,
Nor yet can think they served me true.
When sudden in the ring I view,
In form distinct of shape and hue,
A mounted champion rise.—
I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
In single fight, and mix'd affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight;
But when this unexpected foe
Seem'd starting from the gulf below,—
I care not though the truth I show,—
I trembled with affright;
And as I placed in rest my spear,
My hand so shook for very fear,
I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

"Why need my tongue the issue tell?
We ran our course,—my charger fell;—
What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?—
I roll'd upon the plain.
High o'er my head, with threatening hand,
The spectre shook his naked brand,—
Yet did the worst remain:
My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
Not opening hell itself could blast
Their sight, like what I saw!
Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
A face could never be mistook!
I knew the stern vindictive look,
And held my breath for awe.
I saw the face of one who, fled
To foreign climes, has long been dead,—
I well believe the last;
For ne'er, from vizor raised, did stare
A human warrior, with a glare
So grimly and so ghast.
Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade;
But when to good Saint George I pray'd,
(The first time ere I ask'd his aid,) He plunged it in the sheath;

And, on his courser mounting light,
He seem'd to vanish from my sight:
The moonbeam droop'd, and deepest night
Sunk down upon the heath.—
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face, that met me there,
Call'd by his hatred from the grave,
To cumber upper air:
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy."

XXII.

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount;
Then, learn'd in story, 'gan recount
Such chance had happ'd of old,
When once, near Norham, there did fight,
A spectre fell of fiendish might,
In likeness of a Scottish knight,
With Brian Bulmer bold,
And train'd him nigh to disallow
The aid of his baptismal vow.
"And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
And fingers, red with gore,
Is seen in Rothiemurcus glade,
Or where the sable pine-trees shade
Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnay
Dromouchty, or Glenmore.
And yet, whate'er such legend say,
Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
On mountain, moor, or plain,
Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
True son of chivalry should hold,
These midnight terrors vain;
For seldom have such spirits power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbour unrepented sin.”—

Lord Marmion turn'd him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then press'd Sir David's hand,—
But nought, at length, in answer said;
And here their farther converse staid.
Each ordering that his band
Should bowne them with the rising day,
To Scotland's camp to take their way.—
Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode.
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock,
nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digression o'er,
Suffice it that the route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They pass'd the glen and scanty rill,
And climb'd the opposing bank, until
They gain'd the top of Blackferd Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,
While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV.

But different far the change has been,
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown:
Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor below,
Upland, and dale, and down:—
A thousand did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That chequer'd all the heath between
The streamlet and the town;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green:
In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the southern Redswire edge,
To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge;
From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come;
The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
Where chiefs review'd their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling neigh;
And see the shifting lines advance,
While frequent flash'd, from shield and lance,
The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare
To embers now the brands decay'd,
Where the night-watch their fires had made.
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omen'd gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;
Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there
O'er the pavilions flew."
Highest and midmost, was described
The royal banner floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree, strong and straight,
Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone,
Which still in memory is shown,
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
Whene'er the western wind unroll'd,
With toil, the huge and cumbersome fold,
"The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar."
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.¹⁴⁵

XXIX.

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright,—
He view'd it with a chief's delight,—
Until within him burn'd his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part,
As on the battle-day;
Such glance did falcon never dart,
When stooping on his prey.

"Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy King from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay:
For, by St. George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal nor divine,
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
In glorious battle-fray!"
Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood:

"Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land has bless'd,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall."

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge Castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kissed,
It gleam'd a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law:
And, broad between them roll'd,
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz-Eustace's heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,
And, making demi-volte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land!"
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
Nor Marmion's frown repress'd his glee.

XXXI.
Thus while they look'd, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
And fife, and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
Merrily toll'd the hour of prime,
And thus the Lindesay spoke:
"Thus clamour still the war-notes when
The king to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to St. Katharine's of Sienne,
Or Chapel of Saint Rocque.
To you they speak of martial fame;
But me remind of peaceful game,
When blither was their cheer,
Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.
"Nor less," he said, — "when looking forth,
I view yon Empress of the North
Sit on her hilly throne;
Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers—
Nor less," he said, "I moan,
To think what woe mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant king;
Or with the larum call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst southern sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
But not for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
Lord Marmion, I say nay:
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
That England's dames must weep in bower,
Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
Led on by such a King."—
And now, down winding to the plain,
The barriers of the camp they gain,
And there they made a stay.—
There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
His hand o'er every Border string,
And fit his harp the pomp to sing,
Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
In the succeeding lay.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH.

TO

GEORGE ELLIS, ESQ.

Edinburgh.

When dark December glooms the day,
And takes our autumn joys away;
When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
Upon the weary waste of snows,
A cold and profitless regard,
Like patron on a needy bard;
When silvan occupation's done,
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang, in idle trophy, near,
The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear;
When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
And greyhound, with his length of limb,
And pointer, now employ'd no more,
Cumber our parlour's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemn'd to rest and feed;
When from our snow-encircled home,
Scarce cares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring;
When wrinkled news-page, thrice conn'd o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
And darkling politician, cross'd,
Inveighs against the lingering post,
And answering housewife sore complains
Of carriers' snow-impeded wains;
When such the country cheer, I come,
Well pleased, to seek our city home;
For converse, and for books, to change
The Forest's melancholy range,
And welcome, with renew'd delight,
The busy day and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
Lament the ravages of time,
As erst by Newark's riven towers,
And Ettrick stripp'd of forest bowers.
True,—Caledonia's Queen is changed,"
Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent,
By bulwark, line, and battlement,
And flanking towers, and laky
flood,
Guarded and garrison’d she stood,
Denying entrance or resort,
Save at each tall embattled port;
Above whose arch, suspended,
hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
That long is gone,—but not so long,
Since, early closed, and opening
late,
Jealous revolved the studded
gate,
Whose task, from eve to morning
tide,
A wicket churlishly supplied.
Stern then, and steel-girt was thy
brow,
Dun-Edin! O, how alter’d now,
When safe amid thy mountain
court
Thou sit’st, like Empress at her
sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the
sea,
For thy dark cloud, with umber’d
lower,
That hung o’er cliff, and lake, and
tower,
Thou gleam’st against the western
ray
Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the Championess of old,
In Spenser’s magic tale enroll’d,
She for the charmed spear ren-
nown’d,
Which forced each knight to kiss
the ground,—
Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,

What time she was Malbecco’s
guest,
She gave to flow her maiden vest;
When from the corslet’s grasp
relieved,
Free to the sight her bosom
heaved;
Sweet was her blue eye’s modest
smile,
Erst hidden by the aventayle;
And down her shoulders graceful
roll’d
Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
They who whilom, in midnight
fight,
Had marvell’d at her matchless
might,
No less her maiden charms ap-
proved,
But looking liked, and liking
loved.
The sight could jealous pangs
beguile,
And charm Malbecco’s cares a
while;
And he, the wandering Squire of
Dames,
Forgot his Columbella’s claims,
And passion, erst unknown, could
gain
The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane;
Nor durst light Paridel advance,
Bold as he was, a looser glance.
She charm’d, at once, and tamed
the heart,
Incomparable Britomarte!

So thou, fair City! disarray’d
Of battled wall, and rampart’s aid,
As stately seem’st, but lovelier
far
Than in that panoply of war.
Nor deem that from thy fenceless
throne
Strength and security are flown;
Still, as of yore, Queen of the North!
Still canst thou send thy children forth.
Ne'er reader at alarm-bell's call
Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
Thy dauntless voluntary line;
For fosse and turret proud to stand,
Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
Thy thousands, train'd to martial toil,
Full red would stain their native soil,
Ere from thy mural crown there fell
The slightest knosp, or pinnacle. And if it come,—as come it may,
Dun-Edin! that eventful day,—
Renown'd for hospitable deed.

Bodings, or true or false, to change,
For Fiction's fair romantic range,
Or for tradition's dubious light,
That hovers 'twixt the day and night:
Dazzling alternately and dim,
Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
Creation of my fantasy,
Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
And make of mists invading men.
Who loves not more the night of June
Than dull December's gloomy noon?
The moonlight than the fog of frost?
And can we say, which cheats the most?

But who shall teach my harp to gain
A sound of the romantic strain,
Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
Could win the royal Henry's ear,\(^{149}\)
Famed Beauclerc call'd, for that he loved
The minstrel, and his lay approved?
Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
Decaying on Oblivion's stream;
Such notes as from the Breton tongue
Marie translated, Blondel sung?—O! born, Time's ravage to repair,
And make the dying Muse thy care;
Who, when his scythe her hoary foe
Was poising for the final blow,
The weapon from his hand could wring,
And break his glass, and shear his wing,
And bid, reviving in his strain,
The gentle poet live again;
Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
An unpedantic moral gay,
Nor less the dullest theme bid flit
On wings of unexpected wit;
In letters as in life approved.

Example honour'd, and beloved,—
Dear Ellis! to the bard impart
A lesson of thy magic art,
To win at once the head and heart,—
At once to charm, instruct and mend,
My guide, my pattern, and my friend!

Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
With wonder heard the northern strain.
Come listen! bold in thy applause,
The Bard shall scorn pedantic laws;
And, as the ancient art could stain
Achievements on the storied pane,
Irregularly traced and plann'd,
But yet so glowing and so grand,—
So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
And all the pomp of chivalry.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Court.

I.
The train has left the hills of Braid;
The barrier guard have open made
(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
That closed the tented ground;
Their men the warders backward drew,
And carried pikes as they rode through,
Into its ample bound.
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
Upon the Southern band to stare.
And envy with their wonder rose,
To see such well-appointed foes;
Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
So huge, that many simply thought,  
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought;  
And little deem'd their force to feel,  
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,  
When rattling upon Flodden vale,  
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.  

II.  
Nor less did Marmion's skilful view  
Glance every line, and squadron through;  
And much he marvell'd one small land  
Could marshal forth such various band:  
For men-at-arms were here,  
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,  
Like iron towers for strength and weight,  
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,  
With battle-axe and spear.  
Young knights and squires, a lighter train,  
Practised their chargers on the plain,  
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,  
Each warlike feat to show,  
To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,  
And high curvett, that not in vain  
The sword sway might descend amain  
On foeman's casque below.  
He saw the hardy burghers there  
March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,  
For vizor they wore none,  
Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;  
But burnished were their corslets bright,  
Their brigantines, and gorgets light,  
Like very silver shone.  
Long pikes they had for standing fight,  
Two-handed swords they wore,  
And many wielded mace of weight,  
And bucklers bright they bore.  

III.  
On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd  
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,  
With iron quilted well;  
Each at his back (a slender store)  
His forty days' provision bore,  
As feudal statutes tell.  
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear;  
A crossbow there, a hagbut here,  
A dagger-knife, and brand.  
Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,  
As loth to leave his cottage dear,  
And march to foreign strand;  
Or musing, who would guide his steer,  
To till the fallow land.  
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye  
Did aught of dastard terror lie;  
More dreadful far his ire,  
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,  
In eager mood to battle came,  
Their valour like light straw on flame,  
A fierce but fading fire.  

IV.  
Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,  
He knew the battle's din afar,  
And joy'd to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;
Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please
Like the loud slogan yell.

On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-arm'd pricker plied his trade,—
Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers to guard their townships bleed,
But war's the Borderer's game.

Their gain, their glory, their delight,
To sleep the day, maraud the night,
O'er mountain, moss, and moor;
Joyful to fight they took their way,
Scarcely caring who might win the day,
Their booty was secure.

These, as Lord Marmion's train pass'd by,
Look'd on at first with careless eye,
Nor marvell'd aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow.
But when they saw the Lord array'd
In splendid arms and rich brocade,
Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—
"Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!
Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride?—
O! could we but on Border side,

By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
Beset a prize so fair!
That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
Might chance to lose his glistening hide;
Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
Could make a kirtle rare."

V.

Next, Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face,
A various race of man;
Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,
And wild and garish semblance made,
The chequer'd trews, and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd,
To every varying clan;
Wild through their red or sable hair
Look'd out their eyes with savage stare,
On Marmion as he pass'd;
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And harden'd to the blast;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head:
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;
A broadsword of unwieldy length,
A dagger proved for edge and strength,
A studded targe they wore,
And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but, O!
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
To that which England bore.
The Isles-men carried at their backs
The ancient Danish battle-axe.
They raised a wild and wondering cry,
As with his guide rode Marmion by.
Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.

VI.
Thus through the Scottish camp they pass'd,
And reach'd the City gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamp'd, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountain-er.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show:
At every turn, with dinging clang,
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang;
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
The bar that arms the charger's heel;
Or axe, or falchion, to the side
Of jarring grindstone was applied.
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
Through street, and lane, and market-place,
Bore lance, or casque, or sword;
While burghers, with important face,
Described each new-come lord,
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
His following, and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlook'd the crowded street;
There must the Baron rest,
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
Such was the King's behest.
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
A banquet rich, and costly wines,
To Marmion and his train;
And when the appointed hour succeeds,
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
And following Lindesay as he leads,
The palace-halls they gain.

VII.
Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
That night, with wassell, mirth, and glee:
King James within her princely bower,
Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summon'd to spend the parting hour;
For he had charged, that his array
Should southward march by break of day.
Well loved that splendid monarch aye
The banquet and the song,
By day the tourney, and by night
The merry dance, traced fast and light,
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
The revel loud and long.
This feast outshone his banquets past,
It was his blithest—and his last.
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
Cast on the Court a dancing ray;
Here to the harp did minstrels sing;
There ladies touch'd a softer string;
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
The licensed fool retail'd his jest;
His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courted the ladies of their heart,
Nor courted them in vain;
For often, in the parting hour,
Victorious Love asserts his power
O'er coldness and disdain;
And flinty is her heart, can view
To battle march a lover true—
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.
Through this mix'd crowd of glee and game,
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
While, reverent, all made room.
An easy task it was, I trow,
King James's manly form to know.
Although, his courtesy to show,
He doff'd, to Marmion bending low,
His broider'd cap and plume.
For royal was his garb and mien,
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
Timm'd with the fur of martin wild;
His vest of changeful satin sheen,
The dazzled eye beguiled;
His gorgeous collar hung adown,
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,
The thistle brave, of old renown:
His trusty blade, Toledo right,
Descended from a baldric bright;
White were his buskins, on the heel
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
Was button'd with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.
The Monarch's form was middle size;
For feat of strength, or exercise,
Shaped in proportion fair;
And hazel was his eagle eye,
And auburn of the darkest dye,
His short curl'd beard and hair.
Light was his footstep in the dance,
And firm his stirrup in the lists;
And, oh! he had that merry glance,
That seldom lady’s heart resists.
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
And loved to plead, lament, and sue;—
Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain,
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.
I said he joy’d in banquet bower;
But, ’mid his mirth, ’twas often strange,
How suddenly his cheer would change,
His look o’ercast and lower,
If, in a sudden turn, he felt
The pressure of his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance pain,
In memory of his father slain. 155
Even so ’twas strange how, evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o’er
Forward he rush’d, with double glee,
Into the stream of revelry:
Thus, dim-seen object of affright
Startles the courser in his flight,
And half he halts, half springs aside;
But feels the quickening spur applied,
And, straining on the tighten’d rein,
Scours doubly swift o’er hill and plain.

O’er James’s heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron’s wife held sway: 156
To Scotland’s Court she came,
To be a hostage for her lord,
Who Cessford’s gallant heart had gored,
And with the King to make accord,
Had sent his lovely dame.
Nor to that lady free alone
Did the gay King allegiance own;
For the fair Queen of France 157
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance;
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus, for France’s Queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest;
And thus admitted English fair
His inmost counsels still to share;
And thus, for both, he madly plann’d
The ruin of himself and land!
And yet, the sooth to tell,
Nor England’s fair, nor France’s Queen,
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
From Margaret’s eyes that fell,—
His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow’s bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.
XI.
The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil:—
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,
Dame Heron rises with a smile
Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touch'd and tuned them all,
Ever her bosom's rise and fall Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing.
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring;
And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung:—

XII.
LOCHINVAR.
Lady Heron's Song.
O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland
more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the
young Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the
knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he
threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she
look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a
tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her
mother could bar,—
"Now tread we a measure!" said
young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely
her face,
That never a hall such a galliard
did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her
father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dang-
ing his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd,
"'Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin
with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one
word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the
charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady
he swung,
So light to the saddle before her
he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over
bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that
follow," quoth young Loch-
invar.

There was mounting 'mong
Grämes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Mus-
graves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so daunt-
less in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like
young Lochinvar?

XIII.

The Monarch o'er the siren hung
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer, and more near,
He whisper'd praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied;
And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seem'd to reign
The pride that claims applaudses due,
And of her royal conquest too,
A real or feign'd disdain:
Familiar was the look, and told,
Marmion and she were friends of old.
The King observed their meeting eyes,
With something like displeased surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
Which Marmion's high commission show'd:
"Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,
Our peaceful liege-men robb'd," he said:
"On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton kill'd, his vassals ta'en—
Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain;
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."

**XIV.**

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant view'd:
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions led to die
On Lauder's dreary flat:
Princes and favourites long grew tame,
And trembled at the homely name
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;\(^{158}\)
The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,
Its dungeons, and its towers,
Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,
To fix his princely bowers,

Though now, in age, he had laid down
His armour for the peaceful gown,
And for a staff his brand,
Yet often would flash forth the fire,
That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
And minion's pride withstand; and even that day, at council board,
Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.\(^{159}\)

**XV.**

His giant-form, like ruin'd tower,
Though fall'n its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seem'd o'er the gaudy scene to lower:
His locks and beard in silver grew;
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued:
"Lord Marmion, since these letters say
That in the North you needs must stay,
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.—
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold; 160
Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade, 161
Their blazon o'er his towers display'd;
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
More than to face his country's foes.
And, I bethink me, by St. Stephen,
But e'en this morn to me was given
A prize, the first fruits of the war,
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
A bevy of the maids of Heaven.
Under your guard, these holy maids
Shall safe return to cloister shades,
And, while they at Tantallon stay,
Requiem for Cochran's soul may say."
And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,
Across the Monarch's brow there came
A cloud of ire, remorse and shame.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak;
His proud heart swell'd wellnigh to break:
He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
A burning tear there stole.
His hand the Monarch sudden took,
That sight his kind heart could not brook:
"Now, by the Bruce's soul, Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
For sure as doth his spirit live,
As he said of the Douglas old,
I well may say of you,—
That never king did subject hold,
In speech more free, in war more bold,
More tender and more true:
Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
And, while the King his hand did strain,
The old man's tears fell down like rain.
To seize the moment Marmion tried,
And whisper'd to the King aside:
"Oh! let such tears unwonted plead
For respite short from dubious deed!
A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart:
But woe awaits a country, when
She sees the tears of bearded men.
Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,
When Douglas wets his manly eye!"

XVII.

Displeased was James, that stranger view'd
And tamper'd with his changing mood.
"Laugh those that can, weep those that may,"
Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
"Southward I march by break of day;
And if within Tantallon strong,
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
Perchance our meeting next may fall
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall."—
The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt:
"Much honour'd were my humble home,
If in its halls King James should come;
But Nottingham has archers good,
And Yorkshire men are stern of mood;
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
On Derby Hills the paths are steep;
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;
And many a banner will be torn,
And many a knight to earth be borne,
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent:
Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may!"—
The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
And to his nobles loud did call,—
"Lords, to the dance,—a hall! a hall!"
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
And led Dame Heron gallantly;
And minstrels, at the royal order,
Rung out—"Blue Bonnets o'er the Border."

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
Whose galley, as they sail'd again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
Till James should of their fate decide;
And soon, by his command,
Were gently summon'd to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
Again to English land.
The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
Nor knew which saint she should implore;
For, when she thought of Constance, sore
She fear'd Lord Marmion's mood.
And judge what Clara must have felt!
The sword, that hung in Marmion's belt,
Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
Unwittingly, King James had given,
As guard to Whitby's shades,
The man most dreaded under Heaven
By these defenceless maids:
Yet what petition could avail,
Or who would listen to the tale
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
'Mid bustle of a war begun?
They deem'd it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, join'd;
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warn'd him by a scroll,
She had a secret to reveal,
That much concern'd the Church's weal,
And health of sinner's soul;
And, with deep charge of secrecy,
She named a place to meet,
Within an open balcony,
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
Above the stately street;
To which, as common to each home,
At night they might in secret come.

XX.
At night, in secret, there they came,
The Palmer and the holy Dame.
The moon among the clouds rose high,
And all the city hum was by.
Upon the street, where late before
Did din of war and warriors roar,
You might have heard a pebble fall,
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
An owlet flap his boding wing
On Giles's steeple tall.
The antique buildings, climbing high,
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
Were here wrapt deep in shade;
There on their brows the moon-beam broke,
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
And on the casements play'd.
And other light was none to see,
Save torches gliding far,
Before some chieftain of degree,
Who left the royal revelry
To bowne him for the war.—

A solemn scene the Abbess chose;
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

XXI.
“O, holy Palmer!” she began,—
“For sure he must be sainted man,
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,—
For His dear Church's sake, my tale
Attend, nor deem of light avail,
Though I must speak of worldly love,—
How vain to those who wed above!—
De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd
Clara de Clare, of Gloster’s blood;
(Idle it were of Whitby's dame,
To say of that same blood I came ;)
And once, when jealous rage was high,
Lord Marmion said despiteously,
Wilton was traitor in his heart,
And had made league with Martin Swart,¹⁶²
When he came here on Simnel's part;
And only cowardice did restrain
His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
And down he threw his glove:—
the thing
Was tried, as wont, before the King;
Where frankly did De Wilton own,
That Swart in Gueldres he had known;
And that between them then there went
Some scroll of courteous compliment.
For this he to his castle sent;
But when his messenger return'd,
Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd!
For in his packet there was laid
Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.

His fame, thus blighted, in the field
He strove to clear, by spear and shield;
To clear his fame in vain he strove,
For wondrous are His ways above!
Perchance some form was unobserved;
Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved;\(^{163}\)
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII.

"His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant doom'd to suffer law,
Repentant, own'd in vain,
That, while he had the scrolls in care,
A stranger maiden, passing fair,
Had drench'd him with a beverage rare;
His words no faith could gain.
With Clare alone he credence won,
Who, rather than wed Marmion,
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
To give our house her livings fair And die a vestal vot'ress there.

The impulse from the earth was given,
But bent her to the paths of heaven.
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,
No, not since Saxon Edelfled;
Only one trace of earthly strain,
That for her lover's loss
She cherishes a sorrow vain,
And murmurs at the cross.—It goes
Along the banks of Tame;
Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
In meadows rich the heifer lows,
The falconer and huntsman knows
Its woodlands for the game.
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
And I, her humble vot'ress here,
Should do a deadly sin,
Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
If this false Marmion such a prize
By my consent should win;
Yet hath our boisterous monarch sworn
That Clare shall from our house be torn,
And grievous cause have I to fear,
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII.

"Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd
To evil power, I claim thine aid,
By every step that thou hast trod

To holy shrine and grotto dim,
By every martyr's tortured limb,
By angel, saint, and seraphim,
And by the Church of God!
For mark:—When Wilton was betray'd,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas! that sinful maid,
By whom the deed was done,—
O! shame and horror to be said!—
She was a perjured nun!
No clerk in all the land, like her,
Traced quaint and varying character.
Perchance you may a marvel deem,
That Marmion's paramour
(For such vile thing she was) should scheme
Her lover's nuptial hour;
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
As privy to his honour's stain,
Illimitable power:
For this she secretly retain'd
Each proof that might the plot reveal,
Instructions with his hand and seal;
And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,
Through sinner's perfidy impure,
Her house's glory to secure,
And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV.
"'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
How to my hand these papers fell;
With me they must not stay.
Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!
Who knows what outrage he might do,
While journeying by the way?—
O, blessed Saint, if e'er again
I venturous leave thy calm domain,
To travel or by land or main,
Deep penance may I pay!—
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:
I give this packet to thy care,
For thee to stop they will not dare;
And O! with cautious speed,
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the King:
And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
A weekly mass shall still be thine,
While priests can sing and read.—
What ail'st thou?—Speak!"—
For as he took
The charge, a strong emotion shook
His frame; and, ere reply,
They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
Like distant clarion feebly blown,
That on the breeze did die;
And loud the Abbess shriek'd in fear,
"Saint Withold, save us!—What is here!"
Look at yon City Cross?
See on its battled tower appear
Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,
And blazon'd banners toss!"—
XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,
Rose on a turret octagon;
(But now is razed that monument,
Whence royal edict rang,
And voice of Scotland's law was sent)
In glorious trumpet-clang.
O! be his tomb as lead to lead,
Upon its dull destroyer's head!—
A minstrel's malison is said.)—
Then on its battlements they saw
A vision, passing Nature's law,
Strange, wild, and dimly seen;
Figures that seem'd to rise and die.
Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
While nought confirm'd could ear or eye
Discern of sound or mien.
Yet darkly did it seem, as there
Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,
With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
A summons to proclaim;
But indistinct the pageant proud,
As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
When flings the moon upon her shroud
A wavering tinge of flame;
It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
From midmost of the spectre crowd,
This awful summons came:—

XXVI.

"Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,
Whose names I now shall call,
Scottish, or foreigner, give ear;
Subjects of him who sent me here,
At his tribunal to appear,
I summon one and all:
I cite you by each deadly sin,
That e'er hath soil'd your hearts within:
I cite you by each brutal lust,
That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—
By wrath, by pride, by fear,
By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave, and dying groan!
When forty days are pass'd and gone,
I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
To answer and appear."
Then thunder'd forth a roll of names:
The first was thine, unhappy James!
Then all thy nobles came;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
Why should I tell their separate style;
Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name;
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scrivellbaye;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did say.—
But then another spoke:
"Thy fatal summons I deny,
And thine infernal Lord defy.
Appealing me to Him on High,
Who burst the sinner's yoke."
At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream,
The summoner was gone.
Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell:
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.
She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,
What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move,
Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love,
To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair—
Where is the Palmer now? and where
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?

Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair
They journey in thy charge:
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
The Palmer still was with the band;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command,
That none should roam at large.

But in that Palmer's alter'd mien
A wondrous change might now be seen,
Freely he spoke of war,
Of marvels wrought by single hand,
When lifted for a native land;
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frocke,
Would first his mettle bold provoke,
Then soothe or quell his pride.
Old Hubert said, that never one
He saw, except Lord Marmion,
A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came,
By Eustace govern'd fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
With all her nuns, and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
Ever he fear'd to aggravate
Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;
And safer 'twas, he thought,
To wait till, from the nuns removed,
The influence of kinsmen loved,
And suit by Henry's self approved,
Her slow consent had wrought.
His was no flickering flame, that dies
Unless when fann'd by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He long'd to stretch his wide command
O'er luckless Clara's ample land:
Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
Although the pang of humbled pride
The place of jealousy supplied,
Yet conquest by that meanness won
He almost loath'd to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause,
Which made him burst through honour's laws.
If e'er he lov'd, 'twas her alone.
Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.
And now, when close at hand they saw
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while,
Before a venerable pile,
Whose turrets view'd, afar,
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
The ocean's peace or war.
At tolling of a bell, forth came
The convent's venerable Dame,
And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honour'd guest,
Till Douglas should a bark prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thank'd the Scottish Prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that pass'd between.

O'erjoy'd the nuns their palfreys leave;
But when fair Clara did intend,
Like them, from horseback to descend,
Fitz-Eustace said—"I grieve, Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
Such gentle company to part;—
Think not discourtesy,
But lords' commands must be obey'd;
And Marmion and the Douglas said,
That you must wend with me.
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,
Commanding, that, beneath his care,
Without delay, you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare."

XXX.
The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd;
But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,
Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,—
She deem'd she heard her death-doom read.
"Cheer thee, my child!" the Abbess said,"They dare not tear thee from my hand,
To ride alone with armed band."—
"Nay, holy mother, nay,"
Fitz-Eustace said, "the lovely Clare
Will be in Lady Angus' care,
In Scotland while we stay;
And, when we move, an easy ride
Will bring us to the English side,
Female attendance to provide
Befitting Gloster's heir:
Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
By slightest look, or act, or word,
To harass Lady Clare.
Her faithful guardian he will be,
Nor sue for slightest courtesy
That e'en to stranger falls,
Till he shall place her, safe and free,
Within her kinsman's halls."
He spoke, and blush'd with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face.
And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threaten'd, grieved;
To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd,
Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,
And call'd the Prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistertian shook:
"The Douglas, and the King," she said,
"In their commands will be obey'd;
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
The maiden in Tantallon hall."

XXXI.
The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
Assumed her wonted state again,—
For much of state she had,—
Composed her veil, and raised her head,
And—"Bid," in solemn voice she said,
"Thy master, bold and bad,
The records of his house turn o'er,
And, when he shall there written see,
That one of his own ancestry
Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,"
Bid him his fate explore!
Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
His charger hurl'd him to the dust,
And, by a base plebeian thrust,
He died his band before.
God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;
He is a Chief of high degree,
And I a poor recluse:
Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
Even such weak minister as me
May the oppressor bruise:
For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
The mighty in his sin,
And Jael thus, and Deborah—"
Here hasty Blount broke in:
"Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band:
St. Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand
All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
To hear the Lady preach?
By this good light! if thus we stay,
Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,
Will sharper sermon teach.
Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;
The Dame must patience take perforce."—
"Submit we then to force," said Clare,
"But let this barbarous lord despair
His purposed aim to win;
Let him take living, land, and life;
But to be Marmion's wedded wife
In me were deadly sin:
And if it be the King's decree,
That I must find no sanctuary,
In that inviolable dome,
Where even a homicide might come,
And safely rest his head,
Though at its open portals stood,
Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
The kinsmen of the dead;
Yet one asylum is my own
Against the dreaded hour;
A low, a silent, and a lone,
Where kings have little power.
One victim is before me there.—
Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
Remember your unhappy Clare!"
Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
Kind blessings many a one:
Weeping and wailing loud arose,
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
Of every simple nun.
His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
Then took the squire her rein,
And gently led away her steed,
And, by each courteous word and deed,
To cheer her strove in vain.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they pass'd,
And, sudden, close before them show'd
His towers, Tantallon vast;
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And held impregnable in war.
On a projecting rock they rose,
And round three sides the ocean flows,
The fourth did battling walls enclose,
And double mound and fosse.
By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
Through studded gates, an entrance long,
To the main court they cross.
It was a wide and stately square:
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
And towers of various form,
Which on the court projected far,
And broke its lines quadrangular.
Here was square keep, there turret high,
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
Whence oft the Warder could descry
The gathering ocean-storm.

Here did they rest.—The princely care
Of Douglas, why should I declare,
Or say they met reception fair?
Or why the tidings say,
Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
By hurrying posts or fleeter fame,
With ever varying day?
And, first they heard King James had won
Etall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,
That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
At that sore marvell'd Marmion;—
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland:
But whisper'd news there came,
That, while his host inactive lay,
And melted by degrees away,
King James was dallying off the day
With Heron's wily dame.—
Such acts to chronicles I yield;
Go seek them there, and see:
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
And not a history.—
At length they heard the Scottish host
On that high ridge had made their post,
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gather'd in the Southern land,
And march'd into Northumberland,
And camp at Wooler ta'en.
Marmion, like charger in the stall,
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
Began to chafe, and swear:—
"A sorry thing to hide my head
In castle, like a fearful maid,
When such a field is near!
Needs must I see this battle-day:
Death to my fame if such a fray
Were fought, and Marmion away!

The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
Hath 'bated of his courtesy:
No longer in his halls I'll stay."
Then bade his band they should array
For march against the dawning day.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

To
RICHARD HEBER, ESQ.

Mertoun-House, Christmas.

Heap on more wood!—the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deem'd the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Io! more deep the mead did drain;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes deck'd the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dress'd steer;
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnaw'd rib, and marrow-bone:
Or listen'd all, in grim delight,
While Scalds yell'd out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildly-loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung:
That only night in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.

The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dress'd with holy green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then open'd wide the Baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doff'd his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The Lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."

All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubb'd till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell;
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trows.
There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roar'd with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;\(^\text{169}\)
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But, O! what maskers, richly dight,
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger, in our northern clime,
Some remnants of the good old time;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetch'd claim
To Southron ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus, my Christmas still I hold
Where my great-grand sire came of old,
With amber beard, and flaxen hair,\(^\text{170}\)
And reverend apostolic air—

The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
Small thought was his, in after time
E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast,
That he was loyal to his cost;
The banish'd race of kings revered,
And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
Is with fair liberty combined;
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame that rules the land.
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer,
Speed on their wings the passing year.
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
As loath to leave the sweet domain,
And holds his mirror to her face,
And clips her with a close embrace:—
Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
And as reluctant turn us home.

How just that, at this time of glee,
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!
For many a merry hour we've known,
And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.
Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
And leave these classic tomes in peace!
Of Roman and of Grecian lore,
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
"Were pretty fellows in their day;"
But time and tide o'er all prevail—
On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
Of wonder and of war—"Profane!
What! leave the lofty Latian strain,
Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
To hear the clash of rusty arms:
In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
To jostle conjurer and ghost,
Goblin and witch!"—Nay, Heber dear,
Before you touch my charter, hear:
Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,
My cause with many-languaged lore,
This may I say:—in realms of death
Ulysses meets Alcides' wraith;
Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
The ghost of murder'd Polydore;
For omens, we in Livy cross,
At every turn, locutius Bos.
As grave and duly speaks that ox,
As if he told the price of stocks;
Or held, in Rome republican,
The place of common-councilman.
All nations have their omens drear,
Their legends wild of woe and fear.
To Cambria look—the peasant see,
Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
And shun "the spirit's Blasted Tree." 171
The Highlander, whose red claymore
The battle turn'd on Maida's shore,
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If ask'd to tell a fairy tale: 172
He fears the vengeful Elfin King;
Who leaves that day his grassy ring:
Invisible to human ken,
He walks among the sons of men.

Did'st e'er, dear Heber, pass along
Beneath the towers of Franchémont, 173
Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
A mighty treasure buried lay,
Amass'd through rapine and through wrong,
By the last Lord of Franchémont.
The iron chest is bolted hard,
A huntsman sits, its constant guard;
Around his neck his horn is hung,
His hanger in his belt is slung;
Before his feet his blood-hounds lie;
An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
As true a huntsman doth he look,
As bugle e’er in brake did sound,
Or ever holoo’d to a hound.
To chase the fiend, and win the prize,
In that same dungeon ever tries
An aged necromantic priest;
It is an hundred years at least,
Since ’twixt them first the strife begun,
And neither yet has lost nor won.
And oft the Conjurer’s words will make
The stubborn Demon groan and quake;
And oft the bands of iron break,
Or bursts one lock, that still amain,
Fast as ’tis open’d, shuts again.
That magic strife within the tomb
May last until the day of doom,
Unless the adept shall learn to tell
The very word that clench’d the spell,
When Franch’mont lock’d the treasure cell.
An hundred years are pass’d and gone,
And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
Excuse for old Pitscottie say;
Whose gossip history has given
My song the messenger from Heaven,
That warn’d, in Lithgow, Scotland’s King,
Nor less the infernal summoning;
May pass the Monk of Durham’s tale,
Whose demon fought in Gothic mail;
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
Who told of Gifford’s Goblin-Cave.

But why such instances to you,
Who, in an instant, can renew
Your treasured hoards of various lore,
And furnish twenty thousand more?
Hoards, not like theirs whose volumes rest
Like treasures in the Franch’mont chest,
While gripple owners still refuse
To others what they cannot use;
Give them the priest’s whole century,
They shall not spell you letters three;
Their pleasure in the books the same
The magpie takes in pilfer’d gem.
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
Delight, amusement, science, art,
To every ear and eye impart;
Yet who of all who thus employ them,
Can like the owner’s self enjoy them?—
But, hark! I hear the distant drum!
The day of Flodden Field is come.—
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
And store of literary wealth.

CANTO SIXTH.
The Battle.
I.

While great events were on the gale,
And each hour brought a varying tale,
And the demeanour, changed and cold,
Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold.
And, like the impatient steed of war,
He snuff'd the battle from afar;
And hopes were none, that back again
Herald should come from Terouenne,
Where England's King in leaguer lay,
Before decisive battle-day;
Whilst these things were, the mournful Clare
Did in the Dame's devotions share:
For the good Countess ceaseless pray'd
To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
And, with short interval, did pass
From prayer to book, from book to mass,
And all in high Baronial pride,—
A life both dull and dignified;—
Yet as Lord Marmion nothing press'd
Upon her intervals of rest,
Dejected Clara well could bear
The formal state, the lengthen'd prayer,
Though dearest to her wounded heart
The hours that she might spend apart.

II.
I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
Many a rude tower and rampart there
Repell'd the insult of the air,
Which, when the tempest vex'd the sky,
Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
Above the rest, a turret square
Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
The Bloody Heart was in the Field,
And in the chief three mullets stood,
The cognizance of Douglas blood.
The turret held a narrow stair,
Which, mounted, gave you access where
A parapet's embattled row
Did seaward round the castle go.
Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
Sometimes in platform broad extending,
Its varying circle did combine
Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign;
Above the booming ocean leant
The far-projecting battlement;
The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
Upon the precipice below.
Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
Gate-works, and walls, were strongly mann'd;
No need upon the sea-girt side;
The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
Approach of human step denied;
And thus these lines and ramparts rude,
Were left in deepest solitude.
III.

And, for they were so lonely,
Clare
Would to these battlements repair,
And muse upon her sorrows there,
And list the sea-bird's cry;
Or slow, like noontide ghost, would glide
Along the dark-grey bulwarks' side,
And ever on the heaving tide
Look down with weary eye.
Oft did the cliff and swelling main,
Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
A home she ne'er might see again;
For she had laid adown,
So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
And frontlet of the cloister pale,
And Benedictine gown:
It were unseemly sight, he said,
A novice out of convent shade.—
Now her bright locks, with sunny glow,
Again adorn'd her brow of snow;
Her mantle rich, whose borders round,
A deep and fretted broidery bound,
In golden foldings sought the ground;
Of holy ornament, alone
Remain'd a cross with ruby stone;
And often did she look
On that which in her hand she bore,
With velvet bound, and broider'd o'er,
Her breviary book.

In such a place, so lone, so grim,
At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
It fearful would have been
To meet a form so richly dress'd,
With book in hand, and cross on breast,
And such a woeful mien.
Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
To practise on the gull and crow,
Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
And did by Mary swear,—
Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
Or, in Romance, some spell-bound Queen;
For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
And, sighing, thought—"The Abbess, there,
Perchance, does to her home repair;
Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
Walks hand in hand with Charity;
Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow,
That the enraptured sisters see
High vision and deep mystery;
The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
O! wherefore, to my duller eye,
Did still the Saint her form deny!
Was it, that, scar'd by sinful scorn,
My heart could neither melt nor burn?
Or lie my warm affections low,
With him, that taught them first to glow?
Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
To pay thy kindness grateful due,
And well could brook the mild command,
That ruled thy simple maiden band.
How different now! condemn'd to bide
My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.
But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
That constant mind, and hate of wrong,
Descended to a feeble girl,
From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl:
Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

Thus Wilton!—Oh! not corslet's ward,
Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
On yon disastrous day!"—
She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
Wilton himself before her stood!
It might have seem'd his passing ghost,
For every youthful grace was lost;
And joy unwonted, and surprise,
Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
Expect not, noble dames and lords,
That I can tell such scene in words:
What skilful limner e'er would choose
To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
Unless to mortal it were given
To dip his brush in dyes of heaven?
Far less can my weak line declare
Each changing passion's shade;
Brightening to rapture from despair,
Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
And joy, with her angelic air,
And hope, that paints the future fair,
Their varying hues display'd:
Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
Till all, fatigued, the conflict yield,
And mighty Love retains the field.
"Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song."
Shortly I tell what then he said,
By many a tender word delay'd,
And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
And question kind, and fond reply:

VI.
DE WILTON'S HISTORY.

"Forget we that disastrous day,
When senseless in the lists I lay.
Thence dragg'd,—but how I cannot know,
For sense and recollection fled,—
I found me on a pallet low,
Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,
How thou didst blush, when the old man,
When first our infant love began,
Said we would make a matchless pair?—
Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
From the degraded traitor's bed,—
He only held my burning head,
And tended me for many a day,
While wounds and fever held their sway.
But far more needful was his care,
When sense return'd to wake despair;
For I did tear the closing wound,
And dash me frantic on the ground,
If e'er I heard the name of Clare.

At length, to calmer reason brought,
Much by his kind attendance wrought,
With him I left my native strand,
And, in a palmer's weeds array'd,
My hated name and form to shade,
I journey'd many a land;
No more a lord of rank and birth,
But mingled with the dregs of earth.
Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
When I would sit, and deeply brood
On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.
My friend at length fell sick, and said,
God would remove him soon:
And, while upon his dying bed,
He begg'd of me a boon—
If e'er my deadliest enemy
Beneath my brand should conquer'd lie,
Even then my mercy should awake,
And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

"Still restless as a second Cain,
To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
Full well the paths I knew.
Fame of my fate made various sound,
That death in pilgrimage I found,
That I had perish'd of my wound,—
None cared which tale was true:
And living eye could never guess
De Wilton in his Palmer's dress;
For now that sable slough is shed,
And trimm'd my shaggy beard and head,
I scarcely know me in the glass.

sc.
A chance most wondrous did provide,
That I should be that Baron's guide—
I will not name his name!—
Vengeance to God alone belongs;
But, when I think on all my wrongs,
My blood is liquid flame!
And ne'er the time shall I forget,
When, in a Scottish hostel set,
Dark looks we did exchange:
What were his thoughts I cannot tell;
But in my bosom muster'd Hell
Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

"A word of vulgar augury,
That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
Brought on a village tale;
Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
And sent him armed forth by night.
I borrow'd steed and mail,
And weapons, from his sleeping band;
And, passing from a postern door,
We met, and 'counter'd hand to hand,—
He fell on Gifford moor.
For the death-stroke my brand I drew,
(O then my helmed head he knew,
The Palmer's cowl was gone,)
Then had three inches of my blade
The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
My hand the thought of Austin staid;
I left him there alone.—

O good old man! even from the grave
Thy spirit could thy master save:
If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
Given to my hand this packet dear,
Of power to clear my injured fame,
And vindicate De Wilton's name,—
Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
Of the strange pageantry of Hell,
That broke our secret speech—
It rose from the infernal shade,
Or featly was some juggle play'd,
A tale of peace to teach.
Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
When my name came among the rest.

IX.

"Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
To Douglas late my tale I told,
To whom my house was known of old.
Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
This eve anew shall dub me knight.
These were the arms that once did turn
The tide of fight on Otterburne,
And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
When the Dead Douglas won the field.
These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
Ere morn shall every breach repair;
For nought, he said, was in his halls,
But ancient armour on the walls,
And aged chargers in the stalls,
And women, priests, and grey-

hair'd men;
The rest were all in Twisel glen.
And now I watch my armour here,
By law of arms, till midnight's near;
Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

X.

"There soon again we meet, my Clare!
This Baron means to guide thee there:
Douglas reveres his King's com-

mand,
Else would he take thee from his band.
And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.
Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
Once more"—"O Wilton! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,
Trust fate of arms once more?
And is there not an humble glen,
Where we, content and poor,
Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
Thy task on dale and moor?—
That reddening brow!—too well I know,
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,
While falsehood stains thy name:

Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame!"

XI.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moon-beam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embrasure,
Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall.
Much was there need; though seam'd with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,
Though two grey priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descry
The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Chequering the silver moon-shine bright,
A bishop by the altar stood,
A noble lord of Douglas blood,
With mitre sheen, and rocquet white.
Yet show’d his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy;
More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
He gave rude Scotland Virgil’s page,
Than that beneath his rule he held
The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
Beside him ancient Angus stood,
Doff’d his furr’d gown, and sable hood:
O’er his huge form and visage pale,
He wore a cap and shirt of mail;
And lean’d his large and wrinkled hand
Upon the huge and sweeping brand
Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
His foeman’s limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray. 175

He seem’d as, from the tombs around
Rising at judgment-day,
Some giant Douglas may be found
In all his old array;
So pale his face, so huge his limb,
So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
And Clare the spurs bound on his heels;
And think what next he must have felt,
At buckling of the falchion belt!
And judge how Clara changed her hue,
While fastening to her lover’s side
A friend, which, though in danger tried,
He once had found untrue!

Then Douglas struck him with his blade:
“Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid,
I dub thee knight.
Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton’s heir!
For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
See that thou fight.” —
And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
Said—“Wilton! grieve not for thy woes,
Disgrace, and trouble;
For He, who honour best bestows,
May give thee double.” —
De Wilton sobb’d, for sob he must—
“Where’er I meet a Douglas, trust
That Douglas is my brother!” —
“Nay, nay,” old Angus said, “not so;
To Surrey’s camp thou now must go,
Thy wrongs no longer smother.
I have two sons in yonder field;
And, if thou meet’st them under shield,
Upon them bravely—do thy worst;
And foul fall him that blenches first!”

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey’s camp to ride;
He had safe conduct for his band,
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide:
The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whisper'd in an under tone,
"Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."—
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu:—
"Though something I might 'plain," he said,
"Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your King's behest,
While in Tantallon's towers I staid;
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke:—
"My manors, halls, and bowers,
Shall still be open, at my Sovereign's will,
To each one whom he lists, howe'er unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my King's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone—
The hand of Douglas is his own;
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

XIV.

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
And shook his very frame for ire,
And—"This to me!" he said,—
"An 'twere not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!

And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
He, who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate:
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
(Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,)
I tell thee, thou'rt defied!
And if thou said'st I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!"—
On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—"And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms—what, Warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall."—176
Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,
And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung,
The ponderous grate behind him rung:
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars, descending, razed his plume.
XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Nor lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake’s level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reach’d his band,
He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.

"Horse! horse!" the Douglas cried, "and chase!"
But soon he rein’d his fury’s pace:
“A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed! 177
At first in heart it liked me ill,
When the King praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne’er could pen a line:
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne’er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
’Tis pity of him too,” he cried:
“Bold can he speak, and fairly ride,
I warrant him a warrior tried.”
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion’s journey wore;
Yet, ere his passion’s gust was o’er,
They cross’d the heights of Stan-rig-moor.
His troop more closely there he scann’d,
And miss’d the Palmer from the band.—
“Palmer or not,” young Blount did say,
“He part’d at the peep of day;
Good sooth, it was in strange array.”—
“In what array?” said Marmion, quick.
“My Lord, I ill can spell the trick;
But all night long, with clink and bang;
Close to my couch did hammers clang;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loop-hole while I peep;
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
Wrapp’d in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
By Archibald won in bloody work,
Against the Saracen and Turk:
Last night it hung not in the hall;
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the Earl’s best steed;
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
The Earl did much the Master pray
To use him on the battle-day;
But he preferr'd "— "Nay, Henry, cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray,
What did Blount see at break of day?" —

XVII.
"In brief, my lord, we both descried
(For then I stood by Henry's side)
The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
Upon the Earl's own favourite steed:
All sheathed he was in armour bright,
And much resembled that same knight,
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight:
Lord Angus wish'd him speed." —
The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke;—
"Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!"
He mutter'd; "'Twas nor fay nor ghost
I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mould.—
O dotage blind and gross!
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross.—

How stand we now? — he told his tale
To Douglas; and with some avail;
'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged brow.—
Will Surrey dare to entertain,
'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain?
Small risk of that, I trow.
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun;
Must separate Constance from the Nun—
O, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practise to deceive!
A Palmer too! — no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye:
I might have known there was but one,
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

XVIII.
Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the Tweed,
Where Lennel's convent closed their march;
(There now is left but one frail arch,
Yet mourn thou not its cells;
Our time a fair exchange has made;
Hard by, in hospitable shade,
A reverend pilgrim dwells,
That e'er wore sandal, flock, or hood.)
Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the Baron climb’d the tower, 
To view afar the Scottish power, 
Encamp’d on Flodden edge: 
The white pavilions made a show, 
Like remnants of the winter snow, 
Along the dusky ridge. 
Long Marmion look’d:—at length his eye 
Unusual movement might descry 
Amid the shifting lines: 
The Scottish host drawn out appears, 
For, flashing on the hedge of spears 
The eastern sunbeam shines. 
Their front now deepening, now extending; 
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending, 
Now drawing back, and now descending; 
The skilful Marmion well could know, 
They watch’d the motions of some foe, 
Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge 
The Scots beheld the English host 
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post, 
And heedful watch’d them as they cross’d 
The Till by Twisel Bridge. 
High sight it is, and haughty, while 
They dive into the deep defile; 
Beneath the cavern’d cliff they fall, 
Beneath the castle’s airy wall.

By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree, 
Troop after troop are disappearing; 
Troop after troop their banners rearing; 
Upon the eastern bank you see. 
Still pouring down the rocky den, 
Where flows the sullen Till, 
And rising from the dim-wood glen, 
Standards on standards, men on men, 
In slow succession still, 
And, sweeping o’er the Gothic arch, 
And pressing on, in ceaseless march, 
To gain the opposing hill.

That morn, to many a trumpet clang, 
Tisel! thy rock’s deep echo rang; 
And many a chief of birth and rank, 
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank. 
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see 
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly, 
Had then from many an axe its doom, 
To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now, 
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow, 
Since England gains the pass the while, 
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead?
What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand?
—O, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
O for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry—"Saint Andrew and our right!"
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!—
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
"Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!—
Yet more! yet more!—how far array'd
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by!
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly."—
"Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount, "thou'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest."—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
"This instant be our band array'd;
The river must be quickly cross'd,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James,—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins."

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu;
Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And mutter'd as the flood they view,
"The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw:
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me."
Then on that dangerous ford,
and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
He ventured desperately:
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom, before him ride;
Headmost of all he stems the tide
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven per force,
The southern bank they gain;
Behind them straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train:
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharmed, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men array'd,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a Cross of Stone,
That, on a hillock standing lone,
Did all the field command.

XXIII.
Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray;¹⁸⁰
Their marshall'd lines stretch'd east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.—
The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion staid:
"Here, by this Cross," he gently said,
"You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
O! think of Marmion in thy prayer!—
Thou wilt not?—well,—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten pick'd archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again."
He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire; but spurr'd amain,
And, dashing through the battle plain,
His way to Surrey took.
XXIV.

"—The good Lord Marmion, by my life!

Welcome to danger's hour!—Short greeting serves in time of strife:—

Thus have I ranged my power: Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vaward post,
With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight; 13
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
And succour those that need it most.

Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee the charge will blithely share;
There fight thine own retainers too,
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—

"Thanks, noble Surrey!" Marmion said,
Nor farther greeting there he paid;
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill!
On which, (for far the day was spent,) The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
"Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
But see! look up—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."

And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—
Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance’s thrust:
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;
O life and death were in the shout.
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.

Long look’d the anxious squires;
Could in the darkness nought descry.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion’s falcon fly:
And stainless Tunstall’s banner white,
And Edmund Howard’s lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight:
Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly, and with Home.

XXVI.
At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then mark’d they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flash’d amain;
Fell England’s arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stoop’d, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.

XXVII.
Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;
Though there the western moun-taineer
Rush’d with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broad-sword plied.
'Twas vain:—But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheer’d Scotland’s fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard’s lion fell;
Yet still Lord Marmion’s falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It waver'd 'mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
"By Heaven, and all its saints! I swear
I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
It sunk among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too:—yet said
As loath to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.
Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:
Perchance her reason stoops, or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scatter'd van of England wheels;—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roar'd, "Is Wilton there?"—
They fly, or, madden'd by despair,
Fight but to die,—"Is Wilton there?"
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strain'd the broken brand;
His arms were smear'd with blood and sand:
Dragg'd from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion!...
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said—"By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,  
And see the deep cut on his head!  
Good-night to Marmion."—  
"Unnurtured Blount! thy brawl-  
ing cease:  
He opes his eyes," said Eustace;  
"peace!"

XXIX.
When, doff’d his casque, he felt free air,  
Around ’gan Marmion wildly stare:—  
"Where’s Harry Blount? Fitz-  
Eustace where?  
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!  
Redeem my pennon,—charge again!  
Cry—’Marmion to the rescue!’  
—Vain!  
Last of my race, on battle-plain  
That shout shall ne’er be heard again!—  
Yet my last thought is England’s  
—fly,  
To Dacre bear my signet-ring:  
Tell him his squadrons up to bring:—  
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;  
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,  
His life-blood stains the spotless shield:  
Edmund is down:—my life is reft;  
The Admiral alone is left.  
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—  
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,  
Full upon Scotland’s central host,  
Or victory and England’s lost.—

Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!  
Leave Marmion here alone—to die."  
They parted, and alone he lay;  
Clare drew her from the sight away,  
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,  
And half he murmur’d,—"Is there none,  
Of all my halls have nurst,  
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring  
Of blessed water from the spring,  
To slake my dying thirst!"

XXX.
O, Woman! in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade  
By the light quivering aspen made;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou!—  
Scarce were the piteous accents said,  
When, with the Baron’s casque, the maid  
To the nigh streamlet ran:  
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;  
The plaintive voice alone she hears,  
Sees but the dying man.  
She stoop’d her by the runnel’s side,  
But in abhorrence backward drew;  
For, oozing from the mountain’s side,  
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide  
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink, weary pilgrim, drink and pray.
For the kind soul of Sybil Grey.
Who built this cross and well.
She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A monk supporting Marmion's head:
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
"Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
"Or injured Constance, bathes my head?"
Then, as remembrance rose,—
"Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"—
"Alas!" she said, "the while,—
O, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She—died at Holy Isle."—

Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
"Then it was truth,"—he said—
"I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to stanch the gushing wound:
The Monk, with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear;
For that she ever sung,
"In the lost battle, borne down by the flying, 
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!
So the notes rung;—
"Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—
O, look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this."—
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
And—STANLEY! was the cry;
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye:
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted "Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!"
Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII.
By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their King,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vanguard wing,
Where Huntly, and where Home?—

O, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died!
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
Our Caledonian pride!
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
"O, Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair,
Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.
But as they left the dark'ning heath,
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their King.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spear-men still made good
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Link'd in the cerried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Dissolves in silent blow.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless bash,
While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to town and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong:
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
And broken was her shield!

XXXV.
Day dawns upon the mountain's side:—
There, Scotland! lay thy bravest pride,
Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one:
The sad survivors all are gone.—
View not that corpse mistrustfully,
Defaced and mangled though it be;
Nor to yon Border castle high,
Look northward with upbraiding eye;
Nor cherish hope in vain,
That, journeying far on foreign strand,
The Royal Pilgrim to his land
May yet return again.
He saw the wreck his rashness wrought;
Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain:
And well in death his trusty brand,
Firm clencht within his manly hand,
Beseem'd the monarch slain.
XXXVI.
Short is my tale:—Fitz-Eustace' care,
A pierced and mangled body bare
To moated Lichfield's lofty pile;
And there, beneath the southern aisle,
A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
Did long Lord Marmion's image bear,
(Now vainly for its sight you look;
'Twas levell'd when fanatic Brook
The fair cathedral storm'd and took;
But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint Chad,
A guerdon meet the spoiler had!) There erst was martial Marmion found,
His feet upon a couchant hound,
His hands to heaven upraised:
And all around, on scutcheon rich,
And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
His arms and feats were blazed.
And yet, though all was caryed so fair,
And priest for Marmion breathed the prayer,
The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
From Ettrick woods a peasant swain
Follow'd his lord to Flodden plain,—
One of those flowers, whom plaintive lay
In Scotland mourns as "wede away:"
Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
And dragg'd him to its foot, and died,
Close by the noble Marmion's side.
The spoilers stripp'd and gash'd the slain,
And thus their corpses were mis-ta'en;
And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
The lowly woodsman took the room.
XXXVII.
Less easy task it were, to show
Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low.
They dug his grave e'en where he lay,
But every mark is gone;
Time's wasting hand has done away
The simple Cross of Sybil Grey,
And broke her font of stone:
But yet from out the little hill
Oozes the slender springlet still.
Oft halts the stranger there.
For thence may best his curious eye
The memorable field descry;
And shepherd boys repair
To seek the water-flag and rush,
And rest them by the hazel bush,
And plait their garlands fair;
Nor dream they sit upon the grave,
That holds the bones of Marmion brave.—
When thou shalt find the little hill,
With thy heart commune, and be still.
If ever, in temptation strong,
Thou left'st the right path for the wrong;
If every devious step, thus trod,
Still led thee farther from the road;
Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom
On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
But say, "He died a gallant knight,
With sword in hand, for England's right."

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
Who cannot image to himself,
That all through Flodden's dismal night,
Wilton was foremost in the fight;
That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hew'd,
Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood:
Unnamed by Hollinshead or Hall,
He was the living soul of all:
That, after fight, his faith made plain,
He won his rank and lands again;
And charged his old paternal shield
With bearings won on Flodden Field.
Nor sing I to that simple maid,
To whom it must in terms be said,
That King and kinsmen did agree,
To bless fair Clara's constancy;
Who cannot, unless I relate,
Paint to her mind the bridal's state;
That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
More, Sands, and Denny, pass'd the joke:

That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
And Catherine's hand the stocking threw;
And afterwards, for many a day,
That it was held enough to say,
In blessing to a wedded pair,
"Love they like Wilton and like Clare!"

L'Envoy.

TO THE READER.

Why then a final note prolong,
Or lengthen out a closing song,
Unless to bid the gentle speed,
Who long have listed to my rede?
To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
And patriotic heart—as Pitt!
A garland for the hero's crest,
And twined by her he loves the best;
To every lovely lady bright,
What can I wish but faithful knight?
To every faithful lover too,
What can I wish but lady true?
And knowledge to the studious sage;
And pillow to the head of age.
To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.
A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

TO THE
MOST NOBLE
JOHN JAMES MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,
&c. &c. &c.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

ARGUMENT.

The Scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the Vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

CANTO FIRST.
The Chase.

Harp of the North! that moulder-
ing long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades
Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy
numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee
clinging,
Muffling with verdant ringlet
every string,—
O minstrel Harp, still must
thine accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains
murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds
their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach
a maid to weep?
Not thus, in ancient days of
Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the
festal crowd,

When lay of hopeless love, or
glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued
the proud.
At each according pause, was
heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime
and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs
attention bow'd;
For still the burden of thy
minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless
deed, and Beauty's match-
less eye.

O wake once more! how rude
soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic
maze to stray;
O wake once more! though scarce
my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine
earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon
to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touch’d in vain.
Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I.

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan’s rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney’s hazel shade;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich’s head,
The deep-mouth’d bloodhound’s heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
"To arms! the foemen storm the wall;"
The antler’d monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss’d his beam’d frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment sniff’d the tainted gale,
A moment listen’d to the cry,
That thicken’d as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appear’d,
With one brave bound the copse he clear’d,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yell’d on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awaken’d mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bay’d deep and strong,
Clatter’d a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices join’d the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich’s echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cower’d the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint and more faint, its failing din
Return’d from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.
IV.

Less loud the sounds of silvan war
Disturb’d the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where ’tis told,
A giant made his den of old;\(^{184}\)
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stay’d perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now,
Upon the mountain’s southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wander’d o’er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And ponder’d refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood grey,
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.

Fresh vigour with the hope return’d,
With flying foot the heath he spurn’d,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

’Twere long to tell what steeds gave o’er,
As swept the hunt through Cambus-more;
What reins were tighten’d in despair,
When rose Benledi’s ridge in air;
Who flagg’d upon Bochastle’s heath,
Who shunn’d to stem the flooded Teith,—
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o’er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach’d the lake of Venachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unabated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Emboss’d with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strain’d full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toil'd the bloodhounds stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.
The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barr'd the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whinyard drew;—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
And turn'd him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild-flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

IX.
Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanish'd game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.
"I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey!"
Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limp’d, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master’s side they press’d,
With drooping tail and humbled crest;
But still the dingle’s hollow throat
Prolong’d the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answer’d with their scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seem’d an answering blast;
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it show’d.

The western waves of ebbing day
Roll’d o’er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter’d pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar’s plain.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form’d turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem’d fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck’d,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lack’d they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver’d brows display’d,
Far o’er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind’s summer sighs.

Boon nature scatter’d, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain’s child.
Here eglantine embalm’d the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peak's glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.
Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim,
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV.
And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Craggs, knolls and mounds, confus'dly hurl'd,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.
And, "What a scene were here,"
he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister grey;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn!
How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still and mute!
And, when the midnight moon should lave
Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matins' distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding tone
Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewilder'd stranger call
To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI.

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now,—beshrew yon nimble deer,
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place;
A summer night, in greenwood spent,
Were but to-morrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss'd than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here,
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.
I am alone;—my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried."

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow-twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touch'd this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal'd amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head up-raises, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem'd to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had train'd her pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue,—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX.

A Chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,  
Gives back the shaggy banks  
more true,  
Than every free-born glance confess'd  
The guileless movements of her breast;  
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,  
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,  
Or filial love was glowing there,  
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,  
Or tale of injury call'd forth  
The indignant spirit of the North.  
One only passion unreveal'd,  
With maiden pride the maid conceal'd,  
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—  
O need I tell that passion's name!

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,  
Now on the gale her voice was borne:—  
"Father!" she cried; the rocks around  
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.  
A while she paused, no answer came,—  
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the name  
Less resolutely utter'd fell,  
The echoes could not catch the swell.  
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,  
Advancing from the hazel shade.  
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar,  
Push'd her light shallop from the shore,  
And when a space was gain'd between,  
Closer she drew her bosom's screen;  
(So forth the startled swan would swing,  
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)  
Then safe, though flutter'd and amazed,  
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.  
Not his the form, nor his the eye,  
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age  
Had slightly press'd its signet sage  
Yet had not quench'd the open truth  
And fiery vehemence of youth;  
Forward and frolic glee was there,  
The will to do, the soul to dare,  
The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,  
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.  
His limbs were cast in manly mould,  
For hardy sports or contest bold;  
And though in peaceful garb array'd,  
And weaponless, except his blade,  
His stately mien as well implied  
A high-born heart, a martial pride,  
As if a Baron's crest he wore,  
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.  
Slighting the petty need he show'd,  
He told of his benighted road;  
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,  
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seem’d that tone, and gesture bland,
Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.
A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder’d wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull’d for you;
On yonder mountain’s purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere,
To furnish forth your evening cheer.”—
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err’d,” he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser lost,
I ne’er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake’s romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land!”—

XXIII.
"I well believe,” the maid replied,
As her light skiff approach’d the side,—

"I well believe, that ne’er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine’s shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-Bane foretold your plight,—
A grey-hair’d sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision’d future bent. 189
He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
That tassell’d horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion’s crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deem’d it was my father’s horn,
Whose echoes o’er the lake were borne.”

XXIV.
The stranger smiled:—“Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doom’d, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I’ll lightly front each high emprise,
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o’er the tide.”
The maid, with smile suppress’d and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom sure, if e’er before,
His noble hand had grasp’d an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o’er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect, and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.

Nor frequent does the bright oar break
The dark’ning mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The stranger view’d the shore around,
’Twas all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden show’d
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And open’d on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials, as around
The workman’s hand had readiest found.
Lopp’d off their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves combined
To fence each crevice from the wind.
The lighter pine-trees, over-head,
Their slender length for rafters spread,
And wither’d heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir, with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen’s hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idaean vine,
The clematis, the favour’d flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine’s keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she staid,
And gaily to the stranger said,
“On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!”
XXVII.

“My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
My gentle guide, in following thee.”
He cross’d the threshold—and a clang
Of angry steel that instant rang.
To his bold brow his spirit rush’d,
But soon for vain alarm he blush’d,
When on the floor he saw display’d,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropp’d from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag’s huge antlers swung;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase:
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusk’d trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat’s brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o’er the bison’s horns;
Pennons and flags defaced and stain’d,
That blackening streaks of blood retain’d,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter’s fur and seal’s unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the silvan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised:
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length,
And as the brand he poised and sway’d,
“I never knew but one,” he said,
“Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.”
She sigh’d, then smiled and took the word:
“You see the guardian champion’s sword:
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand;
My sire’s tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart;¹⁹¹
But in the absent giant’s hold
Are women now, and menials old.”

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother’s due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unask’d his birth and name.¹⁹²
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.

At length his rank the stranger names,
"The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.

This morning, with Lord Moray's train,
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wander'd here."

XXX.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well show'd the elder lady's mien,
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks display'd
The simple grace of silvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Show'd she was come of gentle race.

'Twere strange, in ruder rank to find,
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
Turn'd all inquiry light away:—
"Weird women we! by dale and down
We dwell, afar from tower and town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we cast;
While viewless minstrels touch the string,
'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."

She sung, and still a harp unseen
Fill'd up the symphony between.193

XXXI.

SONG.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan, or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the day-break from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum.
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steeds neigh and champing,
Shouting clans, or squadrons stamping."

XXXII.
She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
To grace the stranger of the day.
Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

SONG CONTINUED.
"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
How thy gallant steed lay dying.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye,
Here no bugles sound reveillé."

XXXIII.
The hall was clear'd—the stranger's bed
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dream'd their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lull'd to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the brake,
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honour's lost.
Then,—from my couch may heavenly might
Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again return'd the scenes of youth,
Of confident undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
They come, in dim procession led,
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
As if they parted yesterday.
XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seem'd to walk, and speak of love;
She listen'd with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.

He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone.
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darken'd cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—

He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recall'd the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fix'd his eye,
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rush'd, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose, and sought the moon-shine pure.

XXXV.

The wild-rose, eglantine, and broom,
Wasted around their rich perfume:
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Play'd on the water's still expanse,—
Wild were the heart whose passions' sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!

He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:—
"Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain-maiden spy.
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand.
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fever'd dream.
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resign'd.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."

His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consign'd to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturb'd repose;
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.
CANTO SECOND.

The Island.

I.

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while you little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again.

Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-hair'd Allan-Bane!

II.

SONG.

"Not faster yonder rowers' might
Flings from their oars the spray,
Not faster yonder rippling bright,
That tracks the shallop's course in light,
Melts in the lake away,
Than men from memory erase
The benefits of former days;
Then, stranger, go! good speed the while,
Nor think again of the lonely isle.

"High place to thee in royal court,
High place in battle line,
Good hawk and hound for silvan sport,
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
The honour'd meed be thine!

True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love and friendship's smile
Be memory of the lonely isle.

III.

SONG CONTINUED.

"But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam,
Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
Pine for his Highland home;
Then, warrior, then be thine to show
The care that soothes a wanderer's woe;
Remember then thy hap ere while,
A stranger in the lonely isle.

"Or if on life's uncertain main
Mishap shall mar thy sail;
If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
Beneath the fickle gale;
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
But come where kindred worth shall smile,
To greet thee in the lonely isle."

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
The shallop reach'd the mainland side,
And ere his onward way he took,
The stranger cast a lingering look,
Where easily his eye might reach
The Harper on the islet beach,
Reclined against a blighted tree,
As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
To minstrel meditation given,
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,
As from the rising sun to claim
A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seem'd watching the awakening fire;
So still he sate, as those who wait
Till judgment speak the doom of fate;
So still, as if no breeze might dare
To lift one lock of hoary hair;
So still, as life itself were fled,
In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
Beside him Ellen sate and smiled.—
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vex'd spaniel, from the beach,
Bay'd at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
Why deepen'd on her cheek the rose?—
Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!
Perchance the maiden smiled to see
Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
And stop and turn to wave anew;
And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI.

While yet he loiter'd on the spot,
It seem'd as Ellen mark'd him not;
But when he turn'd him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made;
And after, oft the knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day
Was dealt him by the brightest fair,
Who c'er wore jewel in her hair,
So highly did his bosom swell,
As at that simple mute farewell.
Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
Watch'd him wind slowly round the hill;
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid—
"Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!"
'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said,—
Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phrase of southern tongue;
"Not so had Malcolm strain'd his eye,
Another step than thine to spy.
Wake, Allan-Bane," aloud she cried,
To the old Minstrel by her side,—
"Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name;
Pour forth the glory of the Graëme!" 195
Scarce from her lip the word had rush'd,
When deep the conscious maiden blush'd;
For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Graëme was held the flower.

VII.
The Minstrel waked his harp—three times
Arose the well-known martial chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
"Vainly thou bid'st, O noble maid,"
Clasping his wither'd hands, he said,
"Vainly thou bid'st me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spann'd!
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march, which victors tread,
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
O well for me, if mine alone
That dirge's deep prophetic tone!
If, as my tuneful fathers said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan sway'd, 196
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

VIII.
"But ah! dear lady, thus it sigh'd,
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wail'd loud through Bothwell's banner'd hall,
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven, 197
Were exited from their native heaven.—
Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe,
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shiver'd shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!"

IX.
Soothing she answer'd him,
"Assuage,
Mine honour'd friend, the fears of age;
All melodies to thee are known,
That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
At times, unbidden notes should rise,
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they rush along,
The war-march with the funeral song?—
Small ground is now for boding fear;
Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
My sire, in native virtue great,
Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
Not then to fortune more resign'd,
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage storms may reave,
The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me,"—she stoop'd, and, looking round,
Pluck'd a blue hare-bell from the ground,—
"For me, whose memory scarce conveys
An image of more splendid days,
This little flower, that loves the lea,
May well my simple emblem be;
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
That in the king's own garden grows;
And when I place it in my hair,
Allan, a bard is bound to swear
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."
Then playfully the chaplet wild
She wreath'd in her dark locks, and smiled.

XI.
"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,
(Light was her accent, yet she sigh'd;)
"Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footsteps spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
And then for suitors proud and high,
To bend before my conquering eye,—
Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,
That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
A Lennox foray—for a day."

XII.
The ancient bard his glee repress'd:
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled!
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;¹⁹³
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlaw'd, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say—
The Douglas, like a striken deer,
Disown'd by every noble peer,¹⁹⁹
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread;
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane."

XIII.
"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high
Her father's soul glanced from her eye,
"My debts to Roderick's house I know:
All that a mother could bestow,
To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
Since first an orphan in the wild
She sorrow'd o'er her sister's child;
To her brave chieftain son, from ire
Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,
A deeper, holier debt is owed;
And, could I pay it with my blood,
Allan! Sir Roderick should command
My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
A votaress in Maronnain's cell;²⁰⁰
Rather through realms beyond the sea,
Seeking the world's cold charity,
Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

XIV.

"Thou shakest, good friend, thy tresses grey,—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave; \(^{201}\)
And generous—save vindictive mood,
Or jealous transport, chafe his blood:
I grant him true to friendly band,
As his claymore is to his hand;
But O! that very blade of steel
More mercy for a foe would feel:
I grant him liberal, to fling
Among his clan the wealth they bring,
When back by lake and glen they wind,
And in the Lowland leave behind,
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
The hand that for my father fought,
I honour, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red,
From peasants slaughter'd in their shed
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,
They make his passions darker seem,
And flash along his spirit high,
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.
While yet a child,—and children know,
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,
I shudder'd at his brow of gloom,
His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
A maiden grown, I ill could bear
His haughty mien and lordly air:
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
To change such odious theme were best,—
What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"

XV.

"What think I of him?—woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle!
Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For Time-man forged by fairy lore, \(^{202}\)
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe. \(^{203}\)
If courtly spy hath harbour'd here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deem'd of old
Clan_:::Alpine's last and surest hold?
If neither spy nor foe, I pray
What yet may jealous Roderick say?
—Nay, wave not thy disdainful head,
Bethink thee of the discord dread
That kindled, when at Beltane game
Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Graeme;
Still, though thy sire the peace renew'd,
Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud;
Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze.
No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI.
Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four mann'd and masted barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they pass'd,
And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartans brave,
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
As his tough oar the rower plies;
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
The wave ascending into smoke;
See the proud pipers on the bow,
And mark the gaudy streamers flow
From their loud chanters down, and sweep
The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
As, rushing through the lake amain,
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.
Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sound, by distance tame,
Mellow'd along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wail'd every harsher note away;
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear;
Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight. 204
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And, hurrying at the signal dread,
The batter'd earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Express'd their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broad sword upon target jarr'd;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yell'd amain;
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout.
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain; but slow,
Sunk in a moan prolong'd and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell,
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.
The war-pipes ceased; but lake and hill
Were busy with their echoes still;
And, when they slept, a vocal strain
Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
While loud a hundred clansmen raise
Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.
Each boatman, bending to his oar,
With measured sweep the burden bore,
In such wild cadence, as the breeze
Makes through December's leafless trees.
The chorus first could Allan know,
"Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
And near, and nearer as they row'd,
Distinct the martial ditty flow'd.

XIX.
BOAT SONG.
Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
Honour'd and bless'd be the evergreen Pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeois, and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back a'en,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!" 265

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moor'd in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise a-gen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu,
ho! ieroe!"

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrill'd in Glen Fruin,
And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.\(^{206}\)
Widow and Saxon maid
Long shall lament our raid,
Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
Lennox and Leven-glen
Shake when they hear a-gen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu,
ho! ieroe!"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars, for the evergreen Pine!
O! that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honour'd and bless'd in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from the deepmost glen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu,
ho! ieroe!"

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand,
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
And high their snowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;
While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
The darling passion of his heart,
The Dame call'd Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land:
"Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreathe a victor's brow?"
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obey'd,
And, when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung:—
"List, Allan-Bane! From mainland cast,
I hear my father's signal blast.
Be ours," she cried, "the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain side."
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright
She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick scann'd,
For her dear form, his mother's band.
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.
XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven:
And if there be a human tear
From passion’s dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel’s cheek,
’Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter’s head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely press’d,
Such holy drops her tresses steep’d,
Though ’twas an hero’s eye that weep’d.
Nor while on Ellen’s faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Mark’d she, that fear (affection’s proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof;
No! not till! Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Graeme.

On Malcolm’s shoulder, kindly said,
“Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
In my poor follower’s glistening eye?
I’ll tell thee:— he recalls the day,
When in my praise he led the lay
O’er the arch’d gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answer’d loud,
When Percy’s Norman pennon, won
In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a name
As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
Was I of all that marshall’d crowd,
Though the waned crescent own’d my might,
And in my train troop’d lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymn’d her holiest lays,
And Bothwell’s bards flung back my praise,
As when this old man’s silent tear,
And this poor maid’s affection dear,
A welcome give more kind and true,
Than aught my better fortunes knew.
Forgive, my friend, a father’s boast,
O! it out-beggars all I lost!”
XXIV

Delightful praise!—Like summer rose,
That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
The bashful maiden's cheek appear'd,
For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
The loved caresses of the maid
The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
And, at her whistle, on her hand
The falcon took her favourite stand.
Closed his dark wing, relax'd his eye,
Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
That if a father's partial thought
O'erweigh'd her worth and beauty aught,
Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Graeme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair of sunny hue,
Curl'd closely round his bonnet blue.
Train'd to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy:
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe,
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though wing'd with fear,
Outstripp'd in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast,
As play'd the feather on his crest.
Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
And bards, who saw his features bold,
When kindled by the tales of old,
Said, were that youth to manhood grown
Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
But quail to that of Malcolm Graeme.
XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way
And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say,
"Why urge thy chase so far astray?
And why so late return'd? And why"
The rest was in her speaking eye.
"My child, the chase I follow far,
'Tis mimicry of noble war;
And with that gallant pastime rest
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I stray'd,
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
Nor stray'd I safe; for, all around,
Hunters and horsemen scour'd the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risk'd life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood,
Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Redden'd at sight of Malcolm Graeme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Fail'd aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away,
The morning of that summer day;
But at high moon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared,
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seem'd toiling in his head;
Yet was the evening banquet made,
Ere he assembled round the flame,
His mother, Douglas, and the Graeme,
And Ellen, too; then cast around
His eyes, then fix'd them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

XXVIII.

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honour'd mother;—Ellen—why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?—
And Græme; in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land,—
List all!—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's silvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared;
And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Etrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of silvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye

By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know;
Your counsel in the streight I show."

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turn'd their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire—that to her son.
The hasty colour went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;
But from his glance it well appear'd
'Twas but for Ellen that he fear'd;
While, sorrowful, but undismay'd,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:—
"Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
For well thou know'st, at this grey head
The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek, apart,
The refuge of some forest cell,
Till on the mountain and the moor,
The stern pursuit be pass’d and o'er."—

XXX.

"No, by mine honour," Roderick said,
"So help me, heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: Grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock enow;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And, when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames,
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!

—Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heart might say.—
Small need of inroad, or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foil'd king, from pathless glen,
Shall bootless turn him home agen.”

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
The ocean-tide's incessant roar,
Dream'd calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till waken'd by the morning beam;
When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
Such startler cast his glance below,
And saw unmeasured depth around,
And heard unintermitted sound,
And thought the battled fence so frail,
It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
Did he not desperate impulse feel,
Headlong to plunge himself below,
And meet the worst his fears foreshow?
Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
As sudden ruin yawn'd around,
By crossing terrors wildly toss'd
Still for the Douglas fearing most,
Could scarce the desperate thought withstand
To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak—but ere
His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas mark'd the hectic strife,
Where death seem'd combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rush'd the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
"Roderick, enough! enough!"
he cried,
"My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
Will level a rebellious spear.
'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;

I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs,
By hasty wrath, and slanderous tongues.
O seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darken'd brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seem'd, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim's way:
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenom'd smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung;
While eyes, that mock'd at tears before,
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherish'd hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its chequer'd shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Graeme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
So the deep anguish of despair
Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
"Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
"Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delay'd."
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Graeme.
"Perish my name, if aught afford
Its Chieftain safety save his sword!"
Thus as they strove, their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes
His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego!
I hold the first who strikes, my foe.—
Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!
What! is the Douglas fall'n so far,
His daughter's hand is doom'd the spoil
Of such dishonourable broil!"
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,
And each upon his rival glared,
With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
As, faltered through terrific dream.
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
And veil'd his wrath in scornful word.
"Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!"
Then mayest thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
The Fiery Cross should circle o'er Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
Much were the peril to the Graeme,
From those who to the signal came;
Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the strand.
He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
Round dirk and pouch and broadsword roll'd,
His ample plaid in tight'ned fold,
And stripp'd his limbs to such array,
As best might suit the watery way,—

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt: "Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The Minstrel's hand he kindly press'd,—
"O! could I point a place of rest!"
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Graeme,
Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
Not long shall honour'd Douglas dwell,
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere you pride-swoll'n robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought.
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side.
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steer'd him from the shore;
And Allan strain'd his anxious eye,
Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave,
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plied each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.

And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
How are they blotted from the things that be!
How few, all weak and wither'd of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight!
Time rolls his ceaseless course.

Yet live there still who can remember well,
How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
And solitary heath, the signal knew;
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
What time the warning note was keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
While clamorous war-pipes yell'd the gathering sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.  

CANTO THIRD.
The Gathering.

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course.
The race of yore,
Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
The summer dawn's reflected hue,
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kiss'd the Lake, just stirr'd the trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
The mountain-shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice rear'd of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;
The grey mist left the mountain side,
The torrent show'd its glistening pride;
Invisible in flecked sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;
In answer coo'd the cushat dove
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;
For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its road.
The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast;—
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the wind,
And, high in middle heaven, reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of wither'd boughs was piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the oak,
Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.
Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grisled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seam'd o'er,
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,  
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.  
Not his the mien of Christian priest,  
But Druid's, from the grave released,  
Whose harden'd heart and eye might brook  
On human sacrifice to look;  
And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore  
Mix'd in the charms he mutter'd o'er.  
The hallow'd creed gave only worse  
And deadlier emphasis of curse;  
No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,  
His cave the pilgrim shunn'd with care,  
The eager huntsman knew his bound,  
And in mid chase call'd off his hound;  
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,  
The desert-dweller met his path,  
He pray'd, and sign'd the cross between,  
While terror took devotion's mien.

V.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.  
His mother watch'd a midnight fold,  
Built deep within a dreary glen,  
Where scatter'd lay the bones of men,  
In some forgotten battle slain,  
And bleach'd by drifting wind and rain.  
It might have tamed a warrior's heart,  
To view such mockery of his art!  
The knot-grass fetter'd there the hand,  
Which once could burst an iron band;  
Beneath the broad and ample bone,  
That buckler'd heart to fear unknown,  
A feeble and a timorous guest,  
The field-fare framed her lowly nest;  
There the slow blind-worm left his slime  
On the fleet limbs that mock'd at time;  
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,  
Still wreathed with chaplet, flush'd and full,  
For heath-bell with her purple bloom,  
Supplied the bonnet and the plume.  
All night, in this sad glen, the maid  
Sate, shrouded in her mantle's shade:  
—She said, no shepherd sought her side,  
No hunter's hand her snood untied,  
Yet ne'er again to braid her hair.  
The virgin snood did Alice wear;  
Gone was her maiden glee and sport,  
Her maiden girdle all too short,  
Nor sought she, from that fatal night,  
Or holy church or blessed rite,  
But lock'd her secret in her breast,  
And died in travail, unconfess'd.
VI.

Alone, among his young companions,
Was Brian from his infant years;
A moody and heart-broken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale.
To wood and stream his hap to wail,
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd believed,
And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom Sire!
In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate;
In vain, the learning of the age
Unclasp’d the sable-letter’d page;
Even in its treasures he could find
Food for the fever of his mind.
Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride;
Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre's child.\(^{215}\)
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
He watch'd the wheeling eddies boil,
Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
Beheld the River Demon rise;
The mountain mist took form and limb,
Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;
The midnight wind came wild and dread,
Swell'd with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
His eye beheld the ranks of death:
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurl'd,
Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream;\(^{216}\)
Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;\(^{217}\)
The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.
'Twas all prepared;—and from the rock,
A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
Down his clogg'd beard and shaggy limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.
The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
A slender crosslet form'd with care,
A cubit's length in measure due:
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave 218
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
The Cross, thus form'd, he held on high,
With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings woke,
While his anathema he spoke.

IX.
"Woe to the clansman, who shall view
This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
On Alpine's dwelling low!
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
Each clansman's execration just
Shall doom him wrath and woe."
He paused;—the word the vassals took,
With forward step and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they shook,
Their clattering targets wildly strook;
And first in murmur low,
Then, like the billow in his course,
That far to seaward finds his source,
And flings to shore his muster'd force,
Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,
"Woe to the traitor, woe!"
Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
The joyous wolf from covert drew,
The exulting eagle scream'd afar,—
They knew the voice of Alpine's war.
X.

The shout was hush'd on lake and fell,
The monk resumed his mutter'd spell:
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with flame;
And the few words that reach'd the air,
Although the holiest name was there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:
"Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
Her home, the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim;
While maids and matrons on his name
Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
And infamy and woe."
Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,
Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
Of curses stammer'd slow;
Answering, with imprecation dread,
"Sunk be his home in embers red!
And cursed be the meanest shed
That e'er shall hide the houseless head,
We doom to want and woe!"
A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave!
And the grey pass where birches wave,
On Beala-nam-bo.

XI.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his labouring breath he drew,
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
And eyes that glow'd like fiery brand,
He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
Who, summon'd to his Chieftain's aid,
The signal saw and disobey'd.
The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
He quench'd among the bubbling blood,
And, as again the sign he rear'd,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
"When flits this Cross from man to man,
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart
their prize!
As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
So may his heart’s-blood drench
his hearth!
As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark,
And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!
He ceased; no echo gave agen
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian’s hand the symbol took:
“Speed, Malise, speed!” he said, and gave
The crosslet to his henchman brave.
“The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed!”
Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
A barge across Loch Katrine flew;
High stood the henchman on the prow;
So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launch’d the boat,
Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,
When it had near’d the mainland hill;
And from the silver beach’s side
Still was the prow three fathom wide,
When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer’s hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.\(^{219}\)
Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend ’gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
Burst down like torrent from its crest;
With short and springing foot-step pass
The trembling bog and false morass;
Across the brook like roebuck bound,
And thread the brake like questing hound;
The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:
Parch’d are thy burning lips and brow,
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track’st not now,
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace,
With rivals in the mountain race;
But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed!
XIV.

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They pour'd each hardy tenant down.
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;
He show'd the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swathe the scythe;
The herds without a keeper stray'd,
The plough was in mid-furrow staid,
The falc'ner toss'd his hawk away,
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rush'd to arms;
So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol, from the cloud,
Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

Speed, Malise, speed! the lake is past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,
And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayest thou rest, thy labour done,
Their Lord shall speed the signal on.—
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
The henchman shot him down the way.
—What woeful accents load the gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!
(A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—
Within the hall, where torches' ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
And o'er him streams his widow's tear.
His stripling son stands mournful by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not why;
The village maids and matrons round
The dismal coronach resound.

XVI.

Coronach.

He is gone on the mountain,
He is lost to the forest,
Like a summer-dried fountain,
When our need was the sorest.
The font, reappearing,
From the rain-drops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!
The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the weeper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are searest.
But our flower was in flushing—
When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
Sage counsel in cumber,
Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!
Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign,
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her open'd arms he flew,
Press'd on her lips a fond adieu—
"Alas!" she sobb'd,—"and yet, be gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!"
One look he cast upon the bier,
Dash'd from his eye the gathering tear,
Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast,
And toss'd aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt, when, freed,
First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanish'd, and o'er moor and moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could hear;
And when she mark'd the henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is run,
That should have sped thine errand on;
The oak has fall'n—the sapling bough
Is all Duncraggan's shelter now. Yet trust I well, his duty done.
And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
To arms, and guard that orphan's head!
Let babes and women wail the dead."
Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant band
Snatch'd sword and targe, with hurried hand;
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear,
Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
But faded soon that borrow'd force;
Grief claim'd his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire. 221

O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew;
The tear that gather'd in his eye
He left the mountain breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
That graced the sable strath with green,
The chapel of St. Bride was seen.
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
Though reel'd his sympathetic eye,
He dash'd amid the torrent's roar:
His right hand high the crosslet bore,
His left the pole-axe grasp'd, to guide
And stay his footing in the tide.
He stumbled twice—the foam splash'd high,
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;
And had he fall'n,—for ever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
Firmer he grasp'd the Cross of strife,
Until the opposing bank he gain'd,
And up the chapel pathway strain'd.
XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
Had sought the chapel of St. Bride.
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
To Norman, heir of Armandave.
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their march.
In rude, but glad procession, came
Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;
And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
Which snooded maiden would not hear;
And children, that, unwitting why,
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;
And minstrels, that in measures vied
Before the young and bonny bride,
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
The tear and blush of morning rose.
With virgin step, and bashful hand,
She held the 'kerchief's snowy band;
The gallant bridegroom by her side,
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
And the glad mother in her ear
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the church-yard gate?
The messenger of fear and fate!
Haste in his hurried accent lies,
And grief is swimming in his eyes.
All dripping from the recent flood,
Panting and travel-soil'd he stood,
The fatal sign of fire and sword Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"
And must he change so soon the hand,
Just link'd to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and brand?
And must the day, so blithe that rose,
And promised rapture in the close,
Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted bride?
O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chief-tain's trust,
Her summons dread, brook no delay;
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to
cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on
the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies
the Teith.
—What in the racer's bosom
stirr'd?
The sickening pang of hope
deferr'd,
And memory, with a torturing
train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience,
came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain
burning,
And hope, from well-fought field
returning,
With war's red honours on his
crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts, o'er
bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced
away,
While high resolve, and feeling
strong,
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.
Song.
The heath this night must be my
bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee,
Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody
plaid,
My vesper song, thy wail, sweet
maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!
I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely
brow,
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary.
No fond regret must Norman
know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the
foe,
His heart must be like bended
bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.
A time will come with feeling
fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying
thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if return'd from conquer'd
foes,
How blithely will the evening
close,
How sweet the linnet sing
repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.
Not faster o'er thy heathery
braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight
blaze,
Rushing, in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarm'd, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turn'd its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequester'd glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood;
Each train'd to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu
Survey'd the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
All backward came the news of truce;
Still lay each martial Graeme and Bruce,
In Rednoch courts no horsemen wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,
Nor scared the herons from Loch Con;
All seem'd at peace.—Now, wot ye why
The Chieftain, with such anxious eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scann'd with care?—
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel, pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle withdrew,
And in a deep sequester'd dell
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And call'd the grot the Goblin-
cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's
crest,
Yawn'd like a gash on warrior's
breast;
Its trench had staid full many a
rock,
Hurl'd by primeval earthquake
shock
From Benvenue's grey summit
wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frown'd incumbent o'er the
spot,
And form'd the rugged silvan
grot.
The oak and birch, with mingled
shade,
At noontide there a twilight
made,
Unless when short and sudden
shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or
stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's
eye
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn
still,
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with
the lake,
A sullen sound would upward
break,
With dashing hollow voice, that
spoke
The incessant war of wave and
rock.

Suspended cliffs, with hideous
sway,
Seem'd nodding o'er the cavern
grey.
From such a den the wolf had
sprung,
In such the wild-cat leaves her
young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter
fair
Sought for a space their safety
there.
Grey Superstition's whisper
dread
Debarr'd the spot to vulgar
tread;
For there, she said, did fays
resort,
And satyrs hold their silvan
court,
By moonlight tread their mystic
maze,
And blast the rash beholder's
gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows
long,
Float'd on Katrine bright and
strong;
When Roderick, with a chosen
few,
Repass'd the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin-cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-
nam-bo: 225
The prompt retainers speed
before,
To launch the shallop from the
shore,
For cross Loch Katrine lies his
way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.

sc.
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

Yet lags the Chief in musing mind,  
Unwonted sight, his men behind.  
A single page, to bear his sword,  
Alone attended on his lord; 226
The rest their way through thickets break,  
And soon await him by the lake.  
It was a fair and gallant sight,  
To view them from the neighbouring height,  
By the low-levell’d sunbeams light!  
For strength and stature, from the clan  
Each warrior was a chosen man,  
As even afar might well be seen,  
By their proud step and martial mien.
T...
\textit{Ave Maria!} undeciled!
The flinty couch we now must share.
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;
Mother, list a suppliant child! \textit{Ave Maria!}

\textit{Ave Maria!} stainless styled!
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child! \textit{Ave Maria!}

XXX.
Died on the harp the closing hymn—
Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As list'ning still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page, with humble sign,
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him cast,
"It is the last time—'tis the last,"

He mutter'd thrice,—"the last time e'er
That angel voice shall Roderick hear!"
It was a goading thought—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
Sullen he flung him in the boat,
And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,
And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where muster'd, in the vale below,
Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.
A various scene the clanesmen made,
Some sate, some stood, some slowly stray'd;
But most with mantles folded round,
Were couch'd to rest upon the ground,
Scarce to be known by curious eye,
From the deep heather where they lie,
So well was match'd the tartan screen
With heath-bell dark and brackens green;
Unless where, here and there, a blade,
Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
But when, advancing through
the gloom,
They saw the Chieftain's eagle
plume,
Their shout of welcome, shrill
and wide,
Shook the steep mountain's
steady side.
Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times return'd the martial
yell:
It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claim'd her evening
reign.

CANTO FOURTH.
The Prophecy.

I.
"The rose is fairest when 'tis
budding new,
And hope is brightest when it
dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest wash'd with
morning dew,
And love is loveliest when
embalm'd in tears.
O wilding rose, whom fancy thus
endears,
I bid your blossoms in my
bonnet wave,
Emblem of hope and love through
future years!"
Thus spoke young Norman, heir
of Armandave,
What time the sun arose on
Vennachar's broad wave.

II.
Such fond conceit, half said, half
sung,
Love prompted to the bride-
groom's tongue.

All while he stripp'd the wild-
rose spray,
His axe and bow beside him
lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and
wood,
A wakeful sentinel he stood.
Hark! on the rock a footstep
rung,
And instant to his arms he
sprung.
"Stand, or thou diest!—What,
Malise?—soon
Art thou return'd from Braes of
Doune.
By thy keen step and glance I
know,
Thou bring'st us tidings of the
foe."—
(For while the Fiery Cross hied
on,
On distant scout had Malise
gone.)
"Where sleeps the Chief?" the
henchman said.—
"Apart, in yonder misty glade;
To his lone couch I'll be your
guide."—
Then call'd a slumberer by his
side,
And stirr'd him with his slacken'd
bow—
"Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse
thee, ho!
We seek the Chieftain; on the
track,
Keep eagle watch till I come
back."

III.
Together up the pass they
sped:
"What of the foemen?" Norman
said.—
"Varying reports from near and far;
This certain,—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready bouné,
At prompt command, to march from Doune;
King James, the while, with princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
Inured to bide such bitter bout,
The warrior's plaid may bear it out;
But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
A shelter for thy bonny bride?"—
"What! know ye not that Roderick's care
To the lone isle hath caused repair
Each maid and matron of the clan,
And every child and aged man
Unfit for arms; and given his charge,
Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
Upon these lakes shall float at large,
But all beside the islet moor,
That such dear pledge may rest secure?"—

IV.
"'Tis well advised—the Chief-tain's plan
Bespeaks the father of his clan.
But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
Apart from all his followers true?"—

"It is, because last evening-tide
Brian an augury hath tried,
Of that dread kind which must not be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm call'd; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war."

Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew."

MALISE.
"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!
The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glow'd like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,
And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikemen's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row,
A child might scatheless stroke his brow."—

V.

NORMAN.
"That bull was slain: his reeking hide
They stretch'd the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy boss
Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.  
Couch'd on a shelve beneath its brink,
Close where the thundering torrents sink,
Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
The wizard waits prophetic dream.
Nor distant rests the Chief;— but hush!
See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughter'd host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,  
That, watching while the deer is broke,
His morsel claims with sullen croak?"

MALISE.
—"Peace! peace! to other than to me,
Thy words were evil augury;
But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,
Not aught that, glean'd from heaven or hell,
Yon fiend-begotten monk can tell.
The Chieftain joins him, see—and now,
Together they descend the brow.

VI.
And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
The Hermit Monk held solemn word:
"Roderick! it is a fearful strife,
For man endow'd with mortal life,
Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, my eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn,—
This for my Chieftain have I borne!—
The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
An human tongue may ne'er avouch;
No mortal man,—save he, who, bred
Between the living and the dead, Is gifted beyond nature's law,—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fatal answer came,
In characters of living flame!
Not spoke in word, nor blazed
in scroll,
But borne and branded on my
soul;—
Which spills the foremost
foeman’s life,
That party conquers in the
strife!" —

VII.

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and
care!
Good is thine augury, and fair.
Clan-Alpine ne’er in battle stood,
But first our broadswords tasted
blood.
A surer victim still I know,
Self-offer’d to the auspicious blow:
A spy has sought my land this
morn,—
No eve shall witness his return!
My followers guard each pass’s
mouth,
To east, to westward, and to
south;
Red Murdoch, bribed to be his
guide,
Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on those shall bring
him down.
—But see, who comes his news
to show!
Malise! what tidings of the
foe?" —

VIII.

"At Doune, o’er many a spear
and glaive
Two Barons proud their banners
wave.
I saw the Moray’s silver star,
And mark’d the sable pale of
Mar.’’—
"By Alpine’s soul, high tidings
those!
I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?’’—"To-
morrow’s noon
Will see them here for battle
bouse.”—
"Then shall it see a meeting
stern!—
But, for the place—say, couldst
thou learn
Nought of the friendly clans of
Earn?
Strengthen’d by them, we well
might bide
The battle on Benledi’s side.
Thou couldst not?—Well! Clan-
Alpine’s men
Shall man the Trosach’s shaggy
glen;
Within Loch Katrine’s gorge
we’ll fight,
All in our maids’ and matrons’
sight,
Each for his hearth and household
fire,
Father for child, and son for
sire,—
Lover for maid beloved!—But
why—
Is it the breeze affects mine
eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omen’d
tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon
lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce
through
The unyielding heart of Roderick
Dhu!"
"Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.—
Each to his post!—all know their charge."

The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
—I turn me from the martial roar,
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the grey stone
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan;
While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are pour'd on her unheeding ear.—
"He will return—Dear lady, trust!—
With joy return;—he will—he must.
Well was it time to seek, afar,
Some refuge from impending war,
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
Are cow'd by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats, with many a light,
Floating the live-long yester-night,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
By the red streamers of the north;
I mark'd at morn how close they ride,
Thick moor'd by the lone islet's side,
Like wild-ducks couching in the fen,
When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"—

X.

ELLEN.

"No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting blessing gave,
The tear that glisten'd in his eye
Drown'd not his purpose fix'd on high.
My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturb'd by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden, when the theme
Turn'd, Allan, on thine idle dream,
Of Malcolm Graeme, in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he trow'd thine omen aught?
Oh no! 'twas apprehensive thought
For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
(Let me be just) that friend so true;
In danger both, and in our cause!
Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,
'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!'
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to hie, and make me known?
Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friend's safety with his own;
He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his son!"—

XI.
"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
He only named yon holy fane
As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,—
Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!
My vision'd sight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.
When did my gifted dream beguile?
Think of the stranger at the isle,
And think upon the harpings slow,
That presaged this approaching woe!
Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe,
My harp was wont thy grief to cheer."—

ELLEN.
"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear."
The Minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.
Ballad.
ALICE BRAND.
Merry it is in the good green-wood,
When the mavis and merle are singing,
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry
And the hunter's horn is ringing.
"O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and wold,
As outlaws wont to do.
"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright,
And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
That on the night of our luckless flight,
Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

"And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That wont on harp to stray,
A cloak must sheer from the slaughter'd deer,
To keep the cold away."—

"O Richard! if my brother died,
'Twas but a fatal chance;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.

"If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet grey,
As gay the forest-green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand."

XIII.

Ballad continued.
'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who won'd within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

"Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies fatal green?"

"Up, Urgan, up! to you mortal hie,
For thou wert christen'd man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For mutter'd word or ban.

"Lay on him the curse of the wither'd heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die."

XIV.

Ballad continued.
'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
Though the birds have still'd their singing;
The evening blaze doth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands,
And, as he cross'd and bless'd himself,
"I fear not sign," quoth the grisly elf,
"That is made with bloody hands."

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
That woman, void of fear,—
"And if there's blood upon his hand,
'Tis but the blood of deer."—

"Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
It cleaves unto his hand,
The stain of thine own kindly blood,
The blood of Ethert Brand."

Then forward stepp'd she, Alice Brand,
And made the holy sign,—
"And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
A spotless hand is mine.

"And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
By Him whom Demons fear,
To show us whence thou art thyself,
And what thine errand here?"—

XV.
Ballad continued.

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry in Fairy-land,
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gaily shines the Fairy-land,
But all is glistening show,\textsuperscript{237}
Like the idle gleam that December's beam
Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
Is our inconstant shape,
Who now like knight and lady seem,
And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
When the Fairy King has power,
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
And, 'twixt life and death, was snatch'd away
To the joyless Elfin bower.\textsuperscript{238}

"But wist I of a woman bold,
Who thrice my brow durst sign,
I might regain my mortal mold,
As fair a form as thine."

She cross'd him once—she cross'd him twice—
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She cross'd him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

Merry it is in good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle
are singing,
But merrier were they in Dunfermline grey,
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were staid,
A stranger clumb'd the steepy glade:
His martial step, his stately mien,
His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-James.
Ellen beheld as in a dream,
Then, starting, scarce suppress'd a scream:
"O stranger! in such hour of fear,
What evil hap has brought thee here?"—
"An evil hap how can it be,
That bids me look again on thee?
By promise bound, my former guide
Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marshall'd, over bank and bourne, .
The happy path of my return."—
"The happy path!—what! said he nought
Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded pass?"—"No, by my faith!
Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."—

"O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
—Yonder his tartans I discern;
Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
That he will guide the stranger sure!—
What prompted thee, unhappy man?
The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
Had not been bribed by love or fear,
Unknown to him to guide thee here."—

XVII.

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath,
When love or honour's weigh'd with death.
Then let me profit by my chance,
And speak my purpose bold at once.
I come to bear thee from a wild,
Where ne'er before such blossom smiled;
By this soft hand to lead thee far
From frantic scenes of feud and war.
Near Bochastle my horses wait;
They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
I'll guard thee like a tender flower"—
"O! hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female art,
To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track;
And how, O how, can I atone
The wreck my vanity brought on!—
One way remains—I'll tell him all—
Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!
Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!
But first—my father is a man
Outlaw'd and exiled, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 'twere infamy to wed.—
Still wouldst thou speak?—then hear the truth!
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
If yet he is!—exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
Thou hast the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart!

XVIII.
Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain;
But here he knew and felt them vain.
There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony,
As death had seal'd her Malcolm's doom,
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanish'd from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffer'd to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.—
"O! little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
If thou may'st trust thy wily kern."
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had cross'd his brain,
He paused, and turn'd, and came again.

XIX.
"Hear, lady, yet, a parting word!—
It chanced in fight that my poor sword
Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine;
Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the king without delay;
This signet shall secure thy way;
And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,
As ransom of his pledge to me."

He placed the golden circlet on.
Paused—kiss'd her hand—and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He join'd his guide, and wending down
The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way,
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX.

All in the Trosach's glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whoop'd loud and high—
"Murdoch! was that a signal cry?"—
He stammer'd forth,—"I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare."
He look'd—he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed:—"Ah! gallant grey,
For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well
We ne'er had seen the Trosach's dell.—
Murdoch, move first—but silently; Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!"
Jealous and sullen on they fared,
Each silent, each upon his guard.

XXI.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
Around a precipice's edge,
When lo! a wasted female form,
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
In tatter'd weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seem'd nought to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreath'd with gaudy broom;
With gesture wild she waved a plume
Of feathers, which the eagles fling
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
Where scarce was footing for the goat.
The tartan plaid she first descried,
And shriek'd till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laugh'd when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew;
XXII.

And then her hands she wildly wrung,
And then she wept, and then she sung—
She sung!—the voice, in better time,
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;
And now, though strain'd and roughen'd, still
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

Song.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warp'd and wrung—
I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan glides,
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry day!

'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
They made me to the church repair;
It was my bridal morn they said,
And my true love would meet me there.
But woe betide the cruel guile,
That drown'd in blood the morning smile!
And woe betide the fairy dream!
I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII.

“Who is this maid? what means her lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle grey,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a haunted spring.”—
"'Tis Blanche of Devan," Murdoch said,
“A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick foray'd Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquer'd blade;
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—
Hence, brain-sick fool!”—He raised his bow:—
“Now, if thou strikest her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitch'd a bar!”—
“Thanks, champion, thanks!” the Maniac cried,
And press'd her to Fitz-James's side.
“See the grey pennons I prepare,
To seek my true-love through the air?
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid-air staid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."—

XXIV.

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"—
"O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.—
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

"For O my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the green-wood hue,
And so blithely he trill'd the Lowland lay!

"It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wise and guessest well."
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
She fix'd her apprehensive eye;
Then turn'd it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

"The toils are pitch'd, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

"It was a stag, a stag of ten,
Bearing its branches sturdily;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardly, hardly.

"It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warn'd him of the toils below,
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed—
Hunters watch so narrowly."

XXVI.

Fitz-James's mind was passion-toss'd,
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche's song conviction brought.—
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
"Disclose thy treachery, or die!"
Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrill'd in Blanche's faded breast,—
Murdock of Alpine! prove thy speed,
For ne'er had Alpine's son such need!
With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
The fierce avenger is behind!
Fate judges of the rapid strife—
The forfeit death—the prize is life!
Thy kindred ambush lies before,
Close couch'd upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
Thine ambush'd kin thou ne'er shalt see,
The fiery Saxon gains on thee!—
—Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain,
Ere he can win his blade again.
Bent o'er the fall'n, with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die;
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen-tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laugh'd;
Her wreath of broom and feathers grey,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
"Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried.
"This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.—
Seest thou this tress?—O! still
I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimm'd its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head—
My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.—
I waver still.—O God! more bright
Let reason beam her parting light!—
O! by thy knighthood's honour'd sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine’s Clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan’s wrong!
They watch for thee by pass and fell...
Avoid the path... O God!...
farewell.”

XXVIII.
A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast pour’d his eyes at pity’s claims,
And now with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murder’d maid expire.
“God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!”
A lock from Blanche’s tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom’s hair;
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:
“By Him whose word is truth! I swear,
No other favour will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
—But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chase is up,—but they shall know,
The stag at bay’s a dangerous foe.”

Barr’d from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turn’d back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couch’d him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o’er:—
“Of all my rash adventures past,
This frantic feat must prove the last!
Who e’er so mad but might have guess’d,
That all this Highland hornet’s nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e’er they heard of bands at Doune?—
Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
Hark, to the whistle and the shout!—
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe:
I’ll crouch me here till evening grey,
Then darkling try my dangerous way.”

XXIX.
The shades of eve come slowly down,
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
The fox is heard upon the fell;
Enough remains of glimmering
light
To guide the wanderer's steps
right.
Yet not enough from far to
show
His figure to the watchful foe.
With cautious step, and ear
awake,
He climbs the crag and threads
the brake;
And not the summer solstice,
there,
Temper'd the midnight mountain
air,
But every breeze, that swept the
wold,
Benumb'd his drenched limbs with
cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famish'd and chill'd, through
ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journey'd
on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he
turn'd,
A watch-fire close before him
burn'd.

XXX.
Beside its embers red and clear,
Bask'd, in his plaid, a mount-
taineer;
And up he sprung with sword in
hand,—
"Thy name and purpose! Saxon,
stand!"—
"A stranger,"—"What dost thou
require?"—
"Rest and a guide, and food and
fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chill'd my limbs with
frost."—

"Art thou a friend to Roderick?"
—"No."
"Thou darest not call thyself a
foe?"—
"I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous
hand."—
"Bold words!—but, though the
beast of game
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag
we lend,
Ere hound we slip, or bow we
bend,
Who ever reck'd, where, how, or
when,
The prowling fox was trapp'd or
slain? 239
Thus treacherous scouts,—yet
sure they lie,
Who say thou camest a secret
spy!"—
"They do, by Heaven!—Come
Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their
crest."—
"If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of
Knight."—
"Then by these tokens mayest
thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal
foe."—
"Enough, enough; sit down and
share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

XXXI.
He gave him of his Highland
cheer,
The harden'd flesh of mountain
deer; 249
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,  
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.  

He tended him like welcome guest,  
Then thus his farther speech address'd:  
"Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu  
A clansman born, a kinsman true;  
Each word against his honour spoke,  
Demands of me avenging stroke;  
Yet more,—upon thy fate, 'tis said,  
A mighty augury is laid.

It rests with me to wind my horn,—  
Thou art with numbers overborne;  
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,  
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:  
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,  
Will I depart from honour's laws;  
To assail a wearied man were shame,  
And stranger is a holy name;  
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,  
In vain he never must require.  
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;  
Myself will guide thee on the way,  
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,  
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,  
As far as Coilantogle's ford;  
From thence thy warrant is thy sword."—

"I take thy courtesy, by heaven,  
As freely as 'tis nobly given!"—  
"Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry  
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."  
With that he shook the gather'd heath,  
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;  
And the brave foemen, side by side,  
Lay peaceful down, like brothers tried,  
And slept until the dawning beam  
Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH.  
The Combat.  

I.  

Fair as the earliest beam of eastern light,  
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,  
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,  
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,  
And lights the fearful path on mountain side;—  
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,  
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,  
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,  
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War.

II.  

That early beam, so fair and sheen,  
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Look'd out upon the dappled sky,
Mutter'd their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path! — they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
The windings of the Forth and Teith,
And all the vales beneath that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
Gain'd not the length of horseman's lance.
'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
An hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
But where the lake slept deep and still,
Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill;
And oft both path and hill were torn,
Where wintry torrents down had borne,
And heap'd upon the cumber'd land
Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And ask'd Fitz-James, by what strange cause
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

He sought these wilds? traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

"Brave Gael, my pass in danger tried,
Hangs in my belt, and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,
"I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I came,
Bewilder'd in pursuit of game,
All seem'd as peaceful and as still,
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,
Though deep, perchance, the villain lied."—
"Yet why a second venture try?"—
"A warrior thou, and ask me why!—
Moves our free course by such fix'd cause,
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
Slight cause will then suffice to guide
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—
A falcon flown, a greyhound stray'd,
The merry glance of mountain maid:

Or, if a path be dangerous known,
The danger's self is lure alone."—

V.

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye nought of Low-land war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?"

—"No, by my word;—of bands prepared
To guard King James's sports I heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
Which else in Doune had peaceful hung."—

"Free be they flung!—for we were loth
Their silken folds should feast the moth.
Free be they flung!—as free shall wave
Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
But, Stranger, peaceful since you came,
Bewilder'd in the mountain game,
Whence the bold boast by which you show
Vich-Alpine's vow'd and mortal foe?"

"Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
With ruffian dagger stabb'd a knight:
Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lower'd the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
"And heard'st thou why he drew his blade?
Heard'st thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What reck'd the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."—
"Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claim'd sovereignty his due;
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command,"24
The young King, mew'd in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.

But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruin'd Lowland swain
His herds and harvest rear'd in vain.—
Methinks a soul, like thine, should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answer'd with disdainful smile,—
"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now! See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread,
For fatten'd steer or household bread;
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
'To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.'
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul!—While on yo plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
But one along yon river's maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.242
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold,
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.'—

VIII.

Answer'd Fitz-James,—"And, if I sought,
Think'st thou no other could be brought?
What deem ye of my path way-laid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?"—

"As of a meed to rashness due:
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
I seek my hound, or falcon stray'd,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doom'd to die,
Save to fulfil an augury."—
"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
In peace; but when I come agen,
I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand
This rebel Chieftain and his band!'"—

IX.

"Have, then, thy wish!"—he whistled shrill,
And he was answer'd from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,
From crag to crag the signal flew.
Instant, through copse and heath, arose
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles grey their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.
That whistle garrison'd the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood, and still.
Like the loose crags, whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James,—"Howsay'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"

Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart
The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:
"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."
Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood—then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seem'd as if their mother Earth
Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back,
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shone
On bracken green, and cold grey stone.

XI.

Fitz-James look'd round — yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied, "Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu." 243

They moved:—I said Fitz-James was brave,
As ever knight that belted glaive;
Yet dare not say, that now his blood
Kept on its wont and temper'd flood,

As, following Roderick's stride, he drew
That seeming lonesome pathway through,
Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonour'd and defied.
Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
The vanish'd guardians of the ground,
And still, from copse and heather deep,
Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
And in the plover's shrilly strain,
The signal whistle heard again.
Nor breathed he free till far behind
The pass was left; for then they wind
Along a wide and level green,
Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reach'd that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd. 244
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:—
"Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand: 245
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII.
The Saxon paused:—"I ne'er delay'd,
When foe bade me draw my blade;
Nay, more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!

And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead;
'Who spills the foremost foe-man's life,
His party conquers in the strife.' "—
"Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
"The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land."

XIV.
Dark lightning flash'd from Roderick's eye—
"Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?"
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate:—
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair."
"I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."—
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,246
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dash'd aside;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintain'd unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And shower'd his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,  
Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill;  
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand  
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,  
And backward borne upon the lea,  
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

"Now, yield thee, or by Him who made  
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"  
"Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!  
Let recreant yield, who fears to die."  
—Like adder darting from his coil,  
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,  
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,  
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;  
Received, but reck'd not of a wound,  
And lock'd his arms his foeman round.—  
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!  
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!  
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel,  
Through bars of brass and triple steel!—  
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,  
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
In Roderick's gore he dipt the braid,—

"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid:
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that Faith and Valour give."

With that he blew a bugle-note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
By loosen'd rein, a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,
And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—
With wonder view'd the bloody spot—
—"Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high;—I must be bouned,
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII.

"Stand, Bayard, stand!"—the steed obey'd,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreath'd his left hand in the mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turn'd on the horse his armed heel,
And stirr'd his courage with the steel.
Bounded the fiery steed in air,
The rider sate erect and fair,
Then like a bolt from steel cross-bow
Forth launch'd, along the plain they go.
They dash'd that rapid torrent through,
And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop prick'd the Knight,
His merry-men follow'd as they might.
Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,
And in the race they mock thy tide;
Torry and Lendrick now are past,
And Deanstown lies behind them cast;
They rise, the banner'd towers of Doune,
They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
They sweep like breeze through Ochteryre;
They mark just glance and disappear
The lofty brow of ancient Kier;
They bathe their courser's sweltering sides,
Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,
And on the opposing shore take ground,
With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
Right-hand they cleave thy cliffs,
Craig-Forth!
And soon the bulwark of the North,
Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
Upon their fleet career look'd down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strain'd
Sudden his steed the leader rein'd;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:
"Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman grey,
Who town-ward holds the rocky way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
With which he scales the mountain-side?

Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?"
"No, by my word;—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace."—
"Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Far, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish green.
'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
The uncle of the banish'd Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe:
The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared."
Then right-hand wheel'd their steeds, and straight
They won the castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
Now, as he climb'd the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:
"Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Graeme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven;—
—Be pardon'd one repining tear!
For He, who gave her, knows how dear,
How excellent! but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.
—Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound! 248
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headman's bloody hand—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
—But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day. 249

James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park,
And play my prize;—King James shall mark,
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft, in happier days,
His boyish wonder loved to praise.”

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rock'd and rung,
And echo'd loud the flinty street
Beneath the courser's clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blush'd for pride and shame.
And well the simperer might be vain,—
He chose the fairest of the train.
"The stag at eve had drunk his fill."
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant’s quaint attire,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,
“Long live the Commons’ King, King James!”
Behind the King throng’d peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brook’d the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
—But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern;
There nobles mourn’d their pride restrain’d,
And the mean burgher’s joys disdain’d;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banish’d man,
There thought upon their own grey tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deem’d themselves a shame-ful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their chequer’d bands the joyous rout.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o’er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor call'd in vain; for Douglas came.
—For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades bear.
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring; 252
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppress'd;
Indignant then he turn'd him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky,
A rood beyond the farthest mark;—
And still in Stirling's royal park,
The grey-hair'd sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas-cast,
And moralise on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.
The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
The King, with look unmoved, bestow'd
A purse well-fill'd with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
And sharper glance, the dark grey man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong;
The old men mark'd, and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And wink'd aside, and told each son,
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wreck'd by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmur rose to clamours loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King,
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or call'd the banish'd man to mind;
No, not from those who, at the chase,
Once held his side the honour'd place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he, whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

XXV.
The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favourite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free, and Bourdeaux wine,
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North,—
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antler'd prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound,
In anger struck the noble hound,—
The Douglas had endured,
The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates, that with name
Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darken'd brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the dark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

XXVI.

Then clamour'd loud the royal train,
And brandish'd swords and staves amain.
But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! the Douglas doom'd of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."—
"Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous lord!" the Monarch said;
"Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow, and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break off the sports!"—for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows,—
"Break off the sports!" he said, and frown'd,
"And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen prick'd among the crowd,
Repell'd by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep;
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disorder'd roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said,—
"Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed, permit me then
A word with these misguided men.

XXVIII.

"Hear, gentle friends! ere yet for me,
Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honour, and my cause,
I tender free to Scotland's laws.
Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?
Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,
My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should unbind,
Which knit my country and my kind?
Oh no! Believe, in yonder tower
It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes should dread,
For me in kindred gore are red;
To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
For me, that mother wails her son;
For me, that widow’s mate expires;
For me, that orphans weep their sires;
That patriots mourn insulted laws,
And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!"

XXIX.
The crowd’s wild fury sunk again
In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
With lifted hands and eyes, they pray’d
For blessings on his generous head,
Who for his country felt alone,
And prized her blood beyond his own.
Old men, upon the verge of life,
Bless’d him who staid the civil strife;
And mothers held their babes on high,
The self-devoted chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire:
Even the rough soldier’s heart was moved;
As if behind some bier beloved,
With trailing arms and drooping head,
The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle’s battled verge,
With sighs resign’d his honour’d charge.

XXX.
The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not now vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
"O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear’st thou,” he said, “the loud acclaim,
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
Strain’d for King James their morning note;
With like acclaim they hail'd the day
When first I broke the Douglas' sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet,
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!
Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fever'd blood.
Thou many-headed monster-thing,
O who would wish to be thy king!

XXXI.

"But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of Mar?
"He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground:
For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
Most sure for evil to the throne,—
The outlaw'd Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
Has summon'd his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand array'd.

The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Dounie,
To break their muster march'd, and soon
Your grace will hear of battle fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII.

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,—
I should have earlier look'd to this:
I lost it in this bustling day.
—Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war:
Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
Was made our prisoner by a knight;
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco: fly!"

He turn'd his steed,—"My liege, I hie,—
Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
I fear the broadswords will be drawn."
The turf the flying courser spurn'd,
And to his towers the King return'd.

---

Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown.

CANTO SIXTH.
The Guard-Room.

I.

The sun, awakening, through the smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
Summoning revellers from the laggard dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to his den;
Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,
And warning student pale to leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and, O! what scenes of woe,
Are witness'd by that red and struggling beam!
The fever'd patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds its stream;
The ruin'd maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;

---

XXXIII.
Ill with King James's mood that day,
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;
Soon were dismiss'd the courtly throng,
Nor less upon the sadden'd town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumour'd feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms:—the Douglas too,
They mourn'd him pent within the hold,
"Where stout Earl William was of old"—
And there his word the speaker staid,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen, from the west,
At evening to the Castle press'd;
And busy talkers said they bore Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
The wakeful mother, by the
glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant’s couch,
and soothes his feeble wail.

II.
At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barr’d,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deaden’d the torches’ yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blacken’d stone,
And show’d wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deform’d with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fever’d with the stern debauch;
For the oak table’s massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drain’d, and cups o’erthrown,
Show’d in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;
Some labour’d still their thirst to quench;

Some, chill’d with watching, spread their hands
O’er the huge chimney’s dying brands,
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III.
These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor own’d the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader’s name;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.253
There the Italian’s clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard’s there you trace;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air;
The Fleming there despised the soil,
That paid so ill the labourer’s toil;
Their rolls show’d French and German name;
And merry England’s exiles came,
To share, with ill-conceal’d disdain,
Of Scotland’s pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well train’d to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontroll’d;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.
IV.

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and, 'mid their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
Bore token of the mountain sword.

Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length up-started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved, that day, their games cut short,
And marr'd the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!"
And, while a merry catch I troll,

Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear."

V.

Soldier's Song.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not?
For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!
VI.
The warder's challenge, heard without,
Staid in mid-roar the merry shout.
A soldier to the portal went,—
"Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And,—beet for jubilee the drum!
A maid and minstrel with him come."

Bertram, a Fleming, grey and scarr'd,
Was entering now the Court of Guard,
A harper with him, and in plaid
All mufled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrank to 'scape the view
Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
"What news?" they roared:—
"I only know,
From noon till eve we fought with foe,
As wild and as untameable
As the rude mountains where they dwell;
On both sides store of blood is lost,
Nor much success can either boast."—
"But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band."—

VII.
"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine,
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm."—
"Hear ye his boast?" cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share, howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."

Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
And dropp'd at once the tartan screen:—
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May, through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abash'd and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.
VIII.
Boldly she spoke,—"Soldiers, attend!
My father was the soldier's friend;
Cheer'd him in camps, in marches led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant, or the strong,
Should exile's daughter suffer wrong."
Answer'd De Brent, most forward still
In every feat or good or ill,—
"I shame me of the part I play'd:
And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!
An outlaw I by forest laws,
And merry Needwood knows the cause.
Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,"—
He wiped his iron eye and brow,—
"Must bear such age, I think, as thou.—
Hear ye, my mates;—I go to call
The Captain of our watch to hall:
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!—
Beware loose speech, or jesting rough:
Ye all know John de Brent. Enough."

IX.
Their Captain came, a gallant young.—
(Of Tullibardine's house he sprung),
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humour light,
And, though by courtesy contr'd,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye;—and yet, in sooth,
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
Does thy high quest a knight require,
Or may the venture suit a squire?"—
Her dark eye flash'd;—she paused and sigh'd,—
"O what have I to do with pride!—
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."
The signet-ring young Lewis took,
With deep respect and alter'd look;
And said,—"This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veil'd,
Lady, in aught my folly fail'd.
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshall you the way."
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took;
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden's hold
Forced bluntly back the proffer'd gold;—
"Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar."
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:
Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beau-desert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the labouring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they pass'd, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters' din;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsmen's sword,
And many an hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
By artist form'd, who deem'd it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-brow'd porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward roll'd,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They enter'd:—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Deck'd the sad walls and oaken floor;
Such as the rugged days of old
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou mayst remain
Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then, the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growl'd anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel look'd, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deem'd the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!
And oft his fever'd limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from her seat;—
O! how unlike her course at sea!
Or his free step on hill and lea!—
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
"What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all.
Have they been ruin'd in my fall?
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear."—
(For Allan, who his mood well knew,
Was choked with grief and terror too.)—
"Who fought—who fled?—Old man, be brief;—
Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
Who basely live?—who bravely died?"—
"O, calm thee, Chief!" the Minstrel cried,
"Ellen is safe;"—"For that, thank Heaven!"—
"And hopes are for the Douglas given;—
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told,
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is rent."

XIV.

The Chieftain rear'd his form on high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Chequer'd his swarthy brow and cheeks.
—"Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold, on festal day,
In yon lone isle, . . . again where ne'er
Shall harper play, or warrior hear! . . .
That stirring air that peals on high,"
O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
Strike it!—and then, (for well thou canst,)
Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then,
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soar'd from battle fray."
The trembling Bard with awe obey'd,—
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witness'd from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awaken'd the full power of song—
And bore him in career along;
As shallop launch'd on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side.
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV.

Battle of Bcal' an Duine. 256

"The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For, ere he parted, he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!
There is no breeze upon the fern,
Nor ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.

Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?
—I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero bound for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

XVI.

"Their light-arm'd archers far and near
Survey'd the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frown'd,
Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crown'd.
No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sudden march was dumb.
The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trosach's rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archers.

XVII.

"At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had peal'd the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear;

For life! for life! their plight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broadswords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!'
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levell'd low;
And closely shoulder'd side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
'We'll quell the savage moun-
taineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'—

XVIII.

"Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broad-sword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurl'd them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash,
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
—'My banner-man, advance!'
I see,' he cried, 'their column shake.—
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!'—
The horsemen dash'd among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon make lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
Where, where was Roderick then!
One blast upon his bugle-horn,
Were worth a thousand men!
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was pour'd;
Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanish'd the mountainsword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass:
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

XIX.
"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within,
—Minstrel, away, the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosach's dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.—
Grey Benvenue I soon repass'd,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky view of vivid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain-glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosach's gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,
But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side;
While by the lake below appears
The dark'ning cloud of Saxon spears.
At weary bay each shatter'd band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tatter'd sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Mark'd the fell havoc of the day.

XX.
"Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxon stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—'Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand,
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and den."
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corslet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Pour'd down at once the lowering heaven;
A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
Her billows rear'd their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swell'd they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him shower'd, 'mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
In vain—He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on the shallop's bow.
—Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;—
I mark’d Duncraggan’s widow’d dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleam’d in her hand:
It darken’d,—but, amid the moan
Of waves, I heard a dying groan;
Another flash! — the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o’er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

"‘Revenge! revenge!’ the Saxons cried,
The Gaels’ exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
Waved ’twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch’s name, afar
An herald’s voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell’s lord, and Roderick bold,
Were both, he said, in captive hold.”

—But here the lay made sudden stand!—
The harp escaped the Minstrel’s hand!—
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brook’d his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafen’d ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp,—his hands are clench’d,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrench’d;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fix’d on vacancy;
Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu!—
Old Allan-Bane look’d on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit pass’d:
But when he saw that life was fled,
He pour’d his wailing o’er the dead.

XXII.

Lament.

“And art thou cold and lowly laid,
Thy foeman’s dread, thy people’s aid,
Breadalbane’s boast, Clan-Alpine’s shade
The Lady of the Lake.

For thee shall none a requiem say?
—For thee, — who loved the minstrel's lay,
For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
The shelter of her exiled line,
E'en in this prison-house of thine,
I'll wail for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"What groans shall yonder valleys fill!
What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!
What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
Thy fall before the race was won,
Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!
There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.—
O woes for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

"Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prison'd eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honour'd Pine."—

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remain'd in lordly bower apart,
Where play'd with many-colour'd gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lighten'd up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or, if she look'd, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawn'd the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claim'd with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Graeme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betray'd.—
Those who such simple joys have known,
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour!
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

**XXIV.**

**Lay of the Imprisoned Huntsman.**

"My hawk is tired of perch and hoo!
My idle greyhound loathes his food,
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were, as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,
With bended bow and bloodhound free,
For that's the life is meet for me.
I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they be,
Have not a hall of joy for me.
No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
And homeward wend with evening dew;

A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
That life is lost to love and me!"

**XXV.**

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
The list'ner had not turn'd her head.
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful knight was near.
She turn'd the hastier, lest again
The prisoner should renew his strain.—
"O welcome, brave Fitz-James!"
she said;
"How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt"—"O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.
Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's king thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride
May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than time,
He holds his court at morning prime."
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
As to a brother's arm she clung.
Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whisper'd hope and cheer;
Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
Through gallery fair, and high arcade,
Till, at its touch, its wings of pride
A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue, fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought, who own'd this state,
The dreaded prince whose will was fate.
She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,
Then turn'd bewilder'd and amazed,
For all stood bare; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent;
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring.
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King! 257

XXVII.

As wreath of snow, on mountain-breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She show'd the ring, she clasp'd her hands.
O! not a moment could he brook,
The generous prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her; and, the while,
Check'd with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—
"Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask nought for Douglas; yester even,
His prince and he have much forgiven.
Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamour loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
Our council aided, and our laws.
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern,
With stout De Vaux and Grey Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our Throne.
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid."

XXVIII.

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.

The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
On Nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepp'd between—"Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims.258
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause."—
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
"Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
Join'd to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Ben-venue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!"—
Aloud he spake—"Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guess'd
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But, with that consciousness, there came
A lightening of her fears for Gràme,
And more she deem'd the Monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her sire,
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy suit:—the King of Kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings,
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand:—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—
Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turn'd her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wish'd her sire to speak
The suit that stain'd her glowing cheek.—
"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.—
Malcolm, come forth!"—And, at the word,
Down kneel'd the Gràme to Scotland's Lord.
"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan, A refuge for an outlaw'd man,
Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Gràme!"—
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.
Harp of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
Thy numbers sweet with Nature's vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel harp!
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp
May idly cavil at an idle lay.

When on the weary night dawn'd wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devour'd alone.
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now, the dying numbers ring
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell,
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—

And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!
THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

Quid dignum memorare tuis, Hispania, terris,
Vox humana valet!—Claudian.

TO

JOHN WHITMORE, Esq.

AND TO THE

COMMITTEE OF SUBSCRIBERS FOR RELIEF OF THE PORTUGUESE SUFFERERS
IN WHICH HE PRESIDES,

THIS POEM,

(THE VISION OF DON RODERICK,)

COMPOSED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE FUND UNDER THEIR MANAGEMENT,
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

WALTER SCOTT.

PREFACE.

The following Poem is founded upon a Spanish Tradition, particularly detailed in the Notes; but bearing, in general, that Don Roderick, the last Gothic King of Spain, when the Invasion of the Moors was impending, had the temerity to descend into an ancient vault, near Toledo, the opening of which had been denounced as fatal to the Spanish Monarchy. The legend adds, that his rash curiosity was mortified by an emblematical representation of those Saracens who, in the year 714, defeated him in battle, and reduced Spain under their dominion. I have presumed to prolong the Vision of the Revolutions of Spain down to the present eventful crisis of the Peninsula; and to divide it, by a supposed change of scene, into Three Periods. The First of these represents the Invasion of the Moors, the Defeat and Death of Roderick, and closes with the peaceful occupation of the country by the Victors. The Second Period embraces the state of the Peninsula, when the conquests of the Spaniards and Portuguese in the East and West Indies had raised to the highest pitch the renown of their arms; sullied, however, by superstition and cruelty. An allusion to the inhumanities of the Inquisition terminates this picture. The Last Part of the Poem opens with the state of Spain previous to the unparalleled treachery of Bonaparte; gives a sketch of the usurpation attempted upon that unsuspicious and friendly kingdom, and terminates with the arrival of the British succours. It may be farther proper to mention, that the object of the Poem is less to commemorate or detail particular incidents, than to exhibit a general and impressive picture of the several periods brought upon the stage.

I am too sensible of the respect due to the Public, especially by one who has already experienced more than ordinary indulgence, to offer any apology for the inferiority of the poetry to the subject it is chiefly designed to commemorate. Yet I think it proper to mention, that while I was hastily executing a work, written for a temporary purpose, and on passing events, the task was most cruelly interrupted by the successive deaths of Lord President Blair, and Lord Viscount Melville. In those distinguished characters, I had not only to regret persons whose lives were most important to Scotland, but also whose notice and patronage honoured my entrance upon active life; and, I may add, with melancholy pride, who permitted my more advanced age to claim no common share in their friendship. Under such interruptions, the following verses, which my best and happiest efforts must have left far unworthy of their theme, have, I am myself sensible, an appearance of negligence and incoherence, which, in other circumstances, I might have been able to remove.

EDINBURGH, June 24, 1811.

282
INTRODUCTION.

I.

Lives there a strain, whose sounds of mounting fire
May rise distinguish'd o'er the din of war;
Or died it with yon Master of the Lyre,
Who sung beleaguer'd Ilion's evil star?
Such, Wellington, might reach thee from afar,
Wafting its descant wide o'er Ocean's range;
Nor shouts, nor clashing arms, its mood could mar,
All as it swell'd 'twixt each loud trumpet-change,
That elangs to Britain victory, to Portugal revenge!

II.

Yes! such a strain, with all o'er-pouring measure,
Might melodize with each tumultuous sound,
Each voice of fear or triumph, woe or pleasure,
That rings Mondego's ravaged shores around;
The thundering cry of hosts with conquest crown'd,
The female shriek, the ruin'd peasant's moan,
The shout of captives from their chains unbound,
The foil'd oppressor's deep and sullen groan,
A Nation's choral hymn for tyranny o'erthrown.

III.

But we, weak minstrels of a laggard day,
Skill'd but to imitate an elder page,
Timid and raptureless, can we repay
The debt thou claim'st in this exhausted age?
Thou givest our lyres a theme, that might engage
Those that could send thy name o'er sea and land,
While sea and land shall last; for Homer's rage
A theme; a theme for Milton's mighty hand—
How much unmeet for us, a faint degenerate band!

IV.

Ye mountains stern! within whose rugged breast
The friends of Scottish freedom found repose;
Ye torrents! whose hoarse sounds have soothed their rest,
Returning from the field of vanquish'd foes;
Say have ye lost each wild majestic close,
That erst the choir of Bards or Druids flung;
What time their hymn of victory arose,
And Cattraeth's glens with voice of triumph rung,
And mystic Merlin harp'd, and grey-hair'd Llywarch sung!
O! if your wilds such minstrelsy retain,
As sure your changeful gales seem oft to say,
When sweeping wild and sinking soft again,
Like trumpet-jubilee, or harp's wild sway;
If ye can echo such triumphant lay,
Then lend the note to him has loved you long!
Who pious gather'd each tradition grey,
That floats your solitary wastes along,
And with affection vain gave them new voice in song.

Hark, from yon misty cairn their answer tost:
"Minstrel! the fame of whose romantic lyre,
Capricious-swelling now, may soon be lost,
Like the light flickering of a cottage fire;
If to such task presumptuous thou aspire.
Seek not from us the meed to warrior due:
Age after age has gather'd son to sire,
Since our grey cliffs the din of conflict knew,
Or, pealing through our vales, victorious bugles blew.

For not till now, how oft soe'er the task
Of truant verse hath lighten'd graver care,
From Muse or Sylvan was he wont to ask,
In phrase poetic, inspiration fair;
Careless he gave his numbers to the air,
They came unsought for, if applauses came;
Nor for himself prefers he now the prayer;
Let but his verse befit a hero's fame,
Immortal be the verse!—forgot the poet's name.

" Decay'd our old traditionary lore,
Save where the lingering fays renew their ring,
By milk-maid seen beneath the hawthorn hoar,
Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted spring;
Save where their legends grey-hair'd shepherds sing,
That now scarce win a listening ear but thine,
Of feuds obscure, and Border ravaging,
And rugged deeds recount in rugged line,
Of moonlight foray made on Teviot, Tweed, or Tyne.
"No! search romantic lands, where the near Sun
Gives with unstinted boon ethereal flame,
Where the rude villager, his labour done,
In verse spontaneous chants some favour'd name,
Whether Olalia's charms his tribute claim,
Her eye of diamond, and her locks of jet;
Or whether, kindling at the deeds of Graeme,
He sing, to wild Morisco measure set,
Old Albin's red claymore, green Erin's bayonet!

"There, of Numantian fire a swarthy spark
Still lightens in the sun-burnt native's eye;
The stately port, slow step, and visage dark,
Still mark enduring pride and constancy.
And, if the glow of feudal chivalry
Beam not, as once, thy nobles' dearest pride,
Iberia! oft thy crestless peasantry
Have seen the plumed Hidalgo quit their side,
Have seen, yet dauntless stood—'gainst fortune fought and died.

"Explore those regions, where the flinty crest
Of wild Nevada ever gleams with snows,
Where in the proud Alhambra's ruin'd breast
Barbaric monuments of pomp repose;
Or where the banners of more ruthless foes
Than the fierce Moor, float o'er Toledo's fane,
From whose tall towers even now the patriot throws
An anxious glance, to spy upon the plain
The blended ranks of England, Portugal, and Spain.

"And cherish'd still by that unchanging race,
Are themes for minstrelsy more high than thine;
Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,
Legend and vision, prophecy and sign;
Where wonders wild of Arabesque combine
With Gothic imagery of darker shade,
Forming a model meet for minstrel line.
Go, seek such theme!"—The Mountain Spirit said:
With filial awe I heard—I heard, and I obey'd.
The Vision of Don Roderick.

I.

Rearing their crests amid the cloudless skies,
And darkly clustering in the pale moonlight,
Toledo's holy towers and spires arise,
As from a trembling lake of silver white.

Their mingled shadows intercept the sight
Of the broad burial-ground outstretch'd below,
And nought disturbs the silence of the night;
All sleeps in sullen shade, or silver glow,
All save the heavy swell of Teio's ceaseless flow.

II.

All save the rushing swell of Teio's tide,
Or, distant heard, a courser's neigh or tramp;
Their changing rounds as watchful horsemen ride,
To guard the limits of King Roderick's camp.

For, through the river's night-fog rolling damp,
Was many a proud pavilion dimly seen,
Which glimmer'd back, against the moon's fair lamp,
Tissues of silk and silver twisted sheen,
And standards proudly pitch'd, and warders arm'd between.

III.

But of their Monarch's person keeping ward,
Since last the deep-mouth'd bell of vespers toll'd,
The chosen soldiers of the royal guard
The post beneath the proud Cathedral hold:
A band unlike their Gothic sires of old,
Who, for the cap of steel and iron mace,
Bear slender darts, and casques bedeck'd with gold;
Where silver-studded belts their shoulders grace,
Where ivory quivers ring in the broad falchion's place.

IV.

In the light language of an idle court,
They murmur'd at their master's long delay,
And held his lengthen'd orisons in sport:—
"What! will Don Roderick here till morning stay,
To wear in shrift and prayer the night away?
And are his hours in such dull penance past,
For fair Florinda's plunder'd charms to pay?"
Then to the east their weary eyes they cast,
And wish'd the lingering dawn would glimmer forth at last.
But, far within, Toledo's Prelate lent
An ear of fearful wonder to the King;
The silver lamp a fitful lustre sent,
So long that sad confession witnessing:
For Roderick told of many a hidden thing,
Such as are lothly utter'd to the air,
When Fear, Remorse, and Shame, the bosom wring,
And Guilt his secret burden cannot bear,
And Conscience seeks in speech a respite from Despair.

The old man's faded cheek wax'd yet more pale,
As many a secret sad the King bewray'd;
As sign and glance eked out the unfinish'd tale,
When in the midst his faltering whisper staid.—
"Thus royal Witiza was slain," —he said;
"Yet, holy Father, deem not it was I."
Thus still Ambition strives her crimes to shade.—
"Oh! rather deem 'twas stern necessity!
Self-preservation bade, and I must kill or die.

Full on the Prelate's face, and silver hair,
The stream of failing light was feebly roll'd:
But Roderick's visage, though his head was bare,
Was shadow'd by his hand and mantle's fold.
While of his hidden soul the sins he told,
Proud Alaric's descendant could not brook,
That mortal man his bearing should behold,
Or boast that he had seen, when Conscience shook,
Fear tame a monarch's brow, Remorse a warrior's look.

"And if Florinda's shrieks alarm'd the air,
If she invoked her absent sire in vain,
And on her knees implored that I would spare,
Yet, reverend priest, thy sentence rash refrain!—
All is not as it seems—the female train
Know by their bearing to disguise their mood:"
But Conscience here, as if in high disdain,
Sent to the Monarch's cheek the burning blood—
He stay'd his speech abrupt—and up the Prelate stood.
IX.

"O harden'd offspring of an iron race!
What of thy crimes, Don Roderick, shall I say?
What alms, or prayers, or penance, can efface
Murder's dark spot, wash treason's stain away!
For the foul ravisher how shall I pray,
Who, scarce repentant, makes his crime his boast?
How hope Almighty vengeance shall delay,
Unless in mercy to yon Christian host,
I spare the shepherd, lest the guiltless sheep be lost."

X.

Then kindled the dark Tyrant in his mood,
And to his brow return'd its dauntless gloom;
"And welcome then," he cried,
"be blood for blood,
For treason treachery, for dishonour doom!
Yet will I know whence come they, or by whom.
Show, for thou canst—give forth the fated key,
And guide me, Priest, to that mysterious room,
Where, if aught true in old tradition be,
His nation's future fates a Spanish King shall see."

XI.

"Ill-fated Prince! recall the desperate word,
Or pause ere yet the omen thou obey!
Bethink, yon spell-bound portal would afford
Never to former Monarch entrance-way;
Nor shall it ever ope, old records say,
Save to a King, the last of all his line,
What time his empire totters to decay,
And treason digs, beneath, her fatal mine,
And, high above, impends avenging wrath divine."—

XII.

"Prelate! a monarch's fate brooks no delay;
Lead on!"—The ponderous key the old man took,
And held the winking lamp, and led the way,
By winding stair, dark aisle, and secret nook,
Then on an ancient gateway bent his look;
And, as the key the desperate King essay'd,
Low mutter'd thunders the Cathedral shook,
And twice he stopp'd, and twice new effort made,
Till the huge bolts roll'd back, and the loud hinges Bray'd.
"The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste."
THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty, was that vaulted hall;  
Roof, walls, and floor, were all of marble stone,  
Of polish'd marble, black as funeral pall,  
Carved o'er with signs and characters unknown.  
A paly light, as of the dawning, shone  
Through the sad bounds, but whence they could not spy;  
For window to the upper air was none;  
Yet, by that light, Don Roderick could descry  
Wonders that ne'er till then were seen by mortal eye.

XIV.

Grim sentinels, against the upper wall,  
Of molten bronze, two Statues held their place;  
Massive their naked limbs, their stature tall,  
Their frowning foreheads golden circles grace.  
Moulded they seem'd for kings of giant race,  
That lived and sinn'd before the avenging flood;  
This grasp'd a scythe, that rested on a mace;  
This spread his wings for flight, that pondering stood,  
Each stubborn seem'd and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fix'd was the right-hand Giant's brazen look  
Upon his brother's glass of shifting sand,  
As if its ebb he measured by a book,  
Whose iron volume loaded his huge hand;  
In which was wrote of many a fallen land,  
Of empires lost, and kings to exile driven:  
And o'er that pair their names in scroll expand—  
"Lo, Destiny and Time! to whom by Heaven  
The guidance of the earth is for a season given."—

XVI.

Even while they read, the sand-glass wastes away;  
And, as the last and lagging grains did creep,  
That right-hand Giant 'gan his club upsway,  
As one that startles from a heavy sleep.  
Full on the upper wall the mace's sweep  
At once descended with the force of thunder,  
And hurtling down at once, in crumbled heap,  
The marble boundary was rent asunder,  
And gave to Roderick's view new sights of fear and wonder.
For they might spy, beyond that mighty breach,
Realms as of Spain in vision'd prospect laid,
Castles and towers, in due proportion each,
As by some skilful artist's hand portray'd:
Here, crossed by many a wild Sierra's shade,
And boundless plains that tire the traveller's eye;
There, rich with vineyard and with olive glade,
Or deep-embrown'd by forests huge and high,
Or wash'd by mighty streams, that slowly murmur'd by.

First shrill'd an unrepeated female shriek!—
It seemed as if Don Roderick knew the call,
For the bold blood was blanching in his cheek.—
Then answer'd kettle-drum and atabal,
Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the ear appal,
The Tecbir war-cry, and the Lelie's yell, 265
Ring wildly dissonant along the hall.
Needs not to Roderick their dread import tell—
"The Moor!"—he cried, "the Moor!—ring out the Tocsin bell!"
XXI.

"By Heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians yield!
Their coward leader gives for flight the sign!
The sceptred craven mounts to quit the field—
Is not yon steed Orelio?—Yes, 'tis mine! 266
But never was she turn'd from battle-line:
Lo! where the recreant spurs o'er stock and stone!
Curses pursue the slave, and wrath divine!
Rivers ingulph him!"—"Hush," in shuddering tone,
The Prelate said;—"rash Prince, yon vision'd form's thine own."

XXII.

Just then, a torrent cross'd the flier's course;
The dangerous ford the Kingly Likeness tried:
But the deep eddies whelm'd both man and horse,
Swept like benighted peasant down the tide;
And the proud Moslemah spread far and wide,
As numerous as their native locust band;
Berber and Ismael's sons the spoils divide,
With naked scimitars mete out the land,
And for the bondsmen base the freeborn natives brand.

XXIII.

Then rose the grated Harem, to enclose
The loveliest maidens of the Christian line;
Then, menials, to their misbelieving foes,
Castile's young nobles held forbidden wine;
Then, too, the holy Cross, salvation's sign,
By impious hands was from the altar thrown,
And the deep aisles of the polluted shrine
Echo'd, for holy hymn and organ-tone,
The Santon's frantic dance, the Fakir's gibbering moan.

XXIV.

How fares Don Roderick?—E'en as one who spies
Flames dart their glare o'er midnight's sable woof,
And hears around his children's piercing cries,
And sees the pale assistants stand aloof;
While cruel Conscience brings him bitter proof,
His folly or his crime have caused his grief;
And while above him nods the crumbling roof,
He curses earth and Heaven—himself in chief—
Desperate of earthly aid, despairing Heaven's relief!
XXV.

That scythe-arm’d Giant turn’d his fatal glass
And twilight on the landscape closed her wings;
Far to Asturian hills the war-sounds pass,
And in their stead rebeck or timbrel rings;
And to the sound the bell-deck’d dancer springs,
Bazaars resound as when their marts are met,
In tourney light the Moor his jerrid flings,
And on the land as evening seem’d to set,
The Imaum’s chant was heard from mosque or minaret.

XXVII.

From the dim landscape roll the clouds away—
The Christians have regain’d their heritage;
Before the Cross has waned the Crescent’s ray
And many a monastery decks the stage,
And lofty church, and low-brow’d hermitage.
The land obeys a Hermit and a Knight,—
The Genii those of Spain for many an age;
This clad in sackcloth, that in armour bright,
And that was Valour named, this Bigotry was hight.

XXVI.

So pass’d that pageant. Ere another came,
The visionary scene was wrapp’d in smoke,
Whose sulph’rous wreaths were cross’d by sheets of flame;
With every flash a bolt explosive broke,
Till Roderick deem’d the fiends had burst their yoke,
And waved ’gainst heaven the infernal gonfalone!
For War a new and dreadful language spoke,
Never by ancient warrior heard or known;
Lightning and smoke her breath, and thunder was her tone.

XXVIII.

Valour was harness’d like a Chief of old,
Arm’d at all points, and prompt for knightly gest;
His sword was temper’d in the Ebro cold,
Morena’s eagle plume adorn’d his crest,
The spoils of Afric’s lion bound his breast.
Fierce he stepp’d forward and flung down his gage;
As if of mortal kind to brave the best.
Him follow’d his Companion, dark and sage,
As he, my Master, sung the dangerous Archimage.
XXIX.

Haughty of heart and brow the Warrior came,
In look and language proud as proud might be,
Vaunting his lordship, lineage, fights, and fame:
Yet was that barefoot monk more proud than he:
And as the ivy climbs the tallest tree,
So round the loftiest soul his toils he wound,
And with his spells subdued the fierce and free,
Till ermined Age and Youth in arms renown'd,
Honouring his scourge and hair-cloth, meekly kiss'd the ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that Valour, peerless knight,
Who ne'er to King or Kaiser veil'd his crest,
Victorious still in bull-feast or in fight,
Since first his limbs with mail he did invest,
Stoop'd ever to that Anchoret's behest;
Nor reason'd of the right, nor of the wrong,
But at his bidding laid the lance in rest,
And wrought fell deeds the troubled world along,
For he was fierce as brave, and pitiless as strong.

XXXI.

Oft his proud galleys sought some new-found world,
That latest sees the sun, or first the morn;
Still at that Wizard's feet their spoils he hurl'd,—
Ingots of ore from rich Potosi borne,
Crowns by Caciques, aigrettes by Omrahs worn,
Wrought of rare gems, but broken, rent, and foul;
Idols of gold from heathen temples torn,
Bedabbled all with blood.—With grisly scowl
The Hermit mark'd the stains, and smiled beneath his cowl.

XXXII.

Then did he bless the offering, and bade make
Tribute to Heaven of gratitude and praise;
And at his word the choral hymns awake,
And many a hand the silver censer sways,
But with the incense-breath these censers raise,
Mix steams from corpses smouldering in the fire;
The groans of prison'd victims mar the lays,
And shrieks of agony confound the quire;
While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the darken'd scenes expire.
XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of music heard,  
As once again revolved that measured sand;  
Such sounds as when, for sylvan dance prepared,  
Gay Xeres summons forth her vintage band;  
When for the light bolero ready stand  
The mozo blithe, with gay muchacha met;  
He conscious of his broider’d cap and band,  
She of her netted locks and light corsette,  
Each tiptoe perch’d to spring, and shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening scene became;  
For Valour had relax’d his ardent look,  
And at a lady’s feet, like lion tame,  
Lay stretch’d, full loth the weight of arms to brook;  
And soften’d Bigotry, upon his book,  
Patter’d a task of little good or ill:  
But the blithe peasant plied his pruning-hook,  
Whistled the muleteer o’er vale and hill,  
And rung from village-green the merry seguidille.

XXXV.

Grey Royalty, grown impotent of toil,  
Let the grave sceptre slip his lazy hold;  
And, careless, saw his rule become the spoil  
Of a loose Female and her minion bold.  
But peace was on the cottage and the fold,  
From court intrigue, from bickering faction far;  
Beneath the chestnut-tree Love’s tale was told,  
And to the tinkling of the light guitar,  
Sweet stoop’d the western sun, sweet rose the evening star.

XXXVI.

As that sea-cloud, in size like human hand,  
When first from Carmel by the Tishbite seen,  
Came slowly overshadowing Israel’s land,  
A while, perchance, bedeck’d with colours sheen,  
While yet the sunbeams on its skirts had been,  
Limning with purple and with gold its shroud,  
Till darker folds obscured the blue serene,  
And blotted heaven with one broad sable cloud,  
Then sheeted rain burst down, and whirlwinds howl’d aloud:
XXXVII.

Even so, upon that peaceful scene was pour’d,
Like gathering clouds, full many a foreign band,
And He, their Leader, wore in sheath his sword,
And offer’d peaceful front and open hand,
Veiling the perjured treachery he plann’d,
By friendship’s zeal and honour’s specious guise,
Until he won the passes of the land;
Then burst were honour’s oaths, and friendship’s ties!
He clutch’d his vulture-grasp, and call’d fair Spain his prize.

XXXVIII.

An Iron Crown his anxious forehead bore;
And well such diadem his heart became.
Who ne’er his purpose for remorse gave o’er,
Or check’d his course for piety or shame;
Who, train’d a soldier, deem’d a soldier’s fame
Might flourish in the wreath of battles won,
Though neither truth nor honour deck’d his name;
Who, placed by fortune on a Monarch’s throne,
Reck’d not of Monarch’s faith, or Mercy’s kingly tone.

XXXIX.

From a rude isle his ruder lineage came,
The spark, that, from a suburb-hovel’s hearth
Ascending, wraps some capital in flame,
Hath not a meaner or more sordid birth.
And for the soul that bade him waste the earth—
The sable land-flood from some swamp obscure,
That poisons the glad husband-field with death,
And by destruction bids its fame endure,
Hath not a source more sullen, stagnant, and impure.

XL.

Before that Leader strode a shadowy Form;
Her limbs like mist, her torch like meteor show’d,
With which she beckon’d him through fight and storm,
And all he crush’d that cross’d his desperate road,
Nor thought, nor fear’d, nor look’d on what he trode.
Realms could not glut his pride, blood could not slake,
So oft as e’er she shook her torch abroad—
It was Ambition bade her terrors wake,
Nor deign’d she, as of yore, a milder form to take.
XLI.

No longer now she spurn’d at mean revenge,
Or staid her hand for conquer’d foeman’s moan;
As when, the fates of aged Rome to change,
By Caesar’s side she cross’d the Rubicon.
Nor joy’d she to bestow the spoils she won,
As when the banded powers of Greece were task’d
to war beneath the Youth of Macedon:
No seemly veil her modern minion ask’d,
He saw her hideous face, and loved the fiend unmask’d.

XLII.

That Prelate mark’d his march
—On banners blazed
With battles won in many a distant land,
On eagle-standards and on arms he gazed;
“And hopest thou then,” he said, “thy power shall stand?
O, thou hast builded on the shifting sand,
And thou hast temper’d it with slaughter’s flood;
And know, fell scourge in the Almighty’s hand,
Gore-moisten’d trees shall perish in the bud,
And by a bloody death, shall die the Man of Blood!”

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckon’d from his train
A wan fraternal Shade, and bade him kneel,
And paled his temples with the crown of Spain,
While trumpets rang, and heralds cried, “Castile!”
Not that he loved him—No!—In no man’s weal,
Scarce in his own, e’er joy’d that sullen heart;
Yet round that throne he bade his warrior’s wheel,
That the poor Puppet might perform his part,
And be a sceptred slave, at his stern beck to start.

XLIV.

But on the Natives of that Land misused,
Not long the silence of amazement hung,
Nor brook’d they long their friendly faith abused;
For, with a common shriek, the general tongue
Exclaim’d, “To arms!”—and fast to arms they sprung;
And VALOUR woke, that Genius of the Land!
Pleasure, and ease, and sloth, aside he flung,
As burst th’ awakening Nazarite his band,
When ’gainst his treacherous foes he clench’d his dreadful hand.
That Mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye
Upon the Satraps that begirt him round,
Now doff'd his royal robe in act to fly,
And from his brow the diadem unbound.

So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle wound,
From Tarick's walls to Bilboa's mountains blown,
These martial satellites hard labour found,
To guard a while his substituted throne—
Light recking of his cause, but battling for their own.

But unappall'd and burning for the fight,
The Invaders march, of victory secure;
Skilful their force to sever or unite,
And train'd alike to vanquish or endure.

Nor skilful less, cheap conquest to ensure,
Discord to breathe, and jealousy to sow,
To quell by boasting, and by bribes to lure;
While nought against them bring the unpractised foe,
Save hearts for Freedom's cause, and hands for Freedom's blow.

Proudly they march—but, O! they march not forth
By one hot field to crown a brief campaign,
As when their Eagles, sweeping through the North,
Destroy'd at every stoop an ancient reign!

Far other fate had Heaven decreed for Spain;
In vain the steel, in vain the torch was plied,
New Patriot armies started from the slain,
High blazed the war, and long, and far, and wide,
And oft the God of Battles blest the righteous side.
XLIX.

Nor unatoned, where Freedom's foes prevail,
Remain'd their savage waste.
With blade and brand,
By day the invaders ravaged hill and dale,
But, with the darkness, the Guerilla band
Came like night's tempest, and avenged the land,
And claim'd for blood the retribution due,
Probed the hard heart, and lopp'd the murd'rous hand;
And Dawn, when o'er the scene her beams she threw,
Midst ruins they had made, the spoilers' corpses knew.

LI.

Then Zaragoza—blighted be the tongue
That names thy name without the honour due!
For never hath the harp of Minstrel rung,
Of faith so felly proved, so firmly true!
Mine, sap, and bomb, thy shatter'd ruins knew,
Each art of war's extremity had room,
Twice from thy half-sack'd streets the foe withdrew
And when at length stern fate decreed thy doom,
They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb.

L.

What minstrel verse may sing,
or tongue may tell,
Amid the vision'd strife from sea to sea,
How oft the Patriot banners rose or fell,
Still honour'd in defeat as victory!
For that sad pageant of events to be,
Show'd every form of fight by field and flood;
Slaughter and Ruin, shouting forth their glee,
Beheld, while riding on the tempest scud,
The waters choked with slain, the earth bedrench'd with blood!

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad city! Though in chains,
Enthrall'd thou canst not be!
Arise, and claim
Reverence from every heart where Freedom reigns,
For what thou worshippest!—thy sainted dame,
She of the Column, honour'd be her name,
By all, whate'er their creed, who honour love!
And like the sacred relics of the flame,
That gave some martyr to the bless'd above,
To every loyal heart may thy sad embers prove!
LIII.

Nor thine alone such wreck.
    Gerona fair!
Faithful to death thy heroes
    shall be sung,
Manning the towers while o'er
    their heads the air
Swart as the smoke from
    raging furnace hung;
Now thicker dark'ning where
    the mine was sprung,
Now briefly lighten'd by the
    cannon's flare,
Now arch'd with fire-sparks as
    the bomb was flung,
And redd'ning now with con-
    flagration's glare,
While by the fatal light the foes
    for storm prepare.

LV.

Don Roderick turn'd him as
    the shout grew loud—
A varied scene the changeful
    vision show'd,
For, where the ocean mingled
    with the cloud,
A gallant navy stemm'd the
    billows broad.
From mast and stern St.
    George's symbol flow'd,
Blent with the silver cross
    to Scotland dear;
Mottling the sea their land-
    ward barges row'd.
And flash'd the sun on
    bayonet, brand, and spear,
And the wild beach return'd the
    seaman's jovial cheer.

LIV.

While all around was danger,
    strife, and fear,
While the earth shook, and
    darken'd was the sky
And wide Destruction stunn'd
    the listening ear,
Appall'd the heart, and
    stupified the eye,—
Afar was heard that thrice-
    repeated cry,
In which old Albion's heart
    and tongue unite,
Whene'er her soul is up, and
    pulse beats high,
Whether it hail the wine cup
    or the fight,
And bid each arm be strong,
    or bid each heart be
    light.

LV.

It was a dread, yet spirit-stirring
    sight!
The billows foam'd beneath
    a thousand oars,
Fast as they land the red-cross
    ranks unite,
Legions on legions bright'n-
    ing all the shores.
Then banners rise, and cannon-
    signal roars,
Then peals the warlike
    thunder of the drum,
Thrills the loud fife, the
    trumpet-flourish pours,
And patriot hopes awake, and
    doubts are dumb,
For, bold in Freedom's cause,
    the bands of Ocean
    come!
LVII.

A various host they came—
whose ranks display
Each mode in which the
warrior meets the fight,
The deep battalion locks its
firm array,
And meditates his aim the
marksman light;
Far glance the light of sabres
flashing bright,
Where mounted squadrons
shake the echoing mead,
Lacks not artillery breathing
flame and night,
Nor the fleet ordnance
whirl'd by rapid steed,
That rivals lightning's flash in
ruin and in speed.

LIX.

And, O! loved warriors of the
Minstrel's land!
Yonder your bonnets nod,
your tartans wave!
The rugged o'ren may mark
the mountain band,
And harsher features, and a
mien more grave;
But ne'er in battle-field throb'd
heart so brave,
As that which beats beneath
the Scottish plaid;
And when the pibroch bids the
battle rave,
And level for the charge
your arms are laid,
Where lives the desperate foe
that for such onset staid!

LVIII.

A various host—from kindred
realms they came,
Brethren in arms, but rivals
in renown—
For yon fair bands shall merry
England claim,
And with their deeds of
valour deck her crown.
Hers their bold port, and hers
their martial frown,
And hers their scorn of death
in freedom's cause,
Their eyes of azure, and their
locks of brown,
And the blunt speech that
bursts without a pause,
And freeborn thoughts, which
league the Soldier with the
Laws.

LX.

Hark! from yon stately ranks
what laughter rings
Mingling wild mirth with
war's stern minstrelsy,
His jest while each blithe
comrade round him flings,
And moves to death with
military glee:
Boast, Erin, boast them! tame-
less, frank, and free,
In kindness warm, and fierce
in danger known,
Rough nature's children,
humorous as she:
And He, yon Chieftain—
strike the, proudest tone
Of thy bold harp, green Isle!
—the Hero is thine
own.
THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

LXI.

Now on the scene Vimeira
should be shown,
On Talavera's fight should
Roderick gaze,
And hear Corunna wail her
battle won,
And see Busaco's crest with
lightning blaze:—
But shall fond fable mix with
heroes' praise?
Hath Fiction's stage for
Truth's long triumphs
room?
And dare her wild-flowers
mingle with the bays,
That claim a long eternity
to bloom
Around the warrior's crest, and
o'er the warrior's tomb!

LXII.

Or may I give adventurous
Fancy scope,
And stretch a bold hand to
the awful veil
That hides futurity from
anxious hope,
Bidding beyond it scenes of
glory hail,
And painting Europe rousing
at the tale
Of Spain's invaders from her
confines hurl'd,
While kindling nations buckle
on their mail,
And Fame, with clarion-blast
and wings unfurl'd,
To Freedom and Revenge awakes
an injured World?

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the
glance I cast,
Since Fate has mark'd futurity
her own:
Yet fate resigns to worth the
glorious past,
The deeds recorded, and the
laurels won.
Then, though the Vault of
Destiny be gone,
King, Prelate, all the
phantasms of my brain,
Melted away like mist-wreaths
in the sun,
Yet grant for faith, for
valour, and for Spain,
One note of pride and fire, a
Patriot's parting strain!

CONCLUSION.

I.

"Who shall command Estrella's
mountain-tide
Back to the source, when
tempest-chafed, to hie?
Who, when Gascogne's vex'd
gulf is raging wide,
Shall hush it as a nurse her
infant's cry?
His magic power let such vain
boaster try,
And when the torrent shall
his voice obey,
And Biscay's whirlwinds list
his lullaby,
Let him stand forth and bar
mine eagles' way,
And they shall heed his voice,
and at his bidding stay.
II.

"Else ne'er to stoop, till high on Lisbon's towers
They close their wings, the symbol of our yoke,
And their own sea hath whelm'd yon red-cross Powers!"
Thus, on the summit of Alverca's rock,
To Marshall, Duke, and Peer, Gaul's Leader spoke.
While downward on the land his legions press,
Before them it was rich with vine and flock,
And smiled like Eden in her summer dress;—
Behind their wasteful march, a reeking wilderness.

III.

And shall the boastful Chief maintain his word,
Though Heaven hath heard the wailings of the land,
Though Lusitania whet her vengeful sword,
Though Britons arm, and Wellington command!
No! grim Busaco's iron ridge shall stand
An adamantine barrier to his force;
And from its base shall wheel his shatter'd band,
As from the unshaken rock the torrent hoarse
Bears off its broken waves, and seeks a devious course.

IV.

Yet not because Alcoba's mountain-hawk
Hath on his best and bravest made her food,
In numbers confident, yon Chief shall baulk
His Lord's imperial thirst for spoil and blood:
For full in view the promised conquest stood,
And Lisbon's matrons from their walls, might sum
The myriads that had half the world subdued,
And hear the distant thunders of the drum,
That bids the bands of France to storm and havoc come.

V.

Four moons have heard these thunders idly roll'd,
Have seen these wistful myriads eye their prey,
As famish'd wolves survey a guarded fold—
But in the middle path a Lion lay!
At length they move—but not to battle-fray,
Nor blaze yon fires where meets the manly fight;
Beacons of infamy, they light the way
Where cowardice and cruelty unite
To damn with double shame their ignominious flight.
VI.

O triumph for the Fiends of Lust and Wrath!
Ne'er to be told, yet ne'er to be forgot,
What wanton horrors mark'd their wreckful path!
The peasant butcher'd in his ruin'd cot,
The hoary priest even at the altar shot,
Childhood and age given o'er to sword and flame,
Woman to infamy;—no crime forgot,
By which inventive demons might proclaim
Immortal hate to man, and scorn of God's great name!

VII

The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
With horror paused to view the havoc done,
Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch forlorn,
Wiped his stern eye, then fiercer grasp'd his gun.
Nor with less zeal shall Britain's peaceful son
Exult the debt of sympathy to pay;
Riches nor poverty the tax shall shun,
Nor prince nor peer, the wealthy nor the gay,
Nor the poor peasant's mite, nor bard's more worthless lay.

VIII.

But thou unfoughten wilt thou yield to Fate,
Minion of Fortune, now miscall'd in vain!
Can vantage-ground no confidence create,
Marcella's pass, nor Guarda's mountain-chain?
Vainglorious fugitive! yet turn again!
Behold, where, named by some prophetic Seer,
Flows Honour's Fountain, as foredoom'd the stain
From thy dishonour'd name and arms to clear—
Fallen Child of Fortune, turn, redeem her favour here!

IX.

Yet, ere thou turn'st, collect each distant aid;
Those chief that never heard the lion roar!
Within whose souls lives not a trace portray'd,
Of Talavera, or Mondego's shore!
Marshal each band thou hast, and summon more;
Of war's fell stratagems exhaust the whole;
Rank upon rank, squadron on squadron pour;
Legion on legion on thy foeman roll,—
And weary out his arm—thou canst not quell his soul.
X.

O vainly gleams with steel
Agueda's shore,
Vainly thy squadrons hide
Assuava's plain,
And front the flying thunders as they roar,
With frantic charge and tenfold odds, in vain!
And what avails thee that, for Cameron slain,
Wild from his plaided ranks the yell was given—
Vengeance and grief gave mountain-rage the rein,
And, at the bloody spear-point headlong driven,
Thy Despot's giant guards fled like the rack of heaven.

XII.

But you, ye heroes of that well-fought day,
How shall a bard, unknowing and unknown,
His meed to each victorious leader pay,
Or bind on every brow the laurels won?
Yet fain my harp would wake its boldest tone,
O'er the wide sea to hail Cadogan brave;
And he, perchance, the minstrel-note might own,
Mindful of meeting brief that Fortune gave
'Mid you far western isles that hear the Atlantic rave.

XI.

Go, baffled boaster! teach thy haughty mood
To plead at thine imperious master's throne,
Say, thou hast left his legions in their blood,
Deceived his hopes, and frustrated thine own;
Say, that thine utmost skill and valour shown,
By British skill and valour were outvied;
Last say, thy conqueror was Wellington!
And if he chafe, be his own fortune tried—
God and our cause to friend, the venture we'll abide.

XIII.

Yes! hard the task, when Britons wield the sword,
To give each Chief and every field its fame:
Hark! Albuera thunders Beresford,
And Red Barosa shouts for dauntless Graeme!
O for a verse of tumult and of flame,
Bold as the bursting of their cannon sound,
To bid the world re-echo to their fame!
For never, upon gory battleground,
With conquest's well-bought wreath were braver victors crown'd!
THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

XIV.

O who shall grudge him Albuera's bays,^77
Who brought a race regener-ate to the field,
Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
Temper'd their headlong rage, their courage steel'd,
And raised fair Lusitania's fallen shield,
And gave new edge to Lusitania's sword,
And taught her sons forgotten arms to wield
Shiver'd my harp, and burst its every chord,
If it forget thy worth, victorious Beresford!

XV.

Not on that bloody field of battle won,
Though Gaul's proud legions roll'd like mist away,
Was half his self-devoted valour shown—
He gaged but life on that illustrious day;
But when he toil'd those squadrons to array,
Who fought like Britons in the bloody game,
Sharper than Polish pike or assagay,
He braved the shafts of censure and of shame,
And, dearer far than life, he pledged a soldier's fame.

XVI.

Nor be his praise o'erpast who strove to hide
Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,
Whose wish Heaven for his country's weal denied;
Danger and fate he sought, but glory found.
From clime to clime, where'er war's trumpets sound,
The wanderer went; yet, Caledonia! still
Thine was his thought in march and tented ground;
He dream'd 'mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,
And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyndoch's lovely rill.

XVII.

O hero of a race renown'd of old,
Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle-swell,
Since first distinguish'd in the onset bold,
Wild sounding when the Roman rampart fell!
By Wallace' side it rung the Southron's knell,
Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibber, own'd its fame,
Tummell's rude pass can of its terrors tell,
But ne'er from prouder field arose the name,
Than when wild Ronda learn'd the conquering shout of Graeme!^78
XVIII.

But all too long, through seas unknown and dark,
(With Spenser's parable I close my tale,)
By shoal and rock hath steer'd my venturous bark,
And landward now I drive before the gale.

And now the blue and distant shore I hail,
And nearer now I see the port expand,
And now I gladly furl my weary sail,
And as the prow light touches on the strand,
I strike my red-cross flag and bind my skiff to land.
ROKEBY.
A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

TO

JOHN B. S. MORRITT, ESQ.,

THIS POEM,
THE SCENE OF WHICH IS LAID IN HIS BEAUTIFUL DEMESNE OF ROKEBY,
IS INSCRIBED, IN TOKEN OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP, BY

WALTER SCOTT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Scene of this Poem is laid at Rokeby, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire and shifts to the adjacent fortress of Barnard Castle, and to other places in that Vicinity.

The Time occupied by the Action is a space of Five Days, Three of which are supposed to elapse between the end of the Fifth and beginning of the Sixth Canto.

The date of the supposed events is immediately subsequent to the great Battle of Marston Moor, 3d July, 1644. This period of public confusion has been chosen, without any purpose of combining the Fable with the Military or Political Events of the Civil War, but only as affording a degree of probability to the Fictitious Narrative now presented to the Public.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

The Moon is in her summer glow,
But hoarse and high the breezes blow,
And, racking o'er her face, the cloud
Varies the tincture of her shroud;
On Barnard's towers, and Tees's stream,
She changes as a guilty dream,
When conscience, with remorse and fear,
Goads sleeping fancy's wild career.
Her light seems now the blush of shame,
Seems now fierce anger's darker flame,

Shifting that shade, to come and go,
Like apprehension's hurried glow;
Then sorrow's livery dims the air,
And dies in darkness, like despair.
Such varied hues the warder sees
Reflected from the woodland Tees,
Then from old Baliol's tower looks forth,
Sees the clouds mustering in the north,
Hears, upon turret-roof and wall,
By fits the plashing rain-drop fall,
Lists to the breezes boding sound,
And wraps his shaggy mantle round.
II.

Those towers, which in the changeful gleam
Throw murky shadows on the stream,
Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
The emotions of whose troubled breast,
In wild and strange confusion driven,
Rivals the flitting rack of heaven.
Ere sleep stern Oswald’s senses tied,
Oft had he changed his weary side,
Composed his limbs, and vainly sought
By effort strong to banish thought.
Sleep came at length, but with a train
Of feelings true and fancies vain,
Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
The expected future with the past.
Conscience, anticipating time,
Already rues the enacted crime,
And calls her furies forth, to shake
The sounding scourge and hissing snake;
While her poor victim’s outward throes
Bear witness to his mental woes,
And show what lesson may be read
Beside a sinner’s restless bed.

III.

Thus Oswald’s labouring feelings trace
Strange changes in his sleeping face,
Rapid and ominous as these
With which the moonbeams tinge the Tees.
There might be seen of shame the blush,
There anger’s dark and fiercer flush,
While the perturbed sleeper’s hand
Seem’d grasping dagger-knife, or brand.
Relax’d that grasp, the heavy sigh,
The tear in the half-opening eye,
The pallid cheek and brow, confess’d
That grief was busy in his breast;
Nor paused that mood—a sudden start
Impell’d the life-blood from the heart:
Features convulsed, and mutterings dread,
Show terror reigns in sorrow’s stead.
That pang the painful slumber broke,
And Oswald with a start awoke.

IV.

He woke, and fear’d again to close
His eyelids in such dire repose;
He woke—to watch the lamp, and tell
From hour to hour the castle-bell.
Or listen to the owlet’s cry,
Or the sad breeze that whistles by
Or catch, by fits, the tuneless rhyme
With which the warder cheats the time,
And envying think, how, when the sun
Bids the poor soldier’s watch be done,
Couch’d on his straw, and fancy-free,
He sleeps like careless infancy.

V.

Far town-ward sounds a distant tread,
And Oswald, starting from his bed,
Hath caught it, though no human ear,
Unsharpen’d by revenge and fear,
Could e’er distinguish horse’s clank,
Until it reach’d the castle bank.
Now nigh and plain the sound appears,
The warder’s challenge now he hears,
Then clanking chains and levers tell,
That o’er the moat the draw-bridge fell,
And, in the castle court below,
Voices are heard, and torches glow,
As marshalling the stranger’s way,
Straight for the room where Oswald lay;
The cry was—“Tidings from the host,
Of weight—a messenger comes post.”
Stifling the tumult of his breast,
His answer Oswald thus express’d—
“Bring food and wine, and trim the fire;
Admit the stranger, and retire.”

VI.

The stranger came with heavy stride,
The morion’s plumes his visage hide,
And the buff-coat, an ample fold,
Mantles his form’s gigantic mould.
Full slender answer deigned he
To Oswald’s anxious courtesy,
But mark’d, by a disdainful smile,
He saw and scorn’d the petty wile,
When Oswald changed the torch’s place,
Anxious that on the soldier’s face
Its partial lustre might be thrown,
To show his looks, yet hide his own.
His guest, the while, laid low aside
The ponderous cloak of tough bull’s hide,
And to the torch glanced broad and clear
The corslet of a cuirassier;
Then from his brows the casque he drew,
And from the dank plume dash’d the dew,
From gloves of mail relieved his hands,
And spread them to the kindling brands,
And, turning to the genial board,
Without a health, or pledge, or word
Of meet and social reverence said,
Deeply he drank, and fiercely fed;
As free from ceremony's sway,
As famish'd wolf that tears his prey.

VII.
With deep impatience, tinged with fear,
His host beheld him gorge his cheer,
And quaff the full carouse, that lent
His brow a fiercer hardiment.
Now Oswald stood a space aside,
Now paced the room with hasty stride
In feverish agony to learn
Tidings of deep and dread concern,
Cursing each moment that his guest
Protracted o'er his ruffian feast.
Yet, viewing with alarm, at last,
The end of that uncouth repast,
Almost he seem'd their haste to rue,
As, at his sign, his train withdrew,
And left him with the stranger, free
To question of his mystery.
Then did his silence long proclaim
A struggle between fear and shame.

VIII.
Much in the stranger's mien appears,
To justify suspicious fears.
On his dark face a scorching clime,
And toil, had done the work of time,
Roughen'd the brow, the temples bared,
And sable hairs with silver shared,
Yet left—what age alone could tame—
The lip of pride, the eye of flame;
The full-drawn lip that upward curl'd,
The eye, that seem'd to scorn the world.
That lip had terror never blench'd;
Ne'er in that eye had tear-drop quench'd
The flash severe of swarthv glow,
That mock'd at pain, and knew not woe.
Inured to danger's direst form,
Tornade and earthquake, flood and storm,
Death had he seen by sudden blow,
By wasting plague, by tortures slow,
By mine or breach, by steel or ball,
Knew all his shapes, and scorn'd them all.

IX.
But yet, though Bertram's harden'd look,
Unmoved, could blood and danger brook,
Still worse than apathy had place
On his swart brow and callous face;
For evil passions, cherish'd long,
Had plough'd them with impressions strong.
All that gives gloss to sin, all gay
Light folly, past with youth away,
But rooted stood, in manhood's hour,
The weeds of vice without their flower.
And yet the soil in which they grew,
Had it been tamed when life was new,
Had depth and vigour to bring forth
The hardier fruits of virtuous worth.
Not that, e'en then, his heart had known
The gentler feelings' kindly tone;
But lavish waste had been refined
To bounty in his chasen'd mind,
And lust of gold, that waste to feed,
Been lost in love of glory's meed,
And, frantic then no more, his pride
Had ta'en fair virtue for its guide.

X.

Even now, by conscience unrestrain'd,
Clogg'd by gross vice, by slaughter stain'd,
Still knew his daring soul to soar,
And mastery o'er the mind he bore;
For meaner guilt, or heart less hard,
Quail'd beneath Bertram's bold regard.
And this felt Oswald, while in vain
He strove, by many a winding train,
To lure his sullen guest to show,
Unask'd, the news he long'd to know,

While on far other subject hung
His heart, than falter'd from his tongue.
Yet nought for that his guest did deign
To note or spare his secret pain,
But still, in stern and stubborn sort,
Return'd him answer dark and short,
Or started from the theme, to range
In loose digression wild and strange,
And forced the embarrass'd host to buy,
By query close, direct reply.

XI.

A while he glozed upon the cause
Of Commons, Covenant, and Laws,
And Church Reform'd—but felt rebuke
Beneath grim Bertram's sneering look,
Then stammer'd—"Has a field been fought?
Has Bertram news of battle brought?
For sure a soldier, famed so far
In foreign fields for feats of war,
On eve of fight ne'er left the host,
Until the field were won and lost."
"Here, in your towers by circling Tees,
You, Oswald Wycliffe, rest at ease;
Why deem it strange that others come
To share such safe and easy home,
From fields where danger, death, and toil,
Are the reward of civil broil?"—
"Nay, mock not, friend! since well we know
The near advances of the foe,
To mar our northern army's work,
Encamp'd before beleagur'd York;
Thy horse with valiant Fairfax lay,
And must have fought—how went the day?"

XII.

"Wouldst hear the tale?—On
Marston heath
Met, front to front, the ranks of death;
Flourish'd the trumpets fierce, and now
Fired was each eye, and flush'd each brow;
On either side loud clamours ring,
'God and the Cause!'—'God
and the King!'
Right English all, they rush'd to blows,
With nought to win, and all to lose.
I could have laugh'd—but lack'd the time—
To see, in phrenesy sublime,
How the fierce zealots fought and bled,
For king or state, as humour led;
Some for a dream of public good,
Some for church-tippet, gown and hood,
Draining their veins, in death to claim
A patriot's or a martyr's name.—
Led Bertram Risingham the hearts,
That counter'd there on adverse parts,
No superstitious fool had I
Sought El Dorados in the sky!
Chili had heard me through her states,
And Lima oped her silver gates,
Rich Mexico I had march'd through,
And sack'd the splendours of Peru,
Till sunk Pizarro's daring name,
And, Cortez, thine, in Bertram's fame.'—
"Still from the purpose wilt thou stray!
Good gentle friend, how went the day?"

XIII.

"Good am I deem'd at trumpet-sound,
And good where goblets dance the round,
Though gentle ne'er was join'd, till now,
With rugged Bertram's breast and brow.—
But I resume. The battle's rage
Was like the strife which currents wage,
Where Orinoco, in his pride,
Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
A rival sea of roaring war;
While, in ten thousand eddies driven,
The billows fling their foam to heaven,
And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
Where rolls the river, where the main.
Even thus upon the bloody field,
The eddying tides of conflict wheel'd
Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
Hurling against our spears a line
Of gallants, fiery as their wine;
Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
In zeal's despite began to reel.
What wouldst thou more?—in tumult tost,
Our leaders fell, our ranks were lost.
A thousand men, who drew the sword
For both the Houses and the Word,
Preach'd forth from hamlet, grange, and down,
To curb the crosier and the crown,
Now, stark and stiff, lie stretch'd in gore,
And ne'er shall rail at mitre more.—
Thus fared it, when I left the fight,
With the good Cause and Commons' right."—

XIV.

"Disastrous news!" dark Wycliffe said;
Assumed despondence bent his head.
While troubled joy was in his eye,
The well-feign'd sorrow to belie.—
"Disastrous news!—when needed most,
Told ye not that your chiefs were lost?
Complete the woful tale, and say,
Who fell upon that fatal day;
What leaders of repute and name
Bought by their death a deathless fame.
If such my direst foeman's doom,
My tears shall dew his honour'd tomb.—
No answer?—Friend, of all our host,
Thou know'st whom I should hate the most,
Whom thou too, once, wert wont to hate,
Yet leavest me doubtful of his fate."—
With look unmoved—"Of friend or foe,
Aught," answer'd Bertram, "would'st thou know
Demand in simple terms and plain,
A soldier's answer shalt thou gain;—
For question dark, or riddle high,
I have nor judgment nor reply."

XV.

The wrath his art and fear suppress'd
Now blazed at once in Wycliffe's breast;
And brave, from man so meanly born,
Roused his hereditary scorn.
"Wretch! hast thou paid thy bloody debt?
Philip of Mortham, lives he yet?
False to thy patron or thine oath,
Trait'rous or perjured, one or both.
Slave! hast thou kept thy promise plight,
To slay thy leader in the fight?"—Then from his seat the soldier sprung,
And Wycliffe's hand he strongly wrung;
His grasp, as hard as glove of mail,
Forced the red blood-drop from the nail—
"A health!" he cried; and, ere he quaff'd,
Flung from him Wycliffe's hand, and laugh'd:
"Now, Oswald Wycliffe, speaks thy heart!
Now play'st thou well thy genuine part!
Worthy, but for thy craven fear, Like me to roam a bucanier.
What reck'st thou of the Cause divine,
If Mortham's wealth and lands be thine?
What carest thou for beleaguer'd York,
If this good hand have done its work?
Or what, though Fairfax and his best
Are reddening Marston's swarthly breast,
If Philip Mortham with them lie, Lending his life-blood to the dye?—
Sit, then! and as 'mid comrades free
Carousing after victory, When tales are told of blood and fear,
That boys and women shrink to hear,
From point to point I frankly tell
The deed of death as it befell.

"When purposed vengeance I forego,
Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe:
And when an insult I forgive, Then brand me as a slave, and live!—
Philip of Mortham is with those Whom Bertram Risingham calls foes;
Or whom more sure revenge attends,
If number'd with ungrateful friends.
As was his wont, ere battle glow'd,
Along the marshall'd ranks he rode,
And wore his vizor up the while. I saw his melancholy smile,
When, full opposed in front, he knew
Where Rokeby's kindred banner flew.
'And thus,' he said, 'will friends divide!'—
I heard, and thought how, side by side,
We two had turn'd the battle's tide,
In many a well-debated field, Where Bertram's breast was Philip's shield.
I thought on Darien's deserts pale, Where death bestrides the evening gale,
How o'er my friend my cloak I threw, And fenceless faced the deadly dew;
I thought on Quariana's cliff, Where, rescued from our foundering skiff,
Through the white breakers' wrath I bore
Exhausted Mortham to the shore;
And when his side an arrow found,
I suck'd the Indian's venom'd wound.
These thoughts like torrents rush'd along.
To sweep away my purpose strong.

XVII.

"Hearts are not flint, and flints are rent;
Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent.
When Mortham bade me, as of yore,
Be near him in the battle's roar,
I scarcely saw the spears laid low,
I scarcely heard the trumpets blow;
Lost was the war in inward strife,
Debating Mortham's death or life.
'Twas then I thought, how, lured to come,
As partner of his wealth and home,
Years of piratic wandering o'er,
With him I sought our native shore.
But Mortham's lord grew far estranged
From the bold heart with whom he ranged;
Doubts, horrors, superstitious fears,
Sadden'd and dimm'd descending years;

The wily priests their victim sought,
And damn'd each free-born deed and thought
Then must I seek another home,
My license shook his sober dome;
If gold he gave, in one wild day
I revell'd thrice the sum away.
An idle outcast then I stray'd,
Unfit for tillage or for trade.
Deem'd, like the steel of rusted lance,
Useless and dangerous at once.
The women fear'd my hardy look,
At my approach the peaceful shock;
The merchant saw my glance of flame,
And lock'd his hoards when Bertram came;
Each child of coward peace kept far
From the neglected son of war.

XVIII.

"But civil discord gave the call,
And made my trade the trade of all.
By Mortham urged, I came again
His vassals to the fight to train.
What guerdon waited on my care?
I could not cant of creed or prayer;
Sour fanatics each trust obtain'd.
And I, dishonour'd and disdain'd,
Gain'd but the high and happy lot,
In these poor arms to front the shot!—
All this thou know'st, thy gestures tell;
Yet hear it o'er, and mark it well.
"'Tis honour bids me now relate
Each circumstance of Mortham's fate.

XIX.

"Thoughts, from the tongue that slowly part,
Glance quick as lightning through the heart.
As my spur press'd my courser's side,
Philip of Mortham's cause was tried,
And, ere the charging squadrons mix'd,
His plea was cast, his doom was fix'd.
I watch'd him through the doubtful fray,
That changed as March's moody day,
Till, like a stream that bursts its bank,
Fierce Rupert thunder'd on our flank.
'Twas then, midst tumult, smoke, and strife,
Where each man fought for death or life,
'Twas then I fired my petronel,
And Mortham, steed and rider, fell.
One dying look he upward cast,
Of wrath and anguish—'twas his last.
Think not that there I stopp'd, to view
What of the battle should ensue;
But ere I clear'd that bloody press,
Our northern horse ran masterless;
Monckton and Mitton told the news,
How troops of roundheads choked the Ouse,
And many a bonny Scot, aghast,
Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
Cursing the day when zeal or meed
First lured their Lesley o'er the Tweed.
Yet when I reach'd the banks of Swale,
Had rumour learn'd another tale;
With his barb'd horse, fresh tidings say,
Stout Cromwell has redeem'd the day:
But whether false the news, or true,
Oswald, Ireck as light as you."

XX.

Not then by Wycliffe might be shown,
How his pride startled at the tone
In which his complice, fierce and free,
 Asserted guilt's equality.
In smoothest terms his speech he wove,
Of endless friendship, faith, and love;
Promised and vow'd in courteous sort,
But Bertram broke professions short.
"Wycliffe, be sure not here I stay,
No, scarcely till the rising day;
Warn'd by the legends of my youth,
I trust not an associate's truth.
Do not my native dales prolong
Of Percy Rede the tragic song."
Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
By Girsonfield, that treacherous Hall?
Oft, by the Pringle's haunted side,
The shepherd sees his spectre glide.
And near the spot that gave me name,
The moated mound of Risingham,
Where Reed upon her margin sees
Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,
Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
An outlaw's image on the stone;
Unmatch'd in strength, a giant he,
With quiver'd back, and kirtled knee.
Ask how he died, that hunter bold,
The tameless monarch of the wold,
And age and infancy can tell,
By brother's treachery he fell.
Thus warn'd by legends of my youth,
I trust to no associate's truth.

XXI.
"When last we reason'd of this deed,
Nought, I bethink me, was agreed,
Or by what rule, or when, or where,
The wealth of Mortham we should share;
Then list, while I the portion name,
Our differing laws give each to claim.
Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,
Her rules of heritage must own;
They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
And these I yield:—do thou revere
The statutes of the Bucanier.
Friend to the sea, and foeman sworn
To all that on her waves are borne,
When falls a mate in battle broil,
His comrade heirs his portion'd spoil;
When dies in fight a daring foe,
He claims his wealth who struck the blow;
And either rule to me assigns
Those spoils of Indian seas and mines,
Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark;
Ingot of gold and diamond spark,
Chalice and plate from churches borne,
And gems from shrieking beauty torn,
Each string of pearl, each silver bar,
And all the wealth of western war.
I go to search, where, dark and deep,
Those Trans-atlantic treasures sleep.
Thou must along—for, lacking thee,
The heir will scarce find entrance free;
And then farewell. I haste to try
Each varied pleasure wealth can buy;
When cloyed each wish, these
wars afford
Fresh work for Bertram's restless
sword."

XXII.
An undecided answer hung
On Oswald's hesitating tongue.
Despite his craft, he heard with
awe
This ruffian stabber fix the
law;
While his own troubled passions
veer
Through hatred, joy, regret, and
fear:—
Joy'd at the soul that Bertram
flies,
He grudged the murderer's
mighty prize,
Hated his pride's presumptuous
tone,
And fear'd to wend with him
alone.
At length, that middle course to
steer,
To cowardice and craft so dear,
"His charge," he said, "would
ill allow
His absence from the fortress
now;
Wilfrid on Bertram should
attend,
His son should journey with his
friend."

XXIII.
Contempt kept Bertram's anger
down,
And wreathed to savage smile
his frown.
"Wilfrid, or thou—'tis one to
me,
Whichever bears the golden key.
Yet think not but I mark, and
smile
To mark, thy poor and selfish
wile!
If injury from me you fear,
What, Oswald Wycliffe, shields
thee here?
I've sprung from walls more
high than these,
I've swam through deeper
streams than Tees.
Might I not stab thee, ere one
yell
Could rouse the distant sentinel?
Start not—it is not my design,
But, if it were, weak fence were
thine;
And, trust me, that, in time of
need,
This hand hath done more
desperate deed.
Go, haste and rouse thy slumber-
ing son;
Time calls, and I must needs be
gone.

XXIV.
Nought of his sire's ungenerous
part
Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart;
A heart too soft from early life
To hold with fortune needful
strife.
His sire, while yet a hardier
race
Of numerous sons were Wycliffe's
grace,
On Wilfrid set contemptuous
brand,
For feeble heart and forceless
hand;
But a fond mother's care and
joy
Were centred in her sickly boy.
ROKEBY.

No touch of childhood's frolic mood
Show'd the elastic spring of blood;
Hour after hour he loved to pore
On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,
But turn'd from martial scenes and light,
From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
To ponder Jaques' moral strain,
And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
And weep himself to soft repose
O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.

XXV.

In youth he sought not pleasures found
By youth in horse, and hawk, and hound,
But loved the quiet joys that wake
By lonely stream and silent lake;
In Deepdale's solitude to lie,
Where all is cliff and copse and sky;
To climb Catcastle's dizzy peak,
Or lone Pendragon's mound to seek.
Such was his wont; and there his dream
Soar'd on some wild fantastic theme,
Of faithful love, or ceaseless spring,
Till contemplation's wearied wing
The enthusiast could no more sustain,
And sad he sunk to earth again.

XXVI.

He loved—as many a lay can tell,
Preserved in Stanmore's lonely dell;
For his was minstrel's skill, he caught
The art unteachable, untaught;
He loved—his soul did nature frame
For love, and fancy nursed the flame;
Vainly he loved—for seldom swain
Of such soft mould is loved again;
Silent he loved—in every gaze
Was passion, friendship in his phrase.
So mused his life away—till died
His brethren all, their father's pride.
Wilfrid is now the only heir
Of all his stratagems and care,
And destined, darkling, to pursue
Ambition's maze by Oswald's clue.

XXVII.

Wilfrid must love and woo the bright
Matilda, heir of Rokeby's knight.
To love her was an easy hest,
The secret empress of his breast;
To woo her was a harder task
To one that durst not hope or ask.
Yet all Matilda could, she gave
In pity to her gentle slave;
Friendship, esteem, and fair regard,
And praise, the poet's best reward!
ROKEBY.

She read the tales his taste approved,
And sung the lays he framed or loved;
Yet, loth to nurse the fatal flame
Of hopeless love in friendship's name,
In kind caprice she oft withdrew
The favouring glance to friendship due,
Then grieved to see her victim's pain,
And gave the dangerous smiles again.

XXVIII.

So did the suit of Wilfrid stand,
When war's loud summons waked the land.
Three banners, floating o'er the Tees,
The wo-foreboding peasant sees;
In concert oft they braved of old
The bordering Scot's incursion bold;
Frowning defiance in their pride,
Their vassals now and lords divide.
From his fair hall on Greta banks,
The Knight of Rokeby led his ranks,
To aid the valiant northern Earls,
Who drew the sword for royal Charles.
Mortham, by marriage near allied—
His sister had been Rokeby's bride,
Though long before the civil fray,
In peaceful grave the lady lay,—
Philip of Mortham raised his band,
And march'd at Fairfax's command;
While Wycliffe, bound by many a train
Of kindred art with wily Vane,
Less prompt to brave the bloody field,
Made Barnard's battlements his shield,
Secured them with his Lunedale powers,
And for the Commons held the towers.

XXIX.

The lovely heir of Rokeby's Knight
Waits in his halls the event of fight;
For England's war revered the claim
Of every unprotected name,
And spared, amid its fiercest rage,
Childhood and womanhood and age.
But Wilfrid, son to Rokeby's foe,
Must the dear privilege forego,
By Greta's side, in evening grey,
To steal upon Matilda's way,
Striving, with fond hypocrisy,
For careless step and vacant eye;
Calming each anxious look and glance,
To give the meeting all to chance,
Or framing, as a fair excuse,
The book, the pencil, or the muse:
Something to give, to sing, to say,
Some modern tale, some ancient lay.
Then, while the long'd-for minutes last,—
Ah! minutes quickly over-past!—
Recording each expression free,
Of kind or careless courtesy,
Birch Tree, Trossachs Glen.
Each friendly look, each softer tone,
As food for fancy when alone.
All this is o'er—but still, unseen,
Wilfrid may lurk in Eastwood green,
To watch Matilda's wonted round,
While springs his heart at every sound.
She comes!—'tis but a passing sight,
Yet serves to cheat his weary night;
She comes not—He will wait the hour,
When her lamp lightens in the tower;
'Tis something yet, if, as she past,
Her shade is o'er the lattice cast.
"What is my life, my hope?"
he said:
"Alas! a transitory shade."

XXX.
Thus wore his life, though reason strove
For mastery in vain with love,
Forcing upon his thoughts the sum
Of present woe and ills to come,
While still he turn'd impatient ear
From Truth's intrusive voice severe.
Gentle, indifferent, and subdued,
In all but this, unmoved he view'd
Each outward change of ill and good:
But Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
Was Fancy's spoil'd and wayward child;

In her bright car she bade him ride,
With one fair form to grace his side,
Or, in some wild and lone retreat,
Flung her high spells around his seat,
Bathed in her dews his languid head,
Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
For him her opiates gave to flow,
Which he who tastes can ne'er forego,
And placed him in her circle, free
From every stern reality,
Till, to the Visionary, seem
Her day-dreams truth, and truth a dream.

XXXI.
Woe to the youth whom fancy gains,
Winning from Reason's hand the reins,
Pity and woe! for such a mind
Is soft, contemplative, and kind;
And woe to those who train such youth,
And spare to press the rights of truth,
The mind to strengthen and anneal,
While on the stithy glows the steel!
O teach him, while your lessons last,
To judge the present by the past;
Remind him of each wish pursued,
How rich it glow'd with promised good;
Remind him of each wish enjoy'd,
How soon his hopes possession cloy'd!
Tell him, we play unequal game,
When'er we shoot by Fancy's aim;
And, ere he strip him for her race,
Show the conditions of the chase.
Two sisters by the goal are set,
Cold Disappointment and Regret;
One disenchants the winner's eyes,
And strips of all its worth the prize.
While one augments its gaudy show,
More to enhance the loser's woe.
The victor sees his fairy gold,
Transform'd, when won, to drossy mold,
But still the vanquish'd mourns his loss,
And rues, as gold, that glittering dross.

XXXII.
More wouldst thou know—yon tower survey,
Yon couch unpress'd since parting day,
Yon untrimm'd lamp, whose yellow gleam
Is mingling with the cold moonbeam,
And yon thin form!—the hectic red
On his pale cheek unequal spread;
The head reclined, the loosen'd hair,
The limbs relax'd, the mournful air.—
See, he looks up;—a woful smile
Lightens his wo-worn cheek a while,—
'Tis fancy wakes some idle thought,
To gild the ruin she has wrought;
For, like the bat of Indian brakes,
Her pinions fan the wound she makes,
And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
She drinks his life-blood from the vein.
Now to the lattice turn his eyes,
Vain hope! to see the sun arise.
The moon with clouds is still o'ercast,
Still howls by fits the stormy blast:
Another hour must wear away,
Ere the East kindle into day,
And hark! to waste that weary hour,
He tries the minstrel's magic power.

XXXIII.
Song.
TO THE MOON.
Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky!
Hail, though the mists that o'er thee stream
Lend to thy brow their sullen dye!
How should thy pure and peaceful eye
Untroubled view our scenes below,
Or how a tearless beam supply
To light a world of war and woe!
Fair Queen! I will not blame thee now,
As once by Greta's fairy side;
Each little cloud that dimm'd thy brow
Did them an angel's beauty hide.
And of the shades I then could chide,
Still are the thoughts to memory dear,
For, while a softer strain I tried,
They hid my blush, and calm'd my fear.

Then did I swear thy ray serene
Was form'd to light some lonely dell,
By two fond lovers only seen,
Reflected from the crystal well,
Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
Or quivering on the lattice bright,
Or glancing on their couch, to tell
How swiftly wanes the summer night!

XXXIV.

He starts—a step at this lone hour!
A voice!—his father seeks the tower,
With haggard look and troubled sense,
Fresh from his dreadful conference.
"Wilfrid!—what, not to sleep address'd?
Thou hast no cares to chase thy rest.
Mortham has fall'n on Marston-moor;
Bertram brings warrant to secure
His treasures, bought by spoil and blood,
For the State's use and public good.

The menials will thy voice obey;
Let his commission have its way,
In every point, in every word."—
Then, in a whisper—"Take thy sword!
Bertram is—what I must not tell.
I hear his hasty step—farewell!"

CANTO SECOND.

I.

Far in the chambers of the west,
The gale had sigh'd itself to rest;
The moon was cloudless now and clear,
But pale, and soon to disappear.
The thin grey clouds wax dimly light
On Brusleton and Houghton height;
And the rich dale, that eastward lay,
Waited the wakening touch of day,
To give its woods and cultured plain,
And towers and spires, to light again.
But, westward, Stanmore's shapeless swell,
And Lunedale wild, and Kelton-fell,
And rock-begirdled Gilmanscar,
And Arkingarth, lay dark afar;
While, as a livelier twilight falls,
Emerge proud Barnard's banner'd walls.
High crown'd he sits, in dawning pale,
The sovereign of the lovely vale.
II.

What prospects, from his watch-tower high,
Gleam gradual on the warder’s eye!—
Far sweeping to the east, he sees
Down his deep woods the course of Tees,
And tracks his wanderings by the steam
Of summer vapours from the stream;
And ere he paced his destined hour
By Brackenbury’s dungeon-tower,
These silver mists shall melt away,
And dew the woods with glittering spray.
Then in broad lustre shall be shown
That mighty trench of living stone,
And each huge trunk that, from the side,
Reclines him o’er the darksome tide,
Where Tees, full many a fathom low,
Wears with his rage no common foe;
For pebbly bank, nor sand-bed here,
Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce career,
Condemn’d to mine a channell’d way,
O’er solid sheets of marble grey.

III.

Nor Tees alone, in dawning bright,
Shall rush upon the ravish’d sight;
But many a tributary stream
Each from its own dark dell shall gleam:
Staindrop, who, from her silvan bowers,
Salutes proud Raby’s battled towers;
The rural brook of Egliston,
And Balder, named from Odin’s son;
And Greta, to whose banks are long
We lead the lovers of the song;
And silver Lune, from Stanmore wild,
And fairy Thorsgill’s murmuring child,
And last and least, but loveliest still,
Romantic Deepdale’s slender rill.
Who in that dim-wood glen hath stray’d,
Yet long’d for Roslin’s magic glade?

Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce career.
Condemn’d to mine a channell’d way,
Thou bid’st him, who by Roslin strays,
List to the deeds of other days;
‘Mid Cartland’s Crags thou show’st the cave,
The refuge of thy champion brave;
Giving each rock its storied tale,
Pouring a lay for every dale,
Knitting, as with a moral band,
Thy native legends with thy land,
To lend each scene the interest high
Which genius beams from Beauty's eye.

IV.
Bertram awaited not the sight
Which sun-rise shows from Barnard's height,
But from the towers, preventing day,
With Wilfrid took his early way,
While misty dawn, and moon-beam pale,
Still mingled in the silent dale.
By Barnard's bridge of stately stone,
The southern bank of Tees they won;
Their winding path then eastward cast,
And Egliston's grey ruins pass'd; 290
Each on his own deep visions bent,
Silent and sad they onward went.
Well may you think that Bertram's mood,
To Wilfrid savage seem'd and rude;
Well may you think bold Risingham
Held Wilfrid trivial, poor, and tame;
And small the intercourse, I ween,
Such uncongenial souls between.

V.
Stern Bertram shunn'd the nearer way,
Through Rokeby's park and chase that lay,
And, skirting high the valley's ridge,
They cross'd by Greta's ancient bridge
Descending where her waters wind
Free for a space and unconfined,
As, 'scaped from Brignall's dark-wood glen,
She seeks wild Mortham's deeper den.
There, as his eye glanced o'er the mound,
Raised by that Legion 291 long renown'd,
Whose votive shrine asserts their claim,
Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,
"Stern sons of war!" said Wilfrid sigh'd,
"Behold the boast of Roman pride!"
What now of all your toils are known?
A grassy trench, a broken stone!"—
This to himself; for moral strain
To Bertram were address'd in vain.

VI.
Of different mood, a deeper sigh
Awoke, when Rokeby's turrets high 292
Were northward in the dawning seen
To rear them o'er the thicket green.
O then, though Spenser's self had stray'd
Beside him through the lovely glade,
Lending his rich luxuriant glow
Of fancy, all its charms to show,
Pointing the stream rejoicing free,
As captive set at liberty,
Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,
And clamouring joyful on her road;
Pointing where, up the sunny banks,
The trees retire in scatter'd ranks,
Save where, advanced before the rest,
On knoll or hillock rears his crest,
Lonely and huge, the giant Oak,
As champions, when their band is broke,
Stand forth to guard the rearward post,
The bulwark of the scatter'd host—
All this, and more, might Spenser say,
Yet waste in vain his magic lay,
While Wilfrid eyed the distant tower,
Whose lattice lights Matilda's bower.

VII.
The open vale is soon pass'd o'er,
Rokeby, though nigh, is seen no more;
Sinking mid Greta's thickets deep,
A wild and darker course they keep,
A stern and lone, yet lovely road,
As e'er the foot of Minstrel trode!  

Broad shadows o'er their passage fell,
Deeper and narrower grew the dell;
It seem'd some mountain, rent and riven,
A channel for the stream had given,
So high the cliffs of limestone grey
Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
Yielding, along their rugged base,
A flinty footpath's niggard space,
Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,
May hear the headlong torrent rave,
And like a steed in frantic fit,
That flings the froth from curb and bit,
May view her chafe her waves to spray,
O'er every rock that bars her way,
Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,
Thick as the schemes of human pride
That down life's current drive amain,
As frail, as frothy, and as vain!

VIII.
The cliffs that rear their haughty head
High o'er the river's darksome bed,
Were now all naked, wild, and grey,
Now waving all with Greenwood spray;
Here trees to every crevice clung,
And o'er the dell their branches hung;
And there, all splinter'd and uneven,
The shiver'd rocks ascend to heaven;
Oft, too, the ivy swath'd their breast,
And wreathed its garland round their crest,
Or from the spires bade loosely flare
Its tendrils in the middle air.
As pennons wont to wane of old
O'er the high feast of Baron bold,
When revell'd loud the feudal rout,
And the arch'd halls return'd their shout;
Such and more wild is Greta's roar,
And such the echoes from her shore.
And so the ivied banners gleam,
Waved wildly o'er the brawling stream.

IX.

Now from the stream the rocks recede,
But leave between no sunny mead,
No, nor the spot of pebbly sand,
Oft found by such a mountain strand;
Forming such warm and dry retreat,
As fancy deems the lonely seat,
Where hermit, wandering from his cell,
His rosary might love to tell.
But here, 'twixt rock and river, grew
A dismal grove of sable yew,
With whose sad tints were mingled seen
The blighted fir's sepulchral green.
Seem'd that the trees their shadows cast,
The earth that nourish'd them to blast;
For never knew that swarthy grove
The verdant hue that fairies love;
Nor wilding green, nor woodland flower,
Arose within its baleful bower:
The dank and sable earth receives
Its only carpet from the leaves,
That, from the withering branches cast,
Bestrew'd the ground with every blast.
Though now the sun was o'er the hill,
In this dark spot 'twas twilight still,
Save that on Greta's farther side
Some straggling beams through copsewood glide;
And wild and savage contrast made
That dingle's deep and funeral shade,
With the bright tints of early day,
Which, glimmering through the ivy spray,
On the opposing summit lay.

X.

The lated peasant shunn'd the dell;
For Superstition wont to tell
Of many a grisly sound and sight,
Scaring its path at dead of night.
When Christmas logs blaze high
and wide,
Such wonders speed the festal tide;
While Curiosity and Fear,
Pleasure and Pain, sit crouching near,
Till childhood’s cheek no longer glows,
And village maidens lose the rose.
The thrilling interest rises higher,
The circle closes nigh and nigher,
And shuddering glance is cast behind,
As louder moans the wintry wind.
Believe, that fitting scene was laid
For such wild tales in Mortham glade;
For who had seen, on Greta’s side,
By that dim light fierce Bertram stride,
In such a spot, at such an hour,—
If touch’d by Superstition’s power,
Might well have deem’d that Hell had given
A murderer’s ghost to upper Heaven,
While Wilfrid’s form had seem’d to glide
Like his pale victim by his side.

XI.

Nor think to village swains alone
Are these unearthly terrors known;
For not to rank nor sex confined
Is this vain ague of the mind:
Hearts firm as steel, as marble hard,
'Gainst faith, and love, and pity barr’d,
ROKEBY.

Fullspread and crowded every sail,
The Demon Frigate braves the gale; \(^{296}\)
And well the doom'd spectators know
The harbinger of wreck and woe.

XII.

Then, too, were told, in stifled tone,
Marvels and omens all their own;
How, by some desert isle or key, \(^{297}\)
Where Spaniards wrought their cruelty,
Or where the savage pirate's mood
Repaid it home in deeds of blood,
Strange nightly sounds of woe and fear
Appall'd the listening Bucanier,
Whose light-armed shallop anchor'd lay
In ambush by the lonely bay.
The groan of grief, the shriek of pain,
Ring from the moonlight groves of cane;
The fierce adventurer's heart they scare,
Who wearies memory for a prayer,
Curses the road-stead, and with gale
Of early morning lifts the sail,
To give, in thirst of blood and prey,
A legend for another bay.

With this on Bertram's soul at times
Rush'd a dark feeling of his crimes;
Such to his troubled soul their form,
As the pale Death-ship to the storm,
And such their omen dim and dread,
As shrieks and voices of the dead,—
That pang, whose transitory force
Hover'd 'twixt horror and remorse;
That pang, perchance, his bosom press'd,
As Wilfrid sudden he address'd:—
"Wilfrid, this glen is never trod Until the sun rides high abroad;
Yet twice have I beheld to-day
A Form, that seem'd to dog our way;
Twice from my glance it seem'd to flee,
And shroud itself by cliff or tree.
How think'st thou?—Is our path way-laid?
Or hath thy sire my trust betray'd?
If so—" Ere, starting from his dream,
That turn'd upon a gentler theme,
Wilfrid had roused him to reply,
Bertram sprang forward, shouting high,
"Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt stand!"—
And forth he darted, sword in hand.

XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child,
Train'd in the mystic and the wild,

XIV.

As bursts the levin in its wrath,
He shot him down the sounding path;
Rock, wood, and stream, rang wildly out,
To his loud step and savage shout.
Seems that the object of his race
Hath scaled the cliffs; his frantic chase
Sidelong he turns, and now 'tis bent
Right up the rock's tall battlement;
Straining each sinew to ascend,
Foot, hand, and knee, their aid must lend.
Wilfrid, all dizzy with dismay,
Views from beneath, his dreadful way:
Now to the oak's warp'd roots he clings,
Now trusts his weight to ivy strings;
Now, like the wild-goat, must he dare
An unsupported leap in air;
Hid in the shrubby rain-course now,
You mark him by the crashing bough,
And by his corslet's sullen clank,
And by the stones spurn'd from the bank,
And by the hawk scared from her nest,
And ravens croaking o'er their guest,
Who deem his forfeit limbs shall pay
The tribute of his bold essay.

XV.
See, he emerges!—desperate now
All farther course—Yon beetling brow,
In craggy nakedness sublime,
What heart or foot shall dare to climb?
It bears no tendril for his clasp,
Presents no angle to his grasp:
Sole stay his foot may rest upon,
Is yon earth-bedded jetting stone.
Balanced on such precarious prop,
He strains his grasp to reach the top.
Just as the dangerous stretch he makes,
By Heaven, his faithless footstool shakes!
Beneath his tottering bulk it bends,
It sways, . . . it loosens, . . .
it descends!
And downward holds its headlong way,
Crashing o'er rock and copse-wood spray.
Loud thunders shake the echoing dell!—
Fell it alone?—alone it fell.
Just on the very verge of fate,
The hardy Bertram's falling weight
He trusted to his sinewy hands,
And on the top unharm'd he stands!—

XVI.
Wilfrid a safer path pursued;
At intervals where, roughly hew'd,
Rude steps ascending from the dell
Render'd the cliffs accessible.
By circuit slow he thus attain'd
The height that Risingham had gain'd,
And when he issued from the wood,
Before the gate of Mortham stood. 298
'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay
On battled tower and portal grey:
And from the grassy slope he sees
The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
Where, issuing from her dark-some bed,
She caught the morning's eastern red,
And through the softening vale below
Roll'd her bright waves, in rosy glow,
All blushing to her bridal bed,
Like some shy maid in convent bred;
While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay,
Sing forth her nuptial roundelay.

XVII.
'Twas sweetly sung that roundelay;
That summer morn shone blithe and gay;
But morning beam, and wild-bird's call,
Awaked not Mortham's silent hall.
No porter, by the low-brow'd gate,
Took in the wonted niche his seat;
To the paved court no peasant drew;
Waked to their toil no menial crew;
The maiden's carol was not heard,
As to her morning task she fared:

In the void offices around,
Rung not a hoof, nor bay'd a hound;
Nor eager steed, with shrilling neigh,
Accused the lagging groom's delay;
Untrimm'd, undress'd, neglected now,
Was alley'd walk and orchard bough;
All spoke the master's absent care,
All spoke neglect and disrepair.
South of the gate, an arrow flight,
Two mighty elms their limbs unite,
As if a canopy to spread
O'er the lone dwelling of the dead;
For their huge boughs in arches bent
Above a massive monument,
Carved o'er in ancient Gothic wise,
With many a scutcheon and device;
There, spent with toil and sunk in gloom,
Bertram stood pondering by the tomb.

XVIII.
"It vanish'd, like a flitting ghost!"
Behind this tomb," he said,
"'twas lost—
This tomb, where oft I deem'd lies stored
Of Mortham's Indian wealth the hoard.
'Tis true, the aged servants said
Here his lamented wife is laid;
But weightier reasons may be guess'd
For their lord's strict and stern behest,
That none should on his steps intrude,
Whene'er he sought this solitude.—
An ancient mariner I knew,
What time I sail'd with Morgan's crew,
Who oft, 'mid our carousals, spake
Of Raleigh, Forbisher, and Drake;
Adventurous hearts! who barter'd, bold,
Their English steel for Spanish gold.
Trust not, would his experience say,
Captain or comrade with your prey;
But seek some charnel, when, at full,
The moon gilds skeleton and skull:
There dig, and tomb your precious heap;
And bid the dead your treasure keep; 299
Sure stewards they, if fitting spell
Their service to the task compel.
Lacks there such charnel?—kill a slave,
Or prisoner, on the treasure-grave;
And bid his discontented ghost
Stalk nightly on his lonely post.—
Such was his tale. Its truth, I ween,
Is in my morning vision seen.”—

XIX.

Wilfrid, who scorn'd the legend wild,
In mingled mirth and pity smiled,

Much marvelling that a breast so bold
In such fond tale beliet should hold;
But yet of Bertram sought to know
The apparition's form and show.—
The power within the guilty breast,
Oft vanquish'd, never quite suppress'd,
That unsubdued and lurking lies
To take the felon by surprise,
And force him, as by magic spell,
In his despite his guilt to tell,—300
That power in Bertram's breast awoke;
Scarce conscious he was heard, he spoke;
"'Twas Mortham's form, from foot to head!
His morion, with the plume of red,
His shape, his mien—'twas Mortham, right
As when I slew him in the fight.”—
"Thou slay him?—thou?"—
With conscious start
He heard, then mann'd his haughty heart—
"I slew him?—I!—I had forgot
Thou, stripling, knew'st not of the plot.
But it is spoken—nor will I
Deed done, or spoken word, deny.
I slew him; I! for thankless pride;
'Twas by this hand that Mortham died!”

XX.

Wilfrid, ot gentle hand and heart,
Averse to every active part,
But most averse to martial broil,
From danger shrunk, and turn'd from toil;
Yet the meek lover of the lyre
Nursed one brave spark of noble fire,
Against injustice, fraud, or wrong,
His blood beat high, his hand wax'd strong.
Not his the nerves that could sustain,
Unshaken, danger, toil, and pain;
But, when that spark blazed forth to flame,
He rose superior to his frame.
And now it came, that generous mood:
And, in full current of his blood,
On Bertram he laid desperate hand,
Placed firm his foot, and drew his brand.
"Should every fiend, to whom thou'rt sold,
Rise in thine aid, I keep my hold.—
Arouse there, ho! take spear and sword!
Attach the murderer of your Lord!"

**XXI.**

A moment, fix'd as by a spell,
Stood Bertram—It seem'd a miracle,
That one so feeble, soft, and tame
Set grasp on warlike Risingham.
But when he felt a feeble stroke,
The fiend within the ruffian woke!
To wrench the sword from Wilfrid's hand;
To dash him headlong on the sand,
Was but one moment's work,—one more
Had drench'd the blade in Wilfrid's gore;
But, in the instant it arose,
To end his life, his love, his woes,
A warlike form, that mark'd the scene,
Presents his rapier sheathed between,
Parries the fast-descending blow,
And steps 'twixt Wilfrid and his foe;
Nor then unscabbard'd his brand,
But, sternly pointing with his hand,
With monarch's voice forbade the fight,
And motion'd Bertram from his sight.
"Go, and repent,"—he said,
"while time Is given thee; add not crime to crime."

**XXII.**

Mute, and uncertain, and amazed,
As on a vision Bertram gazed!
'Twas Mortham's bearing, bold and high,
His sinewy frame, his falcon eye,
His look and accent of command,
The martial gesture of his hand,
His stately form, spare-built and tall,
His war-bleach'd locks—'twas Mortham all.
Through Bertram's dizzy brain career
A thousand thoughts, and all of fear;
His wavering faith received not quite
The form he saw as Mortham's sprite,
But more he fear'd it, if it stood
His lord, in living flesh and blood.—
What spectre can the charnel send,
So dreadful as an injured friend?
Then, too, the habit of command,
Used by the leader of the band,
When Risingham, for many a day,
Had march'd and fought beneath his sway,
Tamed him—and, with reverted face,
Backwards he bore his sullen pace;
Oft stopp'd, and oft on Mortham stared,
And dark as rated mastiff glared;
But when the tramp of steeds was heard,
Plunged in the glen, and disappeared;—
Nor longer there the Warrior stood,
Retiring eastward through the wood;
But first to Wilfrid warning gives,
"Tell thou to none that Mortham lives."

XXIII.
Still rung these words in Wilfrid's ear,
Hinting he knew not what of fear;
When nearer came the courser's tread,
And, with his father at their head,
Of horsemen arm'd a gallant power
Rein'd up their steeds before the tower.

"Whence these pale looks, my son!" he said:
"Where's Bertram?—Why that naked blade?"
Wilfrid ambiguously replied,
(For Mortham's charge his honour tied,)
"Bertram is gone—the villain's word
Avouch'd him murderer of his lord!
Even now we fought—but, when your tread
Announced you nigh, the felon fled."
In Wycliffe's conscious eye appear
A guilty hope, a guilty fear;
On his pale brow the dewdrop broke,
And his lip quiver'd as he spoke. —

XXIV.
"A murderer!—Philip Mortham died
Amid the battle's wildest tide.
Wilfrid, or Bertram raves, or you!
Yet, grant such strange confession true,
Pursuit were vain—let him fly far—
Justice must sleep in civil war."
A gallant Youth rode near his side,
Brave Rokeby's page, in battle tried;
That morn, an embassy of weight
He brought to Barnard's castle gate,
And follow'd now in Wycliffe's train,
An answer for his lord to gain.
His steed, whose arch'd and sable neck
An hundred wreaths of foarn bedeck,
Chafed not against the curb more high
Than he at Oswald's cold reply;
He bit his lip, implored his saint,
(His the old faith)—then burst restraint.

XXV.

"Yes! I beheld his bloody fall,
By that base traitor's dastard ball,
Just when I thought to measure sword,
Presumptuous hope! with Mortham's lord
And shall the murderer 'scape, who slew
His leader, generous, brave, and true?
Escape, while on the dew you trace
The marks of his gigantic pace?
No! ere the sun that dew shall dry,
False Risingham shall yield or die.—
Ring out the castle 'larum bell!
Arouse the peasants with the knell!
Meantime disperse—ride, gallants, ride!
Beset the wood on every side.
But if among you one there be,
That honours Mortham's memory,
Let him dismount and follow me!
Else on your crests sit fear and shame,
And foul suspicion dog your name!"

XXVI.

Instant to earth young Redmond sprung;
Instant on earth the harness rung
Of twenty men of Wycliffe's band,
Who waited not their lord's command.
Redmond his spurs from buskins drew,
His mantle from his shoulders threw,
His pistols in his belt he placed,
The green-wood gain'd, the footsteps traced,
Shouted like huntsman to his hounds,
"To cover, hark!"—and in he bounds.
Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry,
"Suspicion! yes—pursue him—fly—
But venture not, in useless strife,
On ruffian desperate of his life,
Whoever finds him, shoot him dead!
Five hundred nobles for his head!"

XXVII.

The horsemen gallop'd, to make good
Each path that issued from the wood.
Loud from the thickets rung the shout
Of Redmond and his eager rout;
With them was Wilfrid, sting'd with ire,
And envying Redmond's martial fire,
And emulous of fame.—But where
Is Oswald, noble Mortham's heir?
He, bound by honour, law, and faith,
Avenger of his kinsman's death?—
Leaning against the elmin tree,  
With drooping head and slacken'd knee,  
And clenched teeth, and close-clasp'd hands,  
In agony of soul he stands!  
His downcast eye on earth is bent,  
His soul to every sound is lent;  
For in each shout that cleaves the air,  
May ring discovery and despair.

XXVIII.

What 'vail'd it him, that brightly play'd  
The morning sun on Mortham's glade?  
All seems in giddy round to ride,  
Like objects on a stormy tide,  
Seen eddying by the moonlight dim,  
Imperfectly to sink and swim.  
What 'vail'd it, that the fair domain,  
Its battled mansion, hill, and plain,  
On which the sun so brightly shone,  
Envied so long, was now his own?  
The lowest dungeon, in that hour,  
Of Brackenbury's dismal tower, had been his choice, could such a doom  
Have open'd Mortham's bloody tomb!  
Forced, too, to turn unwilling ear  
To each surmise of hope or fear,  
Murmur'd among the rustics round,  
Who gather'd at the 'larum sound;  
He dared not turn his head away,  
E'en to look up to heaven to pray,  
Or call on hell, in bitter mood,  
For one sharp death-shot from the wood!

XXIX.

At length, o'erpast that dreadful space,  
Back straggling came the scatter'd chase;  
Jaded and weary, horse and man,  
Return'd the troopers, one by one.  
Wilfrid, the last, arrived to say,  
All trace was lost of Bertram's way,  
Though Redmond still, up Brignal wood,  
The hopeless quest in vain pursued.—  
O, fatal doom of human race!  
What tyrant passions chase!  
Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone,  
Avarice and pride resume their throne;  
The pang of instant terror by,  
They dictate thus their slave's reply:—  

XXX.

"Ay—let him range like hasty hound!  
And if the grim wolf's lair be found,  
Small is my care how goes the game  
With Redmond, or with Risingham.—  
Nay, answer not, thou simple boy!  
Thy fair Matilda, all so coy  
To thee, is of another mood  
To that bold youth of Erin's blood."
"God and the King!"
Thy ditties will she freely praise,  
And pay thy pains with courtly phrase;  
In a rough path will oft command—  
Accept at least—thy friendly hand;  
His she avoids, or, urged and pray'd,  
Unwilling takes his proffer'd aid,  
While conscious passion plainly speaks  
In downcast look and blushing cheeks.  
Whene'er he sings, will she glide nigh,  
And all her soul is in her eye;  
Yet doubts she still to tender free  
The wonted words of courtesy.  
These are strong signs!—yet wherefore sigh,  
And wipe, effeminate, thine eye?  
Thine shall she be, if thou attend  
The counsels of thy sire and friend.

XXXI.

"Scarce wert thou gone, when peep of light  
Brought genuine news of Mars-ton's fight.  
Brave Cromwell turn'd the doubtful tide,  
And conquest bless'd the rightful side;  
Three thousand cavaliers lie dead,  
Rupert and that bold Marquis fled;  
Nobles and knights, so proud of late,  
Must fine for freedom and estate.  
Of these, committed to my charge,  
Is Rokeby, prisoner at large;  
Redmond, his page arrived, to say  
He reaches Barnard's towers to-day.  
Right heavy shall his ransom be,  
Unless that maid compound with thee!  
Go to her now—be bold of cheer,  
While her soul floats 'twixt hope and fear;  
It is the very change of tide,  
When best the female heart is tried—  
Pride, prejudice, and modesty,  
Are in the current swept to sea;  
And the bold swain, who plies his oar,  
May lightly row his bark to shore."

CANTO THIRD.

I.

The hunting tribes of air and earth  
Respect the brethren of their birth;  
Nature, who loves the claim of kind,  
Less cruel chase to each assign'd.  
The falcon, poised on soaring wing,  
Watches the wild-duck by the spring;  
The slow-hound wakes the fox's lair;  
The greyhound presses on the hare;  
The eagle pounces on the lamb;  
The wolf devours the fleecy dam;  
Even tiger fell, and sullen bear,  
Their likeness and their lineage spare,  
Man, only, mars kind Nature's plan,  
And turns the fierce pursuit on man;
Plying war's desultory trade,
Incursion, flight, and ambuscade,
Since Nimrod, Cush's mighty son,
At first the bloody game begun.

II.

The Indian, prowling for his prey,
Who hears the settlers track his way,
And knows in distant forest far
Camp his red brethren of the war;
He, when each double and disguise
To baffle the pursuit he tries,
Low crouching now his head to hide,
Where swampy streams through rushes glide,
Now covering with the wither'd leaves
The foot-prints that the dew receives:
He, skill'd in every silvan guile,
Knows not, nor tries, such various wile,
As Risingham, when on the wind
Arose the loud pursuit behind.
In Redesdale his youth had heard
Each art her wily dalesmen dared,
When Rook-en-edge, and Red-swair high,
To bugle rung and blood-hound's cry,
Announcing Jedwood-axe and spear,
And Lid'sdale riders in the rear;
And well his venturous life had proved,
The lessons that his childhood loved.

III.

Oft had he shown, in climes afar,
Each attribute of roving war;
The sharpen'd ear, the piercing eye,
The quick resolve in danger nigh;
The speed, that in the flight or chase,
Outstripp'd the Charib's rapid race;
The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim;
The iron frame, inured to bear
Each dire inclemency of air.
Nor less confirm'd to undergo
Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throe.
These arts he proved, his life to save,
In peril oft by land and wave,
On Arawaca's desert shore,
Or where La Plata's billows roar.
When oft the sons of vengeful Spain
Track'd the marauder's steps in vain.
These arts, in Indian warfare tried,
Must save him now by Greta's side.

IV.

'Twas then, in hour of utmost need,
He proved his courage, art, and speed.
Now slow he stalk'd with stealthy pace,
Now started forth in rapid race,
Oft doubling back in mazy train,
To blind the trace the dews retain;
Now clombe the rocks projecting high,
To baffle the pursuer's eye;
Now sought the stream, whose brawling sound
The echo of his footsteps drown'd.
But if the forest verge he nears,
There trample steeds, and glimmer spears;
If deeper down the copse he drew,
He heard the rangers' loud halloo,
Beatimg each cover while they came,
As if to start the silvan game.
'Twas then—like tiger close beset
At every pass with toil and net,
'Counter'd, where'er he turns his glare,
By clashing arms and torches' flare,
Who meditates, with furious bound,
To burst on hunter, horse, and hound,—
'Twas then that Bertram's soul arose,
Prompting to rush upon his foes:
But as that crouching tiger, cow'd
By brandish'd steel and shouting crowd,
Retreats beneath the jungle's shroud,
Bertram suspends his purpose stern,
And couches in the brake and fern,
Hiding his face, lest foemen spy
The sparkle of his swarthy eye.

V.
Then Bertram might the bearing trace
Of the bold youth who led the chase;
Who paused to list for every sound,
Climb every height to look around,
Then rushing on with naked sword,
Each dingle's bosky depths explored.
'Twas Redmond—by the azure eye;
'Twas Redmond—by the locks that fly
Disorder'd from his glowing cheek;
Mien, face, and form, young Redmond speak
A form more active, light, and strong,
Ne'er shot the ranks of war along;
The modest, yet the manly mien,
Might grace the court of maiden queen
A face more fair you well might find,
For Redmond's knew the sun and wind,
Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,
The charm of regularity;
But every feature had the power To aid the expression of the hour:
Whether gay wit, and humour sly,
Danced laughing in his light-blue eye;
Or bended brow, and glance of fire,
And kindling cheek, spoke Erin's ire;
Or soft and sadden'd glances show
Her ready sympathy with woe;
Or in that wayward mood of mind,
When various feelings are combined,
When joy and sorrow mingle near,
And hope's bright wings are check'd by fear,
And rising doubts keep transport down,
And anger lends a short-lived frown;
In that strange mood which maids approve
Even when they dare not call it love;
With every change his features play'd,
As aspens show the light and shade.

VI.

Well Risingham young Redmond knew:
And much he marvell'd that the crew,
Roused to revenge bold Mortham dead,
Were by that Mortham's foeman led;
For never felt his soul the woe,
That wails a generous foeman low,
Far less that sense of justice strong,
That wreaks a generous foeman's wrong.
But small his leisure now to pause;
Redmond is first, whate'er the cause:
And twice that Redmond came so near
Where Bertram couch'd like hunted deer,
The very boughs his steps displace,
Rustled against the ruffian's face,
Who, desperate, twice prepared to start,
And plunge his dagger in his heart!
But Redmond turn'd a different way,
And the bent boughs resumed their sway,
And Bertram held it wise, unseen,
Deeper to plunge in coppice green.
Thus, circled in his coil, the snake,
When roving hunters beat the brake,
Watches with red and glistening eye,
Prepared, if heedless step draw nigh,
With forked tongue and venom'd fang
Instant to dart the deadly pang;
But if the intruders turn aside.
Away his coils unfolded glide,
And through the deep savannah wind,
Some undisturb'd retreat to find.

VII.

But Bertram, as he backward drew,
And heard the loud pursuit renew,
And Redmond's hollo on the wind,
Oft mutter'd in his savage mind—
"Redmond O'Neale! were thou and I
Alone this day's event to try,
With not a second here to see,
But the grey cliff and oaken tree,—
That voice of thine, that shouts so loud,
Should ne'er repeat its summons proud!
No! nor e'er try its melting power
Again in maiden's summer bower."
Eluded, now behind him die,
Faint and more faint, each hostile cry;
He stands in Scargill wood alone,
Nor hears he now a harsher tone
Than the hoarse cushion's plaintive cry,
Or Greta's sound that murmurs by;
And on the dale, so lone and wild,
The summer sun in quiet smiled.

VIII.
He listen'd long with anxious heart,
Ear bent to hear, and foot to start,
And, while his stretch'd attention glows,
Refused his weary frame repose.
'Twas silence all—he laid him down,
Where purple heath profusely strown,
And throatwort, with its azure bell,
And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
The course of Greta's playful tide;
Beneath, her banks now eddying dun,
Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
As, dancing over rock and stone,
In yellow light her currents shone,
Matching in hue the favourite gem
Of Albin's mountain-diadem.
Then, tired to watch the current's play,
He turn'd his weary eyes away,
To where the bank opposing show'd
Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy wood.
One, prominent above the rest,
Rear'd to the sun its pale gray breast;
Around its broken summit grew
The hazel rude, and sable yew;
A thousand varied lichens dyed
Its waste and weather-beaten side,
And round its rugged basis lay,
By time or thunder rent away,
Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
Were mantled now by verdant thorn.
Such was the scene's wild majesty,
That fill'd stern Bertram's gazing eye.

IX.
In sullen mood he lay reclined,
Revolving, in his stormy mind,
The felon deed, the fruitless guilt,
His patron's blood by treason spilt;
A crime, it seem'd, so dire and dread,
That it had power to wake the dead.
Then, pondering on his life betray'd
By Oswald's art to Redmond's blade,
In treacherous purpose to withhold,
So seem'd it, Mortham's promised gold,
A deep and full revenge he vow'd
On Redmond, forward, fierce, and proud;
Revenge on Wilfrid—on his sire
Redoubled vengeance, swift and dire!—
If, in such mood, (as legends say,
And well believed that simple day,)
The Enemy of Man has power
To profit by the evil hour,
Here stood a wretch, prepared to change
His soul's redemption for revenge.

But though his vows, with such a fire
Of earnest and intense desire
For vengeance dark and fell, were made,
As well might reach hell's lowest shade,
No deeper clouds the grove embrown'd,
No nether thunders shook the ground;
The demon knew his vassal's heart,
And spared temptation's needless art.

X.

Oft, mingled with the direful theme,
Come Mortham's form—Was it a dream?
Or had he seen, in vision true,
That very Mortham whom he slew?
Or had in living flesh appear'd
The only man on earth he fear'd?
To try the mystic cause int'st,
His eyes, that on the cliff were bent,
'Counter'd at once a dazzling glance,
Like sunbeam flash'd from sword or lance.
At once he started as for fight,
But not a foeman was in sight;

He heard the cushat's murmur hoarse,
He heard the river's sounding course;
The solitary woodlands lay,
As slumbering in the summer ray.
He gazed, like lion roused, around,
Then sunk again upon the ground.
'Twas but, he thought, some fitful beam,
Glanced sudden from the sparkling stream;
Then plunged him from his gloomy train
Of ill-connected thoughts again,
Until a voice behind him cried,
"Bertram! well met on Greta side."

XI.

Instant his sword was in his hand,
As instant sunk the ready brand;
Yet, dubious still, opposed he stood
To him that issued from the wood:
"Guy Denzil!—is it thou?" he said;
"Do we two meet in Scargill shade!—
Stand back a space!—thy purpose show,
Whether thou comest as friend or foe.
Report hath said, that Denzil's name
From Rokeby's band was razed with shame."
"A shame I owe that hot O'Neale,
Who told his knight, in peevish zeal,
Of my marauding on the clowns
Of Calverley and Bradford downs."
I reck not. In a war to strive, Where, save the leaders, none can thrive, Suits ill my mood; and better game Awaits us both, if thou'rt the same
Unscrupulous, bold Risingham, Who watched with me in midnight dark, To snatch a deer from Rokeby-park.
How think'st thou?"—"Speak thy purpose out; I love not mystery or doubt."—

XII.
"Then, list.—Not far there lurk a crew
Of trusty comrades, stanch and true,
Glean'd from both factions—Roundheads, freed
From cant of sermon and of creed;
And Cavaliers, whose souls, like mine,
Spurn at the bonds of discipline. Wiser, we judge, by dale and wold,
A warfare of our own to hold,
Than breathe our last on battle-down,
For cloak or surplice, mace or crown.
Our schemes are laid, our purpose set,
A chief and leader lack we yet.—Thou art a wanderer, it is said;
For Mortham's death, thy steps way-laid,
Thy head at price—so say our spies, Who range the valley in disguise.
Join then with us:—though wild debate
And wrangling rend our infant state,
Each to an equal loth to bow,
Will yield to chief renown'd as thou."—

XIII.
"Even now," thought Bertram, passion stirr'd,
"I call'd on hell, and hell has heard!
What lack I, vengeance to command,
But of staunch comrades such a band?
This Denzil, vow'd to every evil, Might read a lesson to the devil. Well, be it so! each knave and fool Shall serve as my revenge's tool."—
Aloud, "I take thy proffer, Guy, But tell me where thy comrades lie?"
"Not far from hence," Guy Denzil said; "Descend, and cross the river's bed,
Where rises yonder cliff so grey."—
"Do thou," said Bertram, "lead the way."
Then mutter'd, "It is best make sure;
Guy Denzil's faith was never pure."
He follow'd down the steep descent,
Then through the Greta's streams they went;
And, when they reach'd the farther shore,
They stood the lonely cliff before.
XIV.

With wonder Bertram heard within
The flinty rock a murmur'd din;
But when Guy pull'd the wilding spray,
And brambles, from its base away,
He saw, appearing to the air,
A little entrance, low and square.
Like opening cell of hermit lone,
Dark, winding through the living stone.
Here enter'd Denzil, Bertram here;
And loud and louder on their ear,
As from the bowels of the earth,
Resounded shouts of boisterous mirth.
Of old, the cavern strait and rude,
In slaty rock the peasant hew'd;
And Brignall's woods, and Scar-gill's, wave,
E'en now, o'er many a sister cave,\(^{308}\)
Where, far within the darksome rift,
The wedge and lever ply their thrust.
But war had silenced rural trade,
And the deserted mine was made
The banquet-hall and fortress too,
Of Denzil and his desperate crew.—
There Guilt his anxious revel kept;
There, on his sordid pallet, slept
Guilt-born Excess, the goblet drain'd
Still in his slumbering grasp retain'd;
Regret was there, his eye still cast
With vain repining on the past;
Among the feasters waited near
Sorrow, and unrepentant Fear,
And Blasphemy, to frenzy driven,
With his own crimes reproaching heaven;
While Bertram show'd, amid the crew,
The Master-Fiend that Milton drew.

XV.

Hark! the loud revel wakes again,
To greet the leader of the train.
Behold the group by the pale lamp,
That struggles with the earthy damp.
By what strange features Vice hath known,
To single out and mark her own!
Yet some there are, whose brows retain
Less deeply stamp'd her brand and stain.
See yon pale stripling! when a boy,
A mother's pride, a father's joy!
Now, 'gainst the vault's rude walls reclined,
An early image fills his mind:
The cottage, once his sire's, he sees,
Embower'd upon the banks of Tees;
He views sweet Winston's woodland scene,
And shares the dance on Gainford-green.
A tear is springing—but the zest,
Of some wild tale, or brutal jest
Hath to loud laughter stirr’d the rest.
On him they call, the aptest mate
For jovial song and merry feat:
Fast flies his dream—with dauntless air,
As one victorious o’er Despair,
He bids the ruddy cup go round,
Till sense and sorrow both are drown’d;
And soon, in merry wassail, he,
The life of all their revelry,
Peals his loud song!—The muse has found
Her blossoms on the wildest ground,
’Mid noxious weeds at random strewn’d,
Themselves all profitless and rude.—
With desperate merriment he sung,
The cavern to the chorus rung;
Yet mingled with his reckless glee
Remorse’s bitter agony.

XVI.
Song.
O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a sunner queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall.
Beneath the turrets high,
A Maiden on the castle wall Was singing merrily,—

CHORUS.

“O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I’d rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.”—

“If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
That dwell by dale and down?
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May.”—

CHORUS.
Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I’d rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.

XVII.

“I read you, by your bugle-horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn,
To keep the king’s greenwood.”—

“A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And ’tis at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night.”—
CHORUS.

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnish'd brand and musketoon,
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold Dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum."—

"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS.

"And, O! though Brignall banks, be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

XVIII.

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die!
The fiend, whose lantern lights the mead,
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met,
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS.

"Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."

When Edmund ceased his simple song,
Was silence on the sullen throng,
Till waked some ruder mate their glee
With note of coarser minstrelsy.
But, far apart, in dark divans,
Denzil and Bertram many a plan
Of import foul and fierce, design'd,
While still on Bertram's grasping mind
The wealth of murder'd Mortham hung;
Though half he fear'd his daring tongue,
When it should give his wishes birth,
Might raise a spectre from the earth!

XIX.

At length his wondrous tale he told:
When, scornful, smiled his comrade bold;
For, train'd in license of a court,
Religion's self was Denzil's sport;
Then judge in what contempt he held
The visionary tales of eld!
His awe for Bertram scarce repress'd
The unbeliever's sneering jest.
"'Twere hard," he said, "for sage or seer,  
To spell the subject of your fear;  
Nor do I boast the art renown'd,  
Vision and omen to expound.  
Yet, faith if I must needs afford  
To spectre watching treasured hoard,  
As bandog keeps his master's roof,  
Bidding the plunderer stand aloof,  
This doubt remains—thy goblin gaunt  
Hath chosen ill his ghostly haunt;  
For why his guard on Mortham hold,  
When Rokeby castle hath the gold  
Thy patron won on Indian soil,  
By stealth, by piracy, and spoil?"—

XX.

At this he paused—for angry shame  
Lower'd on the brow of Risingham.  
He blushed to think, that he should seem  
Assertor of an airy dream,  
And gave his wrath another theme.  
"Denzil," he says, "though lowly laid,  
Wrong not the memory of the dead;  
For, while he lived, at Mortham's look  
Thy very soul, Guy Denzil, shook!  
And when he tax'd thy breach of word  
To yon fair Rose of Allenford,  
I saw thee crouch like chasten'd hound,  
Whose back the huntsman's lash hath found.  
Nor dare to call his foreign wealth  
The spoil of piracy or stealth;  
He won it bravely with his brand,  
When Spain waged warfare with our land.  
Mark, too—I brook no idle jeer,  
Nor couple Bertram's name with fear;  
Mine is but half the demon's lot,  
For I believe, but tremble not.—  
Enough of this.—Say, why this hoard  
Thou deem'st at Rokeby castle stored;  
Or think'st that Mortham would bestow  
His treasure with his faction's foe?"

XXI.

Soon quench'd was Denzil's ill-timed mirth;  
Rather he would have seen the earth  
Give to ten thousand spectres birth,  
Than venture to awake to flame  
The deadly wrath of Risingham.  
Submiss he answer'd,—"Mortham's mind,  
Thou know'st, to joy was ill inclined.  
In youth, 'tis said, a gallant free,  
A lusty reveller was he;  
But since return'd from over sea,
A sullen and a silent mood
Hath numb'd the current of his blood.
Hence he refused each kindly call
To Rokeby's hospitable hall,
And our stout knight, at dawn of morn
Who loved to hear the bugle-horn,
Nor less, when eve his oaks embrown'd,
To see the ruddy cup go round,
Took umbrage that a friend so near
Refused to share his chase and cheer;
Thus did the kindred barons jar,
Ere they divided in the war.
Yet, trust me, friend, Matilda fair
Of Mortham's wealth is destined heir."

XXII.

"Destined to her! to yon slight maid!
The prize my life had wellnigh paid,
When 'gainst Laroche, by Cayo's wave,
I fought my patron's wealth to save!—
Denzil, I knew him long, yet ne'er
Knew him that joyous cavalier,
Whom youthful friends and early fame
Call'd soul of gallantry and game.
A moody man, he sought our crew,
Desperate and dark, whom no one knew;
And rose, as men with us must rise,
By scorning life and all its ties.

On each adventure rash he roved,
As danger for itself he loved;
On his sad brow nor mirth nor wine
Could e'er one wrinkled knot untwine;
Ill was the omen if he smiled,
For 'twas in peril stern and wild;
But when he laugh'd, each luckless mate
Might hold our fortune desperate.
Foremost he fought in every broil,
Then scornful turned him from the spoil;
Nay, often strove to bar the way
Between his comrades and their prey;
Preaching, even then, to such as we,
Hot with our dear-bought victory,
Of mercy and humanity.

XXIII.

"I loved him well—His fearless part,
His gallant leading, won my heart.
And after each victorious fight,
'Twas I that wrangled for his right,
Redeem'd his portion of the prey
That greedier mates had torn away:
In field or storm thrice saved his life,
And once amid our comrades' strife.—
Yes, I have loved thee! Well hath proved
My toil, my danger, how I loved! Yet will I mourn no more thy fate, Ingrate in life, in death ingrate.
Rise if thou canst!" he look'd around,  
And sternly stamp'd upon the ground—  
"Rise, with thy bearing proud and high,  
Even as this morn it met mine eye,  
And give me, if thou darest, the lie!"  
He paused—then, calm and passion-freed,  
Bade Denzil with his tale proceed.  

XXIV.  
"Bertram, to thee I need not tell,  
What thou hast cause to wot so well,  
How Superstition's nets were twined  
Around the Lord of Mortham's mind!  
But since he drove thee from his tower,  
A maid he found in Greta's bower,  
Whose speech, like David's harp, had sway,  
To charm his evil fiend away.  
I know not if her features moved  
Remembrance of the wife he loved;  
But he would gaze upon her eye,  
Till his mood soften'd to a sigh.  
He, whom no living mortal sought  
To question of his secret thought,  
Now every thought and care confess'd  
To his fair niece's faithful breast;  
Nor was there aught of rich and rare,  

In earth, in ocean, or in air,  
But it must deck Matilda's hair.  
Her love still bound him unto life;  
But then awoke the civil strife,  
And menials bore, by his commands,  
Three coffers, with their iron bands,  
From Mortham's vault, at midnight deep,  
To her lone bower in Rokeby-keep,  
Ponderous with gold and plate of pride  
His gift, if he in battle died."—  

XXV.  
"Then Denzil, as I guess, lays train,  
These iron-banded chests to gain;  
Else, wherefore should he hover here,  
Where many a peril waits him near,  
From all his feats of war and peace,  
For plunder'd boors, and harts of greese?  
Since through the hamlets as he fared,  
What hearth has Guy's marauding spared,  
Or where the chase that hath not rung  
With Denzil's bow, at midnight strung?"—  
"I hold my wont—my rangers go,  
Even now to track a milk-white doe."  
By Rokeby-hall she takes her lair,  
In Greta wood she harbours fair,
And when my huntsman marks her way,
What think'st thou, Bertram, of the prey?
Were Rokeby's daughter in our power,
We rate her ransom at her dower.”—

XXVI.

"'Tis well!—there's vengeance in the thought
Matilda is by Wilfrid sought;
And hot-brain'd Redmond, too, 'tis said,
Pays lover's homage to the maid.
Bertram she scorn'd—If met by chance,
She turn'd from me her shuddering glance,
Like a nice dame, that will not brook
On what she hates and loathes to look;
She told to Mortham she could ne'er
Behold me without secret fear,
Foreboding evil;—She many rue
To find her prophecy fall true!—
The war has weeded Rokeby's train,
Few followers in his halls remain;
If thy scheme miss, then, brief and bold,
We are enow to storm the hold;
Bear off the plunder, and the dame,
And leave the castle all in flame.”—

XXVII.

"Still art thou Valour's venturous son!
Yet ponder first the risk to run:
The menials of the castle, true,
And stubborn to their charge, though few;
The wall to scale—the moat to cross—
The wicket-grate—the inner fosse”—
—"Fool! if we blench for toys like these,
On what fair guerdon can we seize?
Our hardiest venture, to explore
Some wretched peasant's fenceless door,
And the best prize we bear away,
The earnings of his sordid day.”—
"A while thy hasty taunt forbear:
In sight of road more sure and fair,
Thou wouldst not choose, in blindfold wrath,
Or wantonness, a desperate path?
List, then;—for vantage or assault,
From gilded vane to dungeon-vault,
Each pass of Rokeby-house I know:
There is one postern, dark and low,
That issues at a secret spot,
By most neglected or forgot.
Now, could a spial of our train
On fair pretext admittance gain,
That sally-port might be unbarr'd:
Then, vain were battlement and ward!”—

XXVIII.

"Now speak'st thou well:—to me the same,
If force or art shall urge the game;
Indifferent, if like fox I wind,
Or spring like tiger on the hind.—
But, hark! our merry-men so gay
Troll forth another roundelay.”—

Song.
“A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine!
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine!
A lightsome eye, a soldier’s mien,
A feather of the blue,
A doublet of the Lincoln green,—
No more of me you knew,
My love!
No more of me you knew.

“This morn is merry June, I trow,
The rose is budding fain;
But she shall bloom in winter snow,
Ere we two meet again.”
He turn’d his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore,
He gave his bridle-reins a shake,
Said, “Adieu for evermore,
My love!
And adieu for evermore.”—312

XXIX.
“What youth is this, your band among,
The best for minstrelsy and song?
In his wild notes seem aptly met
A strain of pleasure and regret.”—
“Edmund of Winston is his name;
The hamlet sounded with the fame
Of early hopes his childhood gave,—
Now center’d all in Brignall cave!
I watch him well—his wayward course
Shows oft a tincture of remorse.
Some early love-shaft grazed his heart,
And oft the scar will ache and smart
Yet is he useful;—of the rest,
By fits, the darling and the jest,
His harp, his story, and his lay,
Oft aid the idle hours away:
When unemploy’d, each fiery mate
Is ripe for mutinous debate.
He tuned his strings e’en now—again
He wakes them, with a blither strain.”

XXX.

Song.

ALLEN-A-DALE.
Allen-a-Dale has no fagot for burning,
Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.
Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken my tale!
And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
And he views his domains upon Arkindale side.
The mere for his net, and the land for his game,
The chase for the wild, and the park for the tame;
Yet the fish of the lake, and the deer of the vale,
Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as bright;
Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,
Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale. 355

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
The mother, she ask'd of his household and home:
"Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,
My hall," quoth bold Allen, "shows gallanter still;
'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so pale,
And with all its bright spangles!" said Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone;
They lifted the latch, and they bade him be gone;
But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry:
He had laugh'd on the lass with his bonny black eye.
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-Dale!

XXXI.

"Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,
Love mingles ever in his lay.
But when his boyish wayward fit
Is o'er, he hath address and wit;
O! 'tis a brain of fire, can ape
Each dialect, each various shape."—
"Nay, then, to aid thy project, Guy—
Soft! who comes here?"—"My trusty spy.
Speak, Hamlin! hast thou lodged our deer?"—314
"I have—but two fair stags are near
I watch'd her, as she slowly stray'd
From Egliston up Thorsgill glade;
But Wilfrid Wycliffe sought her side,
And then young Redmond, in his pride,
Shot down to meet them on their way:
Much, as it seem'd, was theirs to say:
There's time to pitch both toil and net,
Before their path be homeward set."
A hurried and a whisper'd speech
Did Bertram's will to Denzil teach;
Who, turning to the robber band,
Bade four, the bravest, take the brand.
CANTO FOURTH.

I.

WHEN Denmark's raven soar'd on high,
Triumphant through Northumbrian sky,
Till, hovering near, her fatal croak
Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke,
And the broad shadow of her wing
Blacken'd each cataract and spring,
Where Tees in tumult leaves his source,
Thundering o'er Caldron and High-Force;
Beneath the shade the Northmen came,
Fix'd on each vale a Runic name,
Rear'd high their altar's rugged stone,
And gave their Gods the land they won.
Then, Balder, one bleak garth was thine,
And one sweet brooklet's silver line,
And Woden's Croft did title gain
From the stern Father of the Slain;
But to the Monarch of the Mace,
That held in fight the foremost place,
To Odin's son, and Sifia's spouse,
Near Stratforth high they paid their vows,
Remember'd Thor's victorious fame,
And gave the dell the Thunderer's name.

II.

Yet Scald or Kemper err'd, I ween,
Who gave that soft and quiet scene,
With all its varied light and shade,
And every little sunny glade,
And the blithe brook that strolls along
Its pebbled bed with summer song,
To the grim God of blood and scar,
The grisly King of Northern War.
O, better were its banks assign'd
To spirits of a gentler kind!
For where the thicket-groups recede,
And the rath primrose decks the mead,
The velvet grass seems carpet meet
For the light fairies' lively feet.
Yon tufted knoll, with daisies strown,
Might make proud Oberon a throne,
While, hidden in the thicket nigh,
Puck should brood o'er his frolic sly;
And where profuse the wood-vetch clings
Round ash and elm, in verdant rings,
Its pale and azure-pencill'd flower
Should canopy Titania's bower.

III.

Here rise no cliffs the vale to shade;
But, skirting every sunny glade,
In fair variety of green
The woodland lends its silvan screen.
Hoary, yet haughty, frowns the oak,
Its boughs by weight of ages broke;
And towers erect, in sable spire,
The pine-tree scathed by lightning-fire;
The drooping ash and birch, between,
Hang their fair tresses o'er the green,
And all beneath, at random grow
Each coppice dwarf of varied show,
Or, round the stems profusely twined,
Fling summer odours on the wind.
Such varied group Urbino's hand
Round Him of Tarsus nobly plann'd,
What time he bade proud Athens own
On Mars's Mount the God Unknown!
Then grey Philosophy stood nigh,
Though bent by age, in spirit high:
There rose the scar-seam'd veteran's spear,
There Grecian Beauty bent to hear,
While Childhood at her foot was placed,
Or clung delighted to her waist.

IV.
"And rest we here," Matilda said,
And sat her in the varying shade.

"Chance-met, we well may steal an hour,
To friendship due, from fortune's power.
Thou, Wilfrid, ever kind, must lend
Thy counsel to thy sister-friend;
And, Redmond, thou, at my behest,
No farther urge thy desperate quest.
For to my care a charge is left,
Dangerous to one of aid bereft;
Wellnigh an orphan, and alone,
Captive her sire, her house o'erthrown."
Wilfrid, with wonted kindness graced,
Beside her on the turf she placed;
Then paused, with downcast look and eye,
Nor bade young Redmond seat him nigh.
Her conscious diffidence he saw,
Drew backward, as in modest awe,
And sat a little space removed,
Unmark'd to gaze on her he loved.

V.
Wreathed in its dark-brown rings, her hair
Half hid Matilda's forehead fair,
Half hid and half reveal'd to view
Her full dark eye of hazel hue.
The rose, with faint and feeble streak,
So slightly tinged the maiden's cheek,
That you had said her hue was pale;
But if she faced the summer gale,
Or spoke, or sung, or quicker moved,
Or heard the praise of those she loved,
Or when of interest was express’d
Aught that waked feeling in her breast,
The mantling blood in ready play
Rivall’d the blush of rising day.
There was a soft and pensive grace,
A cast of thought upon her face,
That suited well the forehead high,
The eyelash dark, and downcast eye;
The mild expression spoke a mind
In duty firm, composed, resign’d;
’Tis that which Roman art has given,
To mark their maiden Queen of Heaven.

In hours of sport, that mood gave way
To Fancy’s light and frolic play;
And when the dance, or tale, or song,
In harmless mirth sped time along,
Full oft her doating sire would call
His Maud the merriest of them all,
But days of war and civil crime,
Allow’d but ill such festal time,
And her soft pensiveness of brow
Had deepen’d into sadness now.
In Marston field her father ta’en,
Her friends dispersed, brave Mortham slain,
While every ill her soul foretold,
From Oswald’s thirst of power and gold,

And boding thoughts that she must part
With a soft vision of her heart,—
All lower’d around the lovely maid,
To darken her dejection’s shade.

VI.

Who has not heard—while Erin yet
Strove ’gainst the Saxon’s iron bit—
Who has not heard how brave O’Neale
In English blood imbruéd his steel,
Against St. George’s cross blazed high
The banners of his Tanistry,
To fiery Essex gave the foil,
And reign’d a prince on Ulster’s soil?

But chief arose his victor pride,
When that brave Marshal fought and died,
And Avon-Duff to ocean bore
His billows red with Saxon gore.
’Twas first in that disastrous fight,
Rokeby and Mortham proved their might.
There had they fallen ’mongst the rest,
But pity touch’d a chieftain’s breast;
The Tanist he to great O’Neale;
He check’d his followers’ bloody zeal,
To quarter took the kinsmen bold,
And bore them to his mountain-hold,
Gave them each silvan joy to know,
Slieve-Donard’s cliffs and woods could show,
Shared with them Erin’s festal cheer,
Show’d them the chase of wolf and deer,
And, when a fitting time was come,
Safe and unsansom’d sent them home,
Loaded with many a gift, to prove
A generous foe’s respect and love.

VII.

Years sped away. On Rokeby’s head
Some touch of early snow was shed;
Calm he enjoy’d, by Greta’s wave,
The peace which James the Peaceful gave,
While Mortham, far beyond the main,
Waged his fierce wars on Indian Spain.—
It chanced upon a wintry night,
That whiten’d Stanmore’s stormy height,
The chase was o’er, the stag was kill’d,
In Rokeby-hall the cups were fill’d,
And by the huge stone chimney sate
The Knight in hospitable state.
Moonless the sky, the hour was late,
When a loud summons shook the gate,
And sore for entrance and for aid
A voice of foreign accent pray’d.
The porter answer’d to the call,
And instant rush’d into the hall
A Man, whose aspect and attire
Startled the circle by the fire.

VIII.

His plaited hair in elf-locks spread
Around his bare and matted head;
On leg and thigh, close stretch’d and trim,
His vesture show’d the sinewy limb;
In saffron dyed, a linen vest
Was frequent folded round his breast;
A mantle long and loose he wore,
Shaggy with ice, and stain’d with gore.
He clasp’d a burden to his heart,
And, resting on a knotted dart,
The snow from hair and beard he shook,
And round him gazed with wilder’d look.
Then up the hall, with staggering pace,
He hasten’d by the blaze to place,
Half lifeless from the bitter air,
His load, a Boy of beauty rare.
To Rokeby, next, he louted low,
Then stood erect his tale to show,
With wild majestic port and tone,
Like envoy of some barbarous throne
“Sir Richard, Lord of Rokeby, hear!
Turlough O’Neale salutes thee dear;
He graces thee, and to thy care 
Young Redmond gives, his 
grandson fair. 
He bids thee breed him as thy son, 
For Turlough’s days of joy are 
done; 
And other lords have seized his 
land, 
And faint and feeble is his hand; 
And all the glory of Tyrone 
is like a morning vapour flown. 
To bind the duty on thy soul, 
He bids thee think on Erin’s 
bowl! 
If any wrong the young O’Neale, 
He bids thee think of Erin’s steel. 
To Mortham first this charge 
was due, 
But, in his absence, honours you.—
Now is my master’s message by, 
And Ferraught will contented 
die.”

IX.

His look grew fix’d, his cheek 
grew pale, 
He sunk when he had told his 
tale; 
For, hid beneath his mantle wide, 
A mortal wound was in his side. 
Vain was all aid—in terror wild, 
And sorrow, scream’d the orphan 
Child. 
Poor Ferraught raised his wistful 
eyes, 
And faintly strove to soothe his 
cries; 
All reckless of his dying pain, 
He blest and blest him o’er 
again! 
And kiss’d the little hands out-
spread, 
And kiss’d and cross’d the infant 
head, 
And, in his native tongue and 
phrase, 
Pray’d to each saint to watch his 
days; 
Then all his strength together 
drew, 
The charge to Rokeby to re-
new. 
When half was falter’d from his 
breast, 
And half by dying signs ex-
press’d, 
“Bless the O’Neale!” he faintly 
said, 
And thus the faithful spirit fled.

X.

’Twas long ere soothing might 
pervail 
Upon the Child to end the 
tale; 
And then he said, that from his 
home 
His grandsire had been forced to 
roam, 
Which had not been if Redmond’s 
hand 
Had but had strength to draw 
the brand, 
The brand of Lenaugh More the 
Red, 
That hung beside the grey wolf’s 
head.—
’Twas from his broken phrase 
descried, 
His foster-father was his guide,322 
Who, in his charge, from Ulster 
bore 
Letters and gifts a goodly 
store; 
But ruffians met them in the 
wood, 
Ferraught in battle boldly stood,
Till wounded and o'erpower'd at length,
And stripp'd of all, his failing strength
Just bore him here—and then the child
Renew'd again his moaning wild.

XI

The tear down childhood's cheek that flows,
Is like the dewdrop on the rose;
When next the summer breeze comes by,
And waves the bush, the flower is dry.
Won by their care, the orphan Child
Soon on his new protector smiled,
With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,
Through his thick curls of flaxen hair,
But blithest laugh'd that cheek and eye,
When Rokeby's little Maid was nigh;
'Twas his, with elder brother's pride,
Matilda's tottering steps to guide;
His native lays in Irish tongue,
To soothe her infant ear he sung,
And primrose twined with daisy fair,
To form a chaplet for her hair.
By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,
The children still were hand in hand,
And good Sir Richard smiling eyed
The early knot so kindly tied.

XII.

But summer months bring wilding shoot
From bud to bloom, from bloom to fruit;
And years draw on our human span,
From child to boy, from boy to man;
And soon in Rokeby's wood is seen
A gallant boy in hunter's green.
He loves to wake the felon boar,
In his dark haunt on Greta's shore,
And loves, against the deer so dun,
To draw the shaft, or lift the gun:
Yet more he loves, in autumn prime,
The hazel's spreading boughs to climb,
And down its cluster'd stores to hail,
Where young Matilda holds her veil.
And she, whose veil receives the shower,
Is alter'd too, and knows her power;
Assumes a monitress's pride,
Her Redmond's dangerous sports to chide;
Yet listens still to hear him tell
How the grim wild-boar fought and fell,
How at his fall the bugle rung,
Till rock and greenwood answer flung;
Then blesses her, that man can find
A pastime of such savage kind!
XIII.
But Redmond knew to weave his tale
So well with praise of wood and dale,
And knew so well each point to trace,
Gives living interest to the chase,
And knew so well o'er all to throw
His spirit's wild romantic glow,
That, while she blamed, and while she fear'd,
She loved each venturous tale she heard.
Oft, too, when drifted snow and rain
To bower and hall their steps restrain,
Together they explored the page
Of glowing bard or gifted sage;
Oft, placed the evening fire beside,
The minstrel art alternate tried,
While gladsome harp and lively lay
Bade winter-night flit fast away;
Thus, from their childhood, blending still
Their sport, their study, and their skill,
An union of the soul they prove,
But must not think that it was love.
But though they dare not, envious Fame
Soon dared to give that union name;
And when so often, side by side,
From year to year the pair she eyed,
She sometimes blamed the good old Knight,
As dull of ear and dim of sight,
Sometimes his purpose would declare,
That young O'Neale should wed his heir.

XIV.
The suit of Wilfrid rent disguise
And bandage from the lovers' eyes;
'Twas plain that Oswald, for his son,
Had Rokeby's favour wellnigh won.
Now must they meet with change of cheer,
With mutual looks of shame and fear;
Now must Matilda stray apart,
To school her disobedient heart:
And Redmond now alone must rue
The love he never can subdue.
But factions rose, and Rokeby swore,
No rebel's son should wed his heir;
And Redmond, nurtured while a child
In many a bard's traditions wild,
Now sought the lonely wood or stream,
To cherish there a happier dream,
Of maiden won by sword or lance,
As in the regions of romance;
And count the heroes of his line,
Great Nial of the Pledges Nine, Shane-Dymas wild, and Geraldine,
And Connan-more, who vow'd his race
For ever to the fight and chase,
ROKEBY.

And cursed him, of his lineage born,
Should sheathe the sword to reap the corn,
Or leave the mountain and the wold,
To shroud himself in castled hold.
From such examples hope he drew,
And brighten'd as the trumpet blew.

XV.

If brides were won by heart and blade,
Redmond had both his cause to aid,
And all beside of nurture rare
That might beseeem a baron's heir.
Turlough O'Neale, in Erin's strife,
On Rokeby's Lord bestow'd his life,
And well did Rokeby's generous Knight
Young Redmond for the deed requite.
Nor was his liberal care and cost
Upon the gallant stripling lost:
Seek the North-Riding broad and wide,
Like Redmond none could steed bestride;
From Tynemouth search to Cumberland,
Like Redmond none could wield a brand;
And then, of humour kind and free,
And bearing him to each degree
With frank and fearless courtesy,

There never youth was form'd to steal
Upon the heart like brave O'Neale.

XVI.

Sir Richard loved him as his son;
And when the days of peace were done,
And to the gales of war he gave
The banner of his sires to wave,
Redmond, distinguish'd by his care,
He chose that honour'd flag to bear;
And named his page, the next degree,
In that old time, to chivalry.
In five pitch'd fields he well maintain'd
The honour'd place his worth obtain'd,
And high was Redmond's youthful name
Blazed in the roll of martial fame.
Had fortune smiled on Marston fight,
The eve had seen him dubb'd a knight;
Twice, 'mid the battle's doubtful strife
Of Rokeby's Lord he saved the life,
But when he saw him prisoner made,
He kiss'd and then resign'd his blade,
And yielded him an easy prey
To those who led the Knight away;
Resolved Matilda's sire should prove
In prison, as in fight, his love.
XVII.

When lovers meet in adverse hour,
'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a shower,
A watery ray, an instant seen
The darkly closing clouds between.
As Redmond on the turf reclined,
The past and present fill'd his mind:
"It was not thus," Affection said,
"I dream'd of my return, dear maid!
Not thus, when from thy trembling hand,
I took the banner and the brand,
When round me, as the bugles blew,
Their blades three hundred warriors drew,
And, while the standard I unroll'd,
Clash'd their bright arms, with clamour bold.
Where is that banner now?—its pride
Lies 'whelm'd in Ouse's sullen tide!
Where now these warriors?—in their gore,
They cumber Marston's dismal moor!
And what avails a useless brand,
Held by a captive's shackled hand,
That only would his life retain,
To aid thy sire to bear his chain!"
Thus Redmond to himself apart;
Nor lighter was his rival's heart;
For Wilfrid, while his generous soul
Disdain'd to profit by control.

By many a sign could mark too plain,
Save with such aid, his hopes were vain.—
But now Matilda's accents stole
On the dark visions of their soul,
And bade their mournful musing fly,
Like mist before the zephyr's sigh.

XVIII.

"I need not to my friends recall,
How Mortham shunn'd my father's hall;
A man of silence and of woe,
Yet ever anxious to bestow
On my poor self whate'er could prove
A kinsman's confidence and love.
My feeble aid could sometimes chase
The clouds of sorrow for a space:
But oftener, fix'd beyond my power,
I mark'd his deep despondence lower.
One dismal cause, by all unguess'd,
His fearful confidence confess'd;
And twice it was my hap to see
Examples of that agony.
Which for a season can o'erstrain
And wreck the structure of the brain.
He had the awful power to know
The approaching mental overthrow,
And while his mind had courage yet
To struggle with the dreadful fit,
The victim writhed against its throes,
Like wretch beneath a murderer's blows.
This malady, I well could mark,  
Sprung from some direful cause  
and dark;  
But still he kept its source conceal'd,  
Till arming for the civil field;  
Then in my charge he bade me hold  
A treasure huge of gems and gold,  
With this disjointed dismal scroll,  
That tells the secret of his soul,  
In such wild words as oft betray  
A mind by anguish forced astray.”—

XIX.
MORTHAM'S HISTORY.

"Matilda! thou hast seen me start,
As if a dagger thrill'd my heart,
When it has hap'd some casual phrase
Waked memory of my former days.
Believe, that few can backward cast
Their thoughts with pleasure on the past;
But I!—my youth was rash and vain,
And blood and rage my manhood stain,
And my grey hairs must now descend
To my cold grave without a friend!
Even thou, Matilda, wilt disown
Thy kinsman, when his guilt is known.
And must I lift the bloody veil,
That hides my dark and fatal tale!

I must—I will—Pale phantom, cease!
Leave me one little hour in peace!
Thus haunted, think'st thou I have skill
Thine own commission to fulfil?
Or, while thou point'st with gesture fierce,
Thy blighted cheek, thy bloody hearse,
How can I paint thee as thou wert,
So fair in face, so warm in heart!

XX.

"Yes, she was fair!—Matilda, thou
Hast a soft sadness on thy brow;
But hers was like the sunny glow,
That laughs on earth and all below!
We wedded secret—there was need—
Differing in country and in creed;
And, when to Mortham's tower she came,
We mentioned not her race and name,
Until thy sire, who fought afar,
Should turn him home from foreign war,
On whose kind influence we relied
To soothe her father's ire and pride.
Few months we lived retired, unknown,
To all but one dear friend alone,
One darling friend—I spare his shame,
I will not write the villain's name!
My trespasses I might forget,
And sue in vengeance for the debt
Due by a brother worm to me,
Ungrateful to God's clemency,
That spared me penitential time,
Nor cut me off amid my crime.—

XXI.
"A kindly smile to all she lent,
But on her husband's friend 'twas bent
So kind, that from its harmless glee,
The wretch misconstrued villany.
Repulsed in his presumptuous love,
A 'vengeful snare the traitor wove.
Alone we sat—the flask had flow'd,
My blood with heat unwonted glow'd.
When through the alley'd walk we spied
With hurried step my Edith glide,
Cowering beneath the verdant screen,
As one unwilling to be seen.
Words cannot paint the fiendish smile,
That curl'd the traitor's cheek the while!
Fiercely I question'd of the cause;
He made a cold and artful pause,
Then pray'd it might not chafe my mood—
'There was a gallant in the wood!'
We had been shooting at the deer;
My cross-bow (evil chance!) was near:
That ready weapon of my wrath
I caught, and, hasting up the path,
In the yew grove my wife I found,
A stranger's arms her neck had bound!
I mark'd his heart—the bow I drew—
I loosed the shaft—'twas more than true!
I found my Edith's dying charms
Lock'd in her murder'd brother's arms!
He came in secret to inquire
Her state, and reconcile her sire.

XXII.
"All fled my rage—the villain first,
Whose craft my jealousy had nursed;
He sought in far and foreign clime
To 'scape the vengeance of his crime.
The manner of the slaughter done
Was known to few, my guilt to none;
Some tale my faithful steward framed—
I know not what—of shaft mis-aim'd;
And even from those the act who knew,
He hid the hand from which it flew.
Untouch'd by human laws I stood,
But God had heard the cry of blood!
There is a blank upon my mind,
A fearful vision ill-defined,
Of raving till my flesh was torn,
Of dungeon-bolts and fetters worn—
And when I waked to woe more mild,
And question'd of my infant child—
(Have I not written, that she bare
A boy, like summer morning fair?—)
With looks confused my menials tell
That arm'd men in Mortham dell
Bset the nurse's evening way,
And bore her, with her charge, away.
My faithless friend, and none but he,
Could profit by this villany;
Him then, I sought, with purpose dread
Of treble vengeance on his head!
He 'scape'd me—but my bosom's wound
Some faint relief from wandering found;
And over distant land and sea
I bore my load of misery.

XXIII.
"'Twas then that fate my footsteps led
Among a daring crew and dread,
With whom full oft my hated life
I ventured in such desperate strife,
That even my fierce associates saw
My frantic deeds with doubt and awe.
Much then I learn'd, and much can show,
Of human guilt and human woe,
Yet ne'er have, in my wanderings, known
A wretch, whose sorrows match'd my own!—
It chanced, that after battle fray,
Upon the bloody field we lay;
The yellow moon her lustre shed
Upon the wounded and the dead,
While, sense in toil and wassail drown'd,
My ruslian comrades slept around,
There came a voice—its silver tone
Was soft, Matilda, as thine own—
'Ah, wretch!' it said, 'what makest thou here,
While unavenged my bloody bier,
While unprotected lives mine heir,
Without a father's name and care?'

XXIV.
"I heard—obey'd—and home-ward drew;
The fiercest of our desperate crew
I brought at time of need to aid
My purposed vengeance, long delay'd.
But, humble be my thanks to Heaven,
That better hopes and thoughts has given,
And by our Lord's dear prayer has taught,
Mercy by mercy must be bought!—
Let me in misery rejoice—
I've seen his face—I've heard his voice—
I claim'd of him my only child—
As he disown'd the theft, he smiled!
That very calm and callous look,
That fiendish sneer his visage took,
As when he said, in scornful mood,
‘There is a gallant in the wood!’—
I did not slay him as he stood—
All praise be to my Maker given!
Long sufferance is one path to
heaven.”

XXV.
Thus far the woful tale was heard,
When something in the thicket
stirr’d.
Up Redmond sprung; the villain
Guy,
(For he it was that lurk’d so
nigh,)
Drew back—he durst not cross
his steel
A moment’s space with brave
O’Neale,
For all the treasured gold that
rests
In Mortham’s iron-banded chests.
Redmond resumed his seat;—
he said,
Some roe was rustling in the
shade.
Bertram laugh’d grimly when he
saw
His timorous comrade backward
draw,
“ A trusty mate art thou, to fear
A single arm, and aid so near!
Yet have I seen thee mark a deer.
Give me thy carabine—I’ll show
An art that thou wilt gladly know,
How thou mayst safely quell a
foe.”

XXVI.
On hands and knees fierce Ber-
tram drew
The spreading birch and hazels
through,
Till he had Redmond full in view;
The gun he levell’d—Mark like
this
Was Bertram never known to
miss,
When fair opposed to aim there
sate
An object of his mortal hate.
That day young Redmond’s death
had seen,
But twice Matilda came between
The carabine and Redmond’s
breast,
Just ere the spring his finger
press’d.
A deadly oath the ruffian swore,
But yet his fell design forbore:
“It ne’er,” he mutter’d, “shall
be said,
That thus I scath’d thee, haughty
maid!”
Then moved to seek more open
aim,
When to his side Guy Denzil
came:
“Bertram, forbear!—we are un-
done
For ever, if thou fire the gun.
By all the fiends, an armed force
Descends the dell, of foot and
horse!
We perish if they hear a shot—
Madman! we have a safer plot—
Nay, friend, be ruled, and bear
thee back!
Behold, down yonder hollow
track,
The warlike leader of the band
Comes, with his broadsword in
his hand.”
Bertram look’d up; he saw, he
knew
That Denzil’s fears had counsell’d
true,
Then cursed his fortune and with-
drew,
ROKEBY.

Threaded the woodlands undescribed,
And gain'd the cave on Greta side.

XXVII.

They whom dark Bertram, in his wrath,
Doom'd to captivity or death,
Their thoughts to one sad subject lent,
Saw not nor heard the ambushment.
Heedless and unconcern'd they sate,
While on the very verge of fate;
Heedless and unconcern'd remain'd,
When heaven the murderer's arm restrain'd;
As ships drift darkling down the tide,
Nor see the shelves o'er which they glide.
Uninterrupted thus they heard
What Mortham's closing tale declared.
He spoke of wealth as of a load,
By Fortune on a wretch bestow'd,
In bitter mockery of hate,
His cureless woes to aggravate;
But yet he pray'd Matilda's care
Might save that treasure for his heir—
His Edith's son—for still he raved
As confident his life was saved;
In frequent vision, he averr'd,
He saw his face, his voice he heard;
Then argued calm—had murder been,
The blood, the corpses, had been seen;
Some had pretended, too, to mark
On Windermere a stranger bark,
Whose crew, with jealous care, yet mild,
Guarded a female and a child.
While these faint proofs he told and press'd,
Hope seem'd to kindle in his breast;
Though inconsistent, vague, and vain,
It warp'd his judgment, and his brain.

XXVIII.

These solemn words his story close:—
"Heaven witness for me, that I chose
My part in this sad civil fight,
Moved by no cause but England's right.
My country's groans have bid me draw
My sword for gospel and for law:—
These righted, I fling arms aside,
And seek my son through Europe wide.
My wealth, on which a kinsman nigh
Already casts a grasping eye,
With thee may unsuspected lie.
When of my death Matilda hears,
Let her retain her trust three years;
If none, from me, the treasure claim,
Perish'd is Mortham's race and name.
Then let it leave her generous hand,
And flow in bounty o'er the land;
Soften the wounded prisoner's lot,
Rebuild the peasant's ruin'd cot;
So spoils, acquired by fight afar,
Shall mitigate domestic war."

XXIX.
The generous youths, who well had known
Of Mortham's mind the powerful tone,
To that high mind, by sorrow swerved,
Gave sympathy his woes deserved;
But Wilfrid chief, who saw reveal'd
Why Mortham wish'd his life conceal'd,
In secret, doubtless, to pursue
The schemes his wilder'd fancy drew.
Thoughtful he heard Matilda tell,
That she would share her father's cell,
His partner of captivity,
Where'er his prison-house should be;
Yet grieved to think that Rokeby-
hall,
Dismantled, and forsook by all,
Open to rapine and to stealth,
Had now no safe-guard for the wealth
Intrusted by her kinsman kind,
And for such noble use design'd.
"Was Barnard Castle then her choice,"
Wilfrid enquired with hasty voice,
"Since there the victor's laws ordain,
Her father must a space remain?"
A flutter'd hope his accents shook,
A flutter'd joy was in his look.

Matilda hasten'd to reply,
For anger flash'd in Redmond's eye;—
"Duty," she said, with gentle grace,
"Kind Wilfrid, has no choice of place;
Else had I for my sire assign'd
Prison less galling to his mind,
Than that his wild-wood haunts which sees
And hears the murmur of the Tees,
Recalling thus, with every glance,
What captive's sorrow can enhance;
But where those woes are highest, there
Needs Rokeby most his daughter's care."

XXX.
He felt the kindly check she gave,
And stood abash'd—then answer'd grave;—
"I sought thy purpose, noble maid,
Thy doubts to clear, thy schemes to aid.
I have beneath mine own command,
So wills my sire, a gallant band,
And well could send some horseman wight
To bear the treasure forth by night,
And so bestow it as you deem
In these ill days may safest seem."—
"Thanks, gentle Wilfrid, thanks," she said:
"O, be it not one day delay'd!
And, more, thy sister-friend to aid,
Be thou thyself content to hold,
In thine own keeping, Mortham's gold,
Safest with thee."—While thus she spoke,
Arm'd soldiers on their converse broke,
The same of whose approach afraid,
The ruffians left their ambuscade.
Their chief to Wilfrid bended low,
Then look'd around as for a foe.
"What mean'st thou, friend," young Wycliffe said,
"Why thus in arms beset the glade?"
"That would I gladly learn from you;
For up my squadron as I drew,
To exercise our martial game
Upon the moor of Barninghame,
A stranger told you were way-laid,
Surrounded, and to death betray'd.
He had a leader's voice, I ween,
A falcon glance, a warrior's mien.
He bade me bring you instant aid;
I doubted not, and I obey'd."

Wilfrid changed colour, and, amazed,
Turn'd short, and on the speaker gazed;
While Redmond every thicket round
Track'd earnest as a questing hound,
And Denzil's carabine he found;
Sure evidence, by which they knew
The warning was as kind as true.
Wisest it seem'd, with cautious speed
To leave the dell. It was agreed,
That Redmond, with Matilda fair,
And fitting guard, should home repair;
At nightfall Wilfrid should attend,
With a strong band, his sister-friend,
To bear with her from Rokeby's bowers
To Barnard Castle's lofty towers,
Secret and safe the banded chests,
In which the wealth of Mortham rests.
This hasty purpose fix'd, they part,
Each with a grieved and anxious heart.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.
The sultry summer day is done,
The western hills have hid the sun.
But mountain peak and village spire
Retain reflection of his fire.
Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
To those that gaze from Toller-hill;
Distant and high, the tower of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows;
And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold array'd,
Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.
Thus aged men, full loth and slow,
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o'er,
Till Memory lends her light no more.

II.
The eve, that slow on upland fades,
Has darker closed on Rokeby's glades,
Where, sunk within their banks profound,
Her guardian streams to meeting wound.
The stately oaks, whose sombre frown
Of noontide made a twilight brown,
Impervious now to fainter light,
Of twilight make an early night.
Hoarse into middle air arose
The vespers of the roosting crows,
And with congenial murmurs seem
To wake the Genii of the stream;
For louder clamour'd Greta's tide,
And Tees in deeper voice replied.
And fitful waked the evening wind,
Fitful in sighs its breath resign'd.
Wilfrid, whose fancy-nurtured soul
Felt in the scene a soft control,
With lighter footstep press'd the ground,
And often paused to look around;
And, though his path was to his love,
Could not but linger in the grove,
To drink the thrilling interest dear,
Of awful pleasure check'd by fear.
Such inconsistent moods have we,
Even when our passions strike the key.

III.
Now, through the wood's dark mazes past,
The opening lawn he reach'd at last,
Where, silver'd by the moonlight ray,
The ancient Hall before him lay.
Those martial terrors long were fled,
That frown'd at old around its head:
The battlements, the turrets grey,
Seem'd half abandon'd to decay;  
On bartican and keep of stone
Stern Time the foeman's work had done.
Where banners the invader braved,
The harebell now and wallflower waved;
In the rude guard-room, where of yore
Their weary hours the warders wore,
Now, while the cheerful fagots blaze,
On the paved floor the spindle plays;
The flanking guns dismounted lie,
The moat is ruinous and dry,
The grim portcullis gone—and all
The fortress turn’d to peaceful Hall.

IV.

But yet precautions, lately ta’en,
Show’d danger’s day revived again;
The court-yard wall show’d marks of care,
The fall’n defences to repair.
The beams once more were taught to bear
The trembling drawbridge into air,
And not, till question’d o’er and o’er,
For Wilfrid oped the jealous door,
And when he entered, bolt and bar
Resumed their place with sullen jar:
Then, as he cross’d the vaulted porch,
The old grey porter raised his torch,
And view’d him o’er, from foot to head,
Ere to the hall his steps he led.
That huge old hall, of knightly state,
Dismantled seem’d and desolate.
The moon through transom-shafts of stone,
Which cross’d the latticed oriel’s, shone,
And by the mournful light she gave,
The Gothic vault seem’d funeral cave.

Pennon and banner waved no more
O’er beams of stag and tusks of boar,
Nor glimmering arms were marshall’d seen,
To glance those silvan spoils between.
Those arms, those ensigns, borne away,
Accomplish’d Rokeby’s brave array,
But all were lost on Marston’s day!
Yet here and there the moon-beams fall
Where armour yet adorns the wall,
Cumbrous of size, uncouth to sight,
And useless in the modern fight!
Like veteran relic of the wars,
Known only by neglected scars.

V.

Matilda soon to greet him came,
And bade them light the evening flame;
Said, all for parting was prepared,
And tarried but for Wilfrid’s guard.
But then, reluctant to unfold
His father’s avarice of gold,
He hinted, that lest jealous eye
Should on their precious burden pry,
He judged it best the castle gate
To enter when the night wore late;
And therefore he had left command
With those he trusted of his band,
That they should be at Rokeby met,
What time the midnight-watch was set.
Now Redmond came, whose anxious care
Till then was busied to prepare
All needful, meetly to arrange
The mansion for its mournful change.
With Wilfrid’s care and kindness pleased,
His cold unready hand he seized,
And press’d it, till his kindly strain
The gentle youth return’d again.
Seem’d as between them this was said,
“A while let jealousy be dead;
And let our contest be, whose care
Shall best assist this helpless fair.”

VI.

There was no speech the truce to bind,
It was a compact of the mind,—
A generous thought, at once impress’d
On either rival’s generous breast.
Matilda well the secret took,
From sudden change of mien and look;
And—for not small had been her fear
Of jealous ire and danger near—
Felt, even in her dejected state,
A joy beyond the reach of fate.
They closed beside the chimney’s blaze,
And talk’d, and hoped for happier days,
And lent their spirits’ rising glow
A while to gild impending woe;—

High privilege of youthful time,
Worth all the pleasures of our prime!
The bickering fagot sparkled bright,
And gave the scene of love to sight,
Bade Wilfrid’s cheek more lively glow,
Play’d on Matilda’s neck of snow,
Her nut-brown curls and forehead high,
And laugh’d in Redmond’s azure eye.
Two lovers by the maiden sate,
Without a glance of jealous hate;
The maid her lovers sat between,
With open brow and equal mien;—
It is a sight but rarely spied,
Thanks to man’s wrath and woman’s pride.

VII.

While thus in peaceful guise they sate,
A knock alarm’d the outer gate,
And ere the tardy porter stirr’d,
The tinkling of a harp was heard.
A manly voice of mellow swell,
Bore burden to the music well.

Song.

“Summer eve is gone and past,
Summer dew is falling fast;
I have wander’d all the day,
Do not bid me farther stray!
Gentle hearts, of gentle kin,
Take the wandering harper in!”
But the stern porter answer
gave,
With "Get thee hence, thou
strolling knave
The king wants soldiers; war,
I trow,
Were meeter trade for such as
thou."
At this unkind reproof, again
Answer'd the ready Minstrel's
strain.

Song resumed.
"Bid not me, in battle-field,
Buckler lift or broadsword wield!
All my strength and all my art
Is to touch the gentle heart,
With the wizard notes that
ring
From the peaceful minstrel-
string."—

The porter, all unmoved, re-
p lied,
"Depart in peace, with Heaven
to guide
If longer by the gate thou dwell,
Trust me, thou shalt not part so
well."

VIII.
With somewhat of appealing
look,
The harper's part young Wilfrid
took:
"These notes so wild and ready
thrill,
They show no vulgar minstrel's
skill;
Hard were his task to seek a
home
More distant, since the night is
come;
And for his faith I dare engage—
Your Harpool's blood is sour'd
by age;
His gate, once readily display'd,
To greet the friend, the poor to
aid,
Now even to me, though known
of old,
Did but reluctantly unfold."—
"O blame not, as poor Harpool's
crime,
An evil of this evil time.
He deems dependent on his care
The safety of his patron's heir,
Nor judges meet to ope the
tower
To guest unknown at parting
hour,
Urging his duty to excess
Of rough and stubborn faithful-
ness.
For this poor harper, I would
fain
He may relax:—Hark to his
strain!"—

IX.

Song resumed.
"I have song of war for
knight,
Lay of love for lady bright,
Fairy tale to lull the heir,
Goblin grim the maids to
scare.
Dark the night, and long till
day,
Do not bid me farther stray!
"Rokeby's lords of martial
fame,
I can count them name by
name;"
Legends of their line there be,
Known to few, but known to me;
If you honour Rokeby's kin,
Take the wandering harper in!

"Rokeby’s lords had fair regard
For the harp, and for the bard;
Baron’s race throve never well,
Where the curse of minstrel fell.
If you love that noble kin,
Take the weary harper in!"—

"Hark! Harpool parleys—there is hope,"
Said Redmond, "that the gate will ope."—
"For all thy brag and boast, I trow,
Nought know’st thou of the Felon Sow," 339
Quoth Harpool, "nor how Greta-side
She roam’d, and Rokeby forest wide;
Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the beast
To Richmond’s friars to make a feast.
Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
That well could strike with sword amain,
And of the valiant son of Spain,
Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir Ralph;
There were a jest to make us laugh!
If thou canst tell it, in yon shed
Thou’st won thy supper and thy bed.”

X.

Matilda smiled; “Cold hope,” said she,
"From Harpool’s love of minstrelsy!
But, for this harper, may we dare,
Redmond, to mend his couch and fare?”—
"O, ask me not!—At minstrel-string
My heart from infancy would spring;
Nor can I hear its simplest strain,
But it brings Erin’s dream again,
When placed by Owen Lysaggh’s knee,
(The Filea of O’Neale was he,339
A blind and bearded man, whose eld
Was sacred as a prophet’s held,)
I’ve seen a ring of rugged kerne,
With aspects shaggy, wild, and stern,
Enchanted by the master’s lay,
Linger around the livelong day,
Shift from wild rage to wilder glee,
To love, to grief, to ecstasy,
And feel each varied change of soul
Obedient to the bard’s control.—
Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
Slieve-Donard’s oak shall light no more; 332
Nor Owen’s harp, beside the blaze,
Tell maiden’s love, or hero’s praise!
The mantling brambles hide thy hearth,
Centre of hospitable mirth;
All undistinguish'd in the glade,
My sires' glad home is prostrate laid,
Their vassals wander wide and far,
Serve foreign lords in distant war,
And now the stranger's sons enjoy
The lovely woods of Clandeboy!" He spoke, and proudly turn'd aside,
The starting tear to dry and hide.

XI.
Matilda's dark and soften'd eye
Was glistening ere O'Neale's was dry.
Her hand upon his arm she laid,
"It is the will of Heaven," she said.
"And think'st thou, Redmond, I can part
From this loved home with lightsome heart,
Leaving to wild neglect whate'er
Even from my infancy was dear?
For in this calm domestic bound Were all Matilda's pleasures found.
That hearth, my sire was wont to grace,
Full soon may be a stranger's place;
This hall, in which a child I play'd,
Like thine, dear Redmond, lowly laid,
The bramble and the thorn may braid;
Or, pass'd for aye from me and mine,
It ne'er may shelter Rokeby's line.

Yet is this consolation given,
My Redmond,—'tis the will of Heaven."
Her word, her action, and her phrase,
Were kindly as in early days; For cold reserve had lost its power,
In sorrow's sympathetic hour. Young Redmond dared not trust his voice;
But rather had it been his choice To share that melancholy hour, Than, arm'd with all a chieftain's power,
In full possession to enjoy Slieve-Donard wide, and Clandeboy.

XII.
The blood left Wilfrid's ashen cheek;
Matilda sees, and hastes to speak.—
"Happy in friendship's ready aid,
Let all my murmurs here be staid!
And Rokeby's Maiden will not part
From Rokeby's hall with moody heart.
This night at least, for Rokeby's fame, The hospitable hearth shall flame, And, ere its native heir retire, Find for the wanderer rest and fire,
While this poor harper, by the blaze, Recounts the tale of other days. Bid Harpool ope the door with speed, Admit him, and relieve each need.—
Meantime, kind Wycliffe, wilt thou try
Thy minstrel skill?—Nay, no reply—
And look not sad!—I guess thy thought,
Thy verse with laurels would be bought;
And poor Matilda, landless now,
Has not a garland for thy brow.
True, I must leave sweet Rokeby’s glades,
Nor wander more in Greta shades;
But sure, no rigid jailer, thou
Wilt a short prison-walk allow,
Where summer flowers grow wild at will,
On Marwood-chase and Toller Hill;
Then holly green and lily gay
Shall twine in guerdon of thy lay.”
The mournful youth, a space aside,
To tune Matilda’s harp applied;
And then a low sad descant rung,
As prelude to the lay he sung.

XIII.
The Cypress Wreath.

O, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree!
Too lively grow the lilies light,
The varnish’d holly’s all too bright,
The May-flower and the eglantine
May shade a brow less sad than mine;
But, Lady, weave no wreath for me,
Or weave it of the cypress-tree!

Let dimpled Mirth his temples twine
With tendrils of the laughing vine;
The manly oak, the pensive yew,
To patriot and to sage be due;
The myrtle bough bid lovers live,
But that Matilda will not give;
Then, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree!

Let merry England proudly rear
Her blended roses, bought so dear;
Let Albin bind her bonnet blue
With heath and harebell dipp’d in dew;
On favour’d Erin’s crest be seen
The flower she loves of emerald green—
But, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree.

Strike the wild harp, while maids prepare
The ivy meet for minstrel’s hair;
And, while his crown of laurel-leaves,
With bloody hand the victor weaves,
Let the loud trump his triumph tell;
But when you hear the passing-bell,
Then, Lady, twine a wreath for me,
And twine it of the cypress-tree.
Yes! twine for me the cypress-bough;
But, O Matilda, twine not now!
Stay till a few brief months are past,
And I have look’d and loved my last!
When villagers my shroud bestrew
With panzies, rosemary, and rue,—
Then, Lady, weave a wreath for me,
And weave it of the cypress-tree.

XIV.

O’Neale observed the starting tear,
And spoke with kind and blithe-some cheer—
"No, noble Wilfrid! ere the day
When mourns the land thy silent lay,
Shall many a wreath be freely wove
By hand of friendship and of love.
I would not wish that rigid Fate
Had doom’d thee to a captive’s state,
Whose hands are bound by honour’s law,
Who wears a sword he must not draw;
But were it so, in minstrel pride
The land together would we ride,
On prancing steeds, like harpers old,
Bound for the halls of barons bold,
Each lover of the lyre we’d seek,
From Michael’s Mount to Skiddaw’s Peak,
Survey wild Albin’s mountain strand,
And roam green Erin’s lovely land,
While thou the gentler souls should move,
With lay of pity and of love,
And I, thy mate, in rougher strain,
Would sing of war and warriors slain.
Old England’s bards were vanquish’d then,
And Scotland’s vaunted Hawthornden,
And, silenced on Iernian shore,
M’Curtin’s harp should charm no more!
In lively mood he spoke, to wile
From Wilfrid’s woe-worn cheek a smile.

XV.

"But," said Matilda, "ere thy name,
Good Redmond, gain its destined fame,
Say, wilt thou kindly deign to call
Thy brother-minstrel to the hall?
Bid all the household, too, attend,
Each in his rank a humble friend;
I know their faithful hearts will grieve,
When their poor Mistress takes her leave;
So let the horn and beaker flow
To mitigate their parting woe."
His garb was fashion'd, to express
The ancient English minstrel's
dress, \(^{334}\)
A seemly gown of Kendal green,
With gorget closed of silver
sheen;
His harp in silken scarf was slung,
And by his side an anlace hung.
It seem'd some masquer's quaint
array,
For revel or for holiday.

XVI.

He made obeisance with a free
Yet studied air of courtesy.
Each look and accent, framed to
please,
Seem'd to affect a playful ease ;
His face was of that doubtful kind,
That wins the eye, but not the
mind;
Yet harsh it seem'd to deem amiss
Of brow so young and smooth as
this.
His was the subtle look and
sly,
That, spying all, seems nought
to spy;
Round all the group his glances
stole,
Unmark'd themselves, to mark
the whole.
Yet sunk beneath Matilda's look,
Nor could the eye of Redmond
brook.
To the suspicious, or the old,
Subtile and dangerous and bold
Had seem'd this self-invited
guest;
But young our lovers,—and the
rest,
Wrapt in their sorrow and their
fear
At parting of their Mistress dear,
Tear-blinded to the Castle-hall,
Came as to bear her funeral pall.

XVII.

All that expression base was
gone,
When waked the guest his min-
strel tone;
It fled at inspiration's call,
As erst the demon fled from
Saul.
More noble glance he cast around,
More free-drawn breath inspired
the sound,
His pulse beat bolder and more
high,
In all the pride of minstrelsy!
Alas! too soon that pride was
o'er,
Sunk with the lay that bade it
soar!
His soul resumed, with habit's
chain,
Its vices wild and follies vain,
And gave the talent, with him
born,
To be a common curse and scorn.
Such was the youth whom
Rokeby's Maid,
With condescending kindness, pr'y'd
Here to renew the strains she
loved,
At distance heard and well
approved.

XVIII.

Song.

THE HARP.

I was a wild and wayward boy,
My childhood scorn'd each childish
toy,
Retired from all, reserved and coy,  
To musing prone,  
I woo'd my solitary joy,  
My Harp alone.  

My youth, with bold Ambition's mood,  
Despised the humble stream and wood,  
Where my poor father's cottage stood,  
To fame unknown;—  
What should my soaring views make good?  
My Harp alone!  

Love came with all his frantic fire,  
And wild romance of vain desire:  
The baron's daughter heard my lyre,  
And praised the tone;—  
What could presumptuous hope inspire?  
My Harp alone!  

At manhood's touch the bubble burst,  
And manhood's pride the vision curst,  
And all that had my folly nursed  
Love's sway to own;  
Yet spared the spell that lull'd me first,  
My Harp alone!  

Woe came with war, and want with woe;  
And it was mine to undergo  
Each outrage of the rebel foe:—  
Can aught atone  
My fields laid waste, my cot laid low?  
My Harp alone!  

Ambition's dreams I've seen depart,  
Have rued of penury the smart,  
Have felt of love the venom'd dart,  
When hope was flown;  
Yet rests one solace to my heart,—  
My Harp alone!  

Then over mountain, moor, and hill,  
My faithful Harp, I'll bear thee still;  
And when this life of want and ill  
Is wellnigh gone,  
Thy strings mine elegy shall thrill,  
My Harp alone!  

XIX.  
"A pleasing lay!" Matilda said;  
But Harpool shook his old gray head,  
And took his baton and his torch,  
To seek his guard-room in the porch.  
Edmund observed; with sudden change,  
Among the strings his fingers range,  
Until they waked a bolder glee  
Of military melody;  
Then paused amid the martial sound,  
And look'd with well-feign'd fear around;—  
"None to this noble house belong,"  
He said, "that would a Minstrel wrong,  
Whose fate has been, through good and ill,  
To love his Royal Master still;
And with your honour'd leave, would fain
Rejoice you with a loyal strain." Then, as assured by sign and look,
The warlike tone again he took; And Harpool stopp'd, and turn'd to hear
A ditty of the Cavalier.

XX.
Song.
The Cavalier.

While the dawn on the mountain was misty and grey,
My true love has mounted his steed and away
Over hill, over valley, o'er dale, and o'er down;
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

He has doff'd the silk doublet the breast-plate to bear,
He has placed the steel-cap o'er his long flowing hair,
From his belt to his stirrup his broadsword hangs down,—
Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

For the rights of Fair England that broadsword he draws,
Her King is his leader, her Church is his cause;
His watchward is honour, his pay is renown,—
God strike with the Gallant that strikes for the Crown!

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Waller, and all
The roundheaded rebels of Westminster Hall;
But tell these bold traitors of London's proud town,
That the spears of the North have encircled the Crown.

There's Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes:
There's Erin's high Ormond, and Scotland's Montrose!
Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and Brown,
With the Barons of England, that fight for the Crown?

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier!
Be his banner unconquer'd, resistless his spear,
Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may drown,
In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and her Crown.

XXI.

"Alas!" Matilda said, "that strain,
Good harper, now is heard in vain!
The time has been, at such a sound,
When Rokeby's vassals gather'd round,
An hundred manly hearts would bound;
But now the stirring verse we hear,
Like trump in dying soldier's ear!
Listless and sad the notes we own,
The power to answer them is flown.
Yet not without his meet applause,
Be he that sings the rightful cause,
Even when the crisis of its fate
To human eye seems desperate.
While Rokeby's Heir such power retains,
Let this slight guerdon pay thy pains:—
And, lend thy harp; I fain would try,
If my poor skill can aught supply,
Ere yet I leave my father's hall,
To mourn the cause in which we fall."

XXII.
The harper, with a downcast look,
And trembling hand, her bounty took.—
As yet, the conscious pride of art
Had steel'd him in his treacherous part;
A powerful spring, of force un-guess'd,
That hath each gentler mood suppress'd,
And reign'd in many a human breast;
From his that plans the red campaign,
To his that wastes the woodland reign.
The falling wing, the blood-shot eye,—
The sportsman marks with apathy,
Each feeling of his victim's ill
Drown'd in his own successful skill.
The veteran, too, who now no more
Aspires to head the battle's roar,
Loves still the triumph of his art,
And traces on the pencill'd chart
Some stern invader's destined way,
Through blood and ruin, to his prey;
Patriots to death, and towns to flame;
He dooms, to raise another's name,
And shares the guilt, though not the fame.
What pays him for his span of time
Spent in premeditating crime?
What against pity arms his heart?—
It is the conscious pride of art.

XXIII.
But principles in Edmund's mind
Were baseless, vague, and undefined.
His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
On Passion's changeful tide was tost;
Nor Vice nor Virtue had the power
Beyond the impression of the hour;
And, O! when Passion rules, how rare
The hours that fall to Virtue's share!
Yet now she roused her—for the pride,
The lack of sterner guilt supplied,
Could scarce support him when arose
The lay that mourned Matilda's woes.
Song.

THE FAREWELL.

The sound of Rokeby's woods I hear,
They mingle with the song:
Dark Greta's voice is in mine ear,
I must not hear them long.
From every loved and native haunt
The native Heir must stray,
And, like a ghost whom sunbeams daunt,
Must part before the day.

Soon from the halls my fathers rear'd,
Their scutcheons may descend,
A line so long beloved and fear'd
May soon obscurely end.
No longer here Matilda's tone
Shall bid those echoes swell;
Yet shall they hear her proudly own
The cause in which we fell.

The Lady paused, and then again
Resumed the lay in loftier strain.

XXIV.

Let our halls and towers decay,
Be our name and line forgot,
Lands and manors pass away,—
We but share our Monarch's lot.
If no more our annals show
Battles won and banners taken,
Still in death, defeat, and woe,
Ours be loyalty unshaken!

Constant still in danger's hour,
Princes own'd our fathers' aid;
Lands and honours, wealth and power,
Well their loyalty repaid.
Perish wealth, and power, and pride!
Mortal boons by mortals given;
But let Constancy abide,—
Constancy's the gift of Heaven.

XXV.

While thus Matilda's lay was heard,
A thousand thoughts in Edmund stirr'd.
In peasant life he might have known
As fair a face, as sweet a tone;
But village notes could ne'er supply
That rich and varied melody;
And ne'er in cottage-maid was seen
The easy dignity of mien,
Claiming respect, yet waving state,
That marks the daughters of the great.
Yet not, perchance, had these alone
His scheme of purposed guilt o'erthrown;
But while her energy of mind
Superior rose to griefs combined,
Lending its kindling to her eye,
Giving her form new majesty,—
To Edmund's thought Matilda seem'd
The very object he had dream'd;
When, long ere guilt his soul had known,
In Winston bowers he mused alone,
Taxing his fancy to combine
The face, the air, the voice divine,
Of princess fair, by cruel fate
Rest of her honours, powers and state,
Till to her rightful realm restored
By destined hero's conquering sword.

XXVI.
"Such was my vision!" Edmund thought;
"And have I, then, the ruin wrought
Of such a maid, that fancy ne'er
In fairest vision form'd her peer?
Was it my hand that could un-close
The postern to her ruthless foes?
Foes, lost to honour, law, and faith,
Their kindest mercy sudden death!
Have I done this? I! who have swore,
That if the globe such angel bore,
I would have traced its circle broad,
To kiss the ground on which she trode!—
And now—O! would that earth would rive,
And close upon me while alive!—
Is there no hope? Is all then lost?
Bertram's already on his post!
Even now, beside the Hall's arch'd door,
I saw his shadow cross the floor!
He was to wait my signal strain—
A little respite thus we gain:

By what I heard the menials say,
Young Wycliffe's troop are on their way—
Alarm precipitates the crime!
My harp must wear away the time."—
And then, in accents faint and low,
He falter'd forth a tale of woe.

XXVII.
Ballad.
"And whither would you lead me, then?"
Quoth the Friar of orders grey;
And the Russians twain replied again,
"By a dying woman to pray."—

"I see," he said, "a lovely sight,
A sight bodes little harm,
A lady as a lily bright,
With an infant on her arm."—

"Then do thine office, Friar grey,
And see thou shrive her free?
Else shall the sprite, that parts to-night,
Fling all its guilt on thee.

"Let mass be said, and trentals read,
When thou'rt to convent gone,
And bid the bell of St. Benedict Toll out its deepest tone."

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
Blindfolded as he came—
Next morning, all in Littlecot Hall
Were weeping for their dame.
Roseby.

Wild Darrell is an alter’d man,
The village crones can tell;
He looks pale as clay, and strives
to pray,
If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell’s
way,
He’ll beard him in his pride—
If he meet a Friar of orders
grey,
He droops and turns aside.

XXVIII.

"Harper! methinks thy magic
lays,"
Matilda said, "can goblins
raise!
Wellnigh my fancy can discern,
Near the dark porch, a visage
stern;
E’en now, in yonder shadowy
nook,
I see it!—Redmond, Wilfrid,
look!—
A human form distinct and
clear—
God, for thy mercy!—It draws
near!"
She saw too true. Stride after
stride,
The centre of that chamber wide
Fierce Bertram gain’d; then made
a stand,
And, proudly waving with his
hand,
Thunder’d—"Be still, upon your
lives!—
He bleeds who speaks, he dies
who strives."
Behind their chief, the robber
crew
Forth from the darken’d portal
drew

In silence—save that echo dread
Return’d their heavy measured
tread.
The lamp’s uncertain lustre gave
Their arms to gleam, their plumes
to wave;
File after file in order pass,
Like forms on Banquo’s mystic
glass.
Then, halting at their leader’s
sign,
At once they form’d and curved
their line,
Hemming within its crescent
drear
Their victims, like a herd of deer.
Another sign, and to the aim
Levell’d at once their muskets
came,
As waiting but their chieftain’s
word,
To make their fatal volley heard.

XXIX.

Back in a heap the menials drew;
Yet, even in mortal terror, true,
Their pale and startled group
oppose
Between Matilda and the foes.
"O, haste thee, Wilfrid!" Red-
mond cried;
"Undo that wicket by thy side!
Bear hence Matilda—gain the
wood—
The pass may be a while made
good—
Thy band, ere this, must sure be
nigh—
O speak not—dally not—but.
fly!"
While yet the crowd their motions
hide,
Through the low wicket door
they glide.
Through vaulted passages they wind,
In Gothic intricacy twined;
Wilfrid half led, and half he bore,
Matilda to the postern-door,
And safe beneath the forest tree,
The Lady stands at liberty.
The moonbeams, the fresh gale's caress,
Renew'd suspended consciousness;
"Where's Redmond?" eagerly she cries:
"Thou answer'st not—he dies! he dies!
And thou hast left him, all bereft
Of mortal aid—with murderers left!
I know it well—he would not yield
His sword to man—his doom is seal'd!
For my scorn'd life, which thou hast bought
At price of his, I thank thee not."

XXX.
The unjust reproach, the angry look,
The heart of Wilfrid could not brook.
"Lady," he said, "my band so near,
In safety thou mayst rest thee here.
For Redmond's death thou shalt not mourn,
If mine can buy his safe return."
He turn'd away—his heart throb'd high,
The tear was bursting from his eye;

The sense of her injustice press'd
Upon the Maid's distracted breast,—
"Stay, Wilfrid, stay! all aid is vain!"
He heard, but turn'd him not again;
He reaches now the postern-door,
Now enters—and is seen no more.

XXXI.
With all the agony that e'er
Was gender'd 'twixt suspense and fear,
She watch'd the line of windows tall,
Whose Gothic lattice lights the Hall,
Distinguish'd by the paly red
The lamps in dim reflection shed,
While all beside in wan moon-light
Each grated casement glimmer'd white.
No sight of harm, no sound of ill,
It is a deep and midnight still.
Who look'd upon the scene, had guess'd
All in the Castle were at rest:
When sudden on the windows shone
A lightning flash, just seen and gone!
A shot is heard—Again the flame
Flash'd thick and fast—a volley came!
Then echo'd wildly, from within,
Of shout and scream the mingled din,
And weapon-clash and maddening cry,
Of those who kill, and those who die!—
"And backward borne upon the sea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee."
As fill'd the Hall with sulphurous smoke,
More red, more dark, the death-flash broke;
And forms were on the lattice cast,
That struck, or struggled, as they past.

XXXII.
What sounds upon the midnight wind
Approach so rapidly behind?
It is, it is, the tramp of steeds,
Matilda hears the sound, she speeds,
Seizes upon the leader's rein—
"O, haste to aid, ere aid be vain!
Fly to the postern—gain the Hall!"
From saddle spring the troopers all;
Their gallant steeds, at liberty,
Run wild along the moonlight lea.
But, ere they burst upon the scene,
Full stubborn had the conflict been.
When Bertram mark'd Matilda's flight,
It gave the signal for the fight;
And Rokeby's veterans, seam'd with scars
Of Scotland's and of Erin's wars,
Their momentary panic o'er,
Stood to the arms which then they bore;
(For they were weapon'd, and prepared
Their Mistress on her way to guard.)

Then cheer'd them to the fight
O'Neale,
Then peal'd the shot, and clash'd the steel;
The war-smoke soon with sable breath
Darken'd the scene of blood and death,
While on the few defenders close
The Bandits, with redoubled blows,
And, twice driven back, yet fierce and fell
Renew the charge with frantic yell.

XXXIII.
Wilfrid has fall'n—but o'er him stood
Young Redmond, soil'd with smoke and blood,
Cheering his mates with heart and hand
Still to make good their desperate stand.
"Up, comrades, up! In Rokeby halls
Ne'er be it said our courage falls.
What! faint ye for their savage cry,
Or do the smoke-wreaths daunt your eye?
These rafters have return'd a shout
As loud at Rokeby's wassail rout,
As thick a smoke these hearths have given
At Hallow-tide or Christmas-even. 336
Stand to it yet! renew the fight,
For Rokeby's and Matilda's right!
These slaves! they dare not, hand to hand, 
Bide buffet from a true man's brand."
Impetuous, active, fierce, and young,
Upon the advancing foes he sprung.
Woe to the wretch at whom is bent
His brandish'd falchion's sheer descent!
Backward they scatter'd as he came,
Like wolves before the levin flame,
When, 'mid their howling conclave driven,
Hath glanced the thunderbolt of heaven.
Bertram rush'd on—but Harpool clasp'd
His knees, although in death he gasp'd,
His falling corpse before him flung,
And round the trammell'd ruffian clung.
Just then, the soldiers fill'd the dome,
And, shouting, charged the felons home
So fiercely, that, in panic dread,
They broke, they yielded, fell, or fled.
Bertram's stern voice they heed no more,
Though heard above the battle's roar;
While, trampling down the dying man,
He strove, with volley'd threat and ban,
In scorn of odds, in fate's despite,
To rally up the desperate fight.

XXXIV.

Soon murkier clouds the Hall enfold,
Than e'er from battle-thunders roll'd
So dense, the combatants scarce know
To aim or to avoid the blow.
Smothering and blindfold grows the fight—
But soon shall dawn a dismal light!
'Mid cries and clashing arms, there came
The hollow sound of rushing flame;
New horrors on the tumult dire
Arise—the Castle is on fire!
Doubtful, if chance had cast the brand,
Or frantic Bertram's desperate hand.
Matilda saw—for frequent broke
From the dim casements gusts of smoke.
Yon tower, which late so clear defined
On the fair hemisphere reclined,
That, pencill'd on its azure pure,
The eye could count each embrasure,
Now, swath'd within the sweeping cloud,
Seems giant-spectre in his shroud;
Till, from each loop-hole flashing light,
A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
And, gathering to united glare,
Streams high into the midnight air;
A dismal beacon, far and wide
That waken'd Greta's slumbering side.
Soon all beneath, through gallery long,
And pendent arch, the fire flash’d strong,
Snatching whatever could maintain,
Raise, or extend, its furious reign;
Startling, with closer cause of dread,
The females who the conflict fled, And now rush’d forth upon the plain,
Filling the air with clamours vain.

XXXV.
But ceased not yet, the Hall within,
The shriek, the shout, the carnage-din,
Till bursting lattices give proof
The flames have caught the rafter’d roof.
What! wait they till its beams amain
Crash on the slayers and the slain?
The alarm is caught—the drawbridge falls,
The warriors hurry from the walls,
But, by the conflagration’s light,
Upon the lawn renew the fight.
Each struggling felon down was hew’d,
Not one could gain the sheltering wood;
But forth the affrighted harper sprung,
And to Matilda’s robe he clung.
Her shriek, entreaty, and command,
Stopp’d the pursuer’s lifted hand.
Denzil and he alive were ta’en;
The rest, save Bertram, all are slain.

XXXVI.
And where is Bertram?—Soaring high
The general flame ascends the sky;
In gather’d group the soldiers gaze
Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
When, like infernal demon, sent,
Red from his penal element,
To plague and to pollute the air,—
His face all gore, on fire his hair,
Forth from the central mass of smoke
The giant form of Bertram broke!
His brandish’d sword on high he rears,
Then plunged among opposing spears;
Round his left arm his mantle truss’d,
Received and foil’d three lances’ thrust;
Nor these his headlong course withstood,
Like reeds he snapp’d the tough ash-wood.
In vain his foes around him clung;
With matchless force aside he flung
Their boldest,—as the bull, at bay,
Tosses the ban-dogs from his way,
Through forty foes his path he made,
And safely gain’d the forest glade.

XXXVII.
Scarce was this final conflict o’er,
When from the postern Redmond bore
Wilfrid, who, as of life bereft,
Had in the fatal Hall been left,
Deserted there by all his train;
But Redmond saw, and turn'd again.—

Beneath an oak he laid him down,
That in the blaze gleam'd ruddy brown,
And then his mantle's clasp un-did;
Matilda held his drooping head,
Till, given to breathe the freer air,
Returning life repaid their care.
He gazed on them with heavy sigh,—
"I could have wish'd even thus to die!"
No more he said—for now with speed
Each trooper had regain'd his steed;
The ready palfreys stood array'd,
For Redmond and for Rokeby's Maid;
Two Wilfrid on his horse sustain,
One leads his charger by the rein.
But oft Matilda look'd behind,
As up the Vale of Tees they wind,
Where far the mansion of her sires
Beacon'd the dale with midnight fires.
In gloomy arch above them spread,
The clouded heaven lower'd bloody red;
Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
Appear'd to roll in waves of blood.
Then, one by one, was heard to fall
The tower, the donjon-keep, the hall,
Each rushing down with thunder sound,
A space the conflagration drown'd;
Till, gathering strength, again it rose,
Announced its triumph in its close,
Shook wide its light the landscape o'er,
Then sunk—and Robeby was no more!

CANTO SIXTH.

I.
The summer sun, whose early power
Was wont to gild Matilda's bower,
And rouse her with his matin ray
Her duteous orisons to pay,—
That morning sun has three times seen
The flowers unfold on Rokeby green,
But sees no more the slumbers fly
From fair Matilda's hazel eye;
That morning sun has three times broke
On Rokeby's glades of elm and oak,
But, rising from their silvan screen,
Marks no grey turrets glance between.
A shapeless mass lie keep and tower,
That, hissing to the morning shower,
Can but with smouldering vapour pay
The early smile of summer day.
The peasant, to his labour bound,  
Pauses to view the blacken'd mound,  
Striving, amid the ruin'd space,  
Each well-remember'd spot to trace.  
That length of frail and fire-scorch'd wall  
Once screen'd the hospitable hall;  
When yonder broken arch was whole,  
'Twas there was dealt the weekly dole;  
And where you tottering columns nod,  
The chapel sent the hymn to God.—  
So flits the world's uncertain span!  
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,  
Gives mortal monuments a date  
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.  
The towers must share the builder's doom;  
Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb:  
But better boon benignant Heaven  
To Faith and Charity has given,  
And bids the Christian hope sublime  
Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.  

II.  
Now the third night of summer came,  
Since that which witness'd Rokeby's flame.  
On Brignall cliffs and Scargill brake  
The owlet's homilies awake,  
The bittern scream'd from rush and flag,  
The raven slumber'd on his crag,  
Forth from his den the otter drew,—  
Grayling and trout their tyrant knew,  
As between reed and sedge he peers,  
With fierce round snout and sharpen'd ears,  
Or, prowling by the moonbeam cool,  
Watches the stream or swims the pool;—  
Perch'd on his wonted eyrie high,  
Sleep seal'd the tercelet's wearied eye,  
That all the day had watch'd so well  
The cushat dart across the dell.  
In dubious beam reflected shone  
That lofty cliff of pale grey stone,  
Beside whose base the secret cave  
To rapine late a refuge gave.  
The crag's wild crest of copse and yew  
On Greta's breast dark shadows threw;  
Shadows that met or shunn'd the sight,  
With every change of fitful light;  
As hope and fear alternate chase  
Our course through life's uncertain race.  

III.  
Gliding by crag and copsewood green,  
A solitary form was seen  
To trace with stealthy pace the wold,  
Like fox that seeks the midnight fold,
And pauses oft, and cowers dismay'd,
At every breath that stirs the shade.
He passes now the ivy bush,—
The owl has seen him, and is hush;
He passes now the dodder'd oak,—
Ye heard the startled raven croak;
Lower and lower he descends,
Rustle the leaves, the brushwood bends;
The otter hears him tread the shore,
And dives, and is beheld no more;
And by the cliff of pale grey stone
The midnight wanderer stands alone.
Methinks, that by the moon we trace
A well-remember'd form and face!
That stripling shape, that cheek so pale,
Combine to tell a rueful tale,
Of powers misused, of passion's force,
Of guilt, of grief, and of remorse!
'Tis Edmund's eye, at every sound
That flings that guilty glance around;
'Tis Edmund's trembling haste divides
The brushwood that the cavern hides;
And, when its narrow porch lies bare,
'Tis Edmund's form that enters there.

IV.

His flint and steel have sparkled bright,
A lamp hath lent the cavern light.
Fearful and quick his eye surveys
Each angle of the gloomy maze.
Since last he left that stern abode,
It seem'd as none its floor had trode;
Untouch'd appear'd the various spoil,
The purchase of his comrades' toil;
Masks and disguises grim'd with mud,
Arms broken and defiled with blood,
And all the nameless tools that aid
Night-felons in their lawless trade,
Upon the gloomy walls were hung,
Or lay in nooks obscurely flung.
Still on the sordid board appear
The relics of the noontide cheer:
Flagons and emptied flasks were there,
And bench o'erthrown, and shatter'd chair;
And all around the semblance show'd,
As when the final revel glow'd,
When the red sun was setting fast,
And parting pledge Guy Denzil past.

"To Rokeby treasure-vaults!" they quaff'd,
And shouted loud and wildly laugh'd,
Pour'd maddening from the rocky door,
And parted—to return no more!
They found in Rokeby vaults their doom,—
A bloody death, a burning tomb!
There his own peasant dress he spies,
Doff'd to assume that quaint disguise;
And, shuddering, thought upon his glee,
When prank'd in garb of minstrelsy.

"O, be the fatal art accurst,"
He cried, "that moved my folly first;
Till, bribed by bandits' base applause,
I burst through God's and Nature's laws!

Three summer days are scantily past
Since I have trod this cavern last,
A thoughtless wretch, and prompt to err—
But, O, as yet no murderer!
Even now I list my comrades' cheer,
That general laugh is in mine ear,
Which raised my pulse and steel'd my heart,
As I rehearsed my treacherous part—
And would that all since then could seem
The phantom of a fever's dream!
But fatal Memory notes too well
The horrors of the dying yell
From my despairing mates that broke,
When flash'd the fire and roll'd the smoke;
When the avengers shouting came,
And hemm'd us 'twixt the sword and flame!

My frantic flight,—the lifted brand,—
That angel's interposing hand!—
If, for my life from slaughter freed,
I yet could pay some grateful meed!
Perchance this object of my quest
May aid"—he turn'd, nor spoke the rest.

Due northward from the rugged hearth,
With paces five he metes the earth,
Then toil'd with mattock to explore
The entrails of the cavern floor,
Nor paused till, deep beneath the ground,
His search a small steel casket found.
Just as he stoop'd to loose its hasp,
His shoulder felt a giant grasp;
He started, and look'd up aghast,
Then shriek'd!—"Twas Bertram held him fast.

"Fear not!" he said; but who could hear
That deep stern voice, and cease to fear?

"Fear not!—By heaven, he shakes as much
As partridge in the falcon's clutch:"
He raised him, and unloosed his hold,
While from the opening casket roll'd
A chain and reliquaire of gold.
Bertram beheld it with surprise, Gazed on its fashion and device, Then, cheering Edmund as he could, Somewhat he smooth'd his rugged mood: For still the youth's half-lifted eye Quiver'd with terror's agony, And sidelong glanced, as to explore, In meditated flight, the door. "Sit," Bertram said, "from danger, free: Thou canst not, and thou shalt not, flee. Chance brings me hither; hill and plain I've sought for refuge-place in vain. And tell me now, thou aguish boy, What makest thou here? what means this toy? Denzil and thou, I mark'd, were ta'en; What lucky chance unbound your chain? I deem'd, long since on Bialiol's tower, Your heads were warp'd with sun and shower. Tell me the whole—and, mark! nought e'er Chafes me like falsehood, or like fear." Gathering his courage to his aid, But trembling still, the youth obey'd.

VII.
"Denzil and I two nights pass'd o'er In fetters on the dungeon floor A guest the third sad morrow brought; Our hold dark Oswald Wycliffe sought, And eyed my comrade long askance, With fix'd and penetrating glance. 'Guy Denzil art thou call'd?'— 'The same.'— 'At Court who served wild Buckingham? Thence banish'd, won a keeper's place, So Villiers will'd, in Marwood-chase; That lost—I need not tell thee why— Thou madest thy wits thy wants supply, Then fought for Rokeby:—Have I guess'd My prisoner right?'—'At thy behest.'— He paused a while, and then went on With low and confidential tone;— Me, as I judge, not then he saw, Close nestled on my couch of straw.— 'List to me, Guy. Thou know'st the great Have frequent need of what they hate; Hence, in their favour oft we see Unscrupled, useful men like thee. Were I disposed to bid thee live, What pledge of faith hast thou to give?'

VIII.
"The ready Fiend, who never yet Hath failed to sharpen Denzil's wit,
Prompted his lie—'His only child
Should rest his pledge.'—The
Baron smiled,
And turn'd to me—'Thou art his
son?'
I bowed—our fetters were undone,
And we were led to hear apart
A dreadful lesson of his art.
Wilfrid, he said, his heir and
son,
Had fair Matilda's favour won;
And long since had their union
been,
But for her fathers bigot spleen,
Whose brute and blindfold party-
rage
Would, force per force, her hand
engage
To a base kern of Irish earth,
Unknown his lineage and his
birth,
Save that a dying ruffian bore
The infant brat to Rokeby door.
Gentle restraint, he said, would
lead
Old Rokeby to enlarge his creed;
But fair occasion he must find
For such restraint well-meant and
kind,
The Knight being render'd to his
charge
But as a prisoner at large.

IX.
"He school'd us in a well-forged
tale,
Of scheme the Castle walls to
scale,
To which was leagued each
Cavalier
That dwells upon the Tyne and
Wear;
That Rokeby, his parole forgot,
Had dealt with us to aid the plot.

Such was the charge, which
Denzil's zeal
Of hate to Rokeby and O'Neale
Proffer'd as witness, to make
good,
Even though the forfeit were
their blood,
I scrupled, until o'er and o'er
His prisoners' safety Wycliffe
swore;
And then—alas! what needs there
more?
I knew I should not live to
say
The proffer I refused that
day;
Ashamed to live, yet loth to
die,
I soil'd me with their infamy!"
"Poor youth," said Bertram,
"wavering still,
Unfit alike for good or ill!
But what fell next?"—"Soon as
at large
Was scroll'd and sign'd our fatal
charge,
There never yet, on tragic
stage,
Was seen so well a painted
rage
As Oswald's show'd! With loud
alarm
He call'd his garrison to arm;
From tower to tower, from post
to post,
He hurried as if all were
lost;
Consign'd to dungeon and to
chain
The good old Knight and all his
train;
Warn'd each suspected Cavalier,
Within his limits to appear
To-morrow, at the hour of noon,
In the high church of Egliston."—
X.

"Or Egliston! — Even now I pass'd,"
Said Bertram, "as the night closed fast;
Torches and cressets gleam'd around,
I heard the saw and hammer sound,
And I could mark they toil'd to raise
A scaffold, hung with sable baize,
Which the grim headsman's scene display'd,
Block, axe, and sawdust ready laid.
Some evil deed will there be done,
Unless Matilda wed his son;—
She loves him not—'tis shrewdly guess'd
That Redmond rules the damsel's breast.
This is a turn of Oswald's skill;
But I may meet, and foil him still!——
How camest thou to thy freedom?"—"There
Lies mystery more dark and rare.
In midst of Wycliffe's well-seign'd rage,
A scroll was offer'd by a page,
Who told, a muffled horseman late
Had left it at the Castle-gate.
He broke the seal—his cheeks show'd change,
Sudden, portentous, wild, and strange;
The mimic passion of his eye
Was turn'd to actual agony;
His hand like summer sapling shook,
Terror and guilt were in his look.

Denzil he judged, in time of need,
Fit counsellor for evil deed;
And thus apart his counsel broke,
While with a ghastly smile he spoke:—

XI.

"'As in the pageants of the stage,
The dead awake in this wild age,
Mortham—whom all men deem'd decreed
In his own deadly snare to bleed,
Slain by a bravo, whom, o'er sea,
He train'd to aid in murdering me,—
Mortham has 'scaped! The coward shot
The steed, but harm'd the rider not.'"

Here, with an execration fell,
Bertram leap'd up, and paced the cell:—
"Thine own grey head, or bosom dark,"
He mutter'd, "may be surer mark!"
Then sat, and sign'd to Edmund, pale
With terror, to resume his tale.
"Wycliffe went on:—"Mark with what flights
Of wilder'd reverie he writes:—

The Letter.

"'Ruler of Mortham's destiny!
Though dead, thy victim lives to thee.
Once had he all that binds to life,
A lovely child, a lovelier wife;"
Wealth, fame, and friendship, were his own—
Thou gavest the word, and they are flown.
Mark how he pays thee:—To thy hand
He yields his honours and his land,
One boon premised;—Restore his child!
And, from his native land exiled, Mortham no more returns to claim
His lands, his honours, or his name;
Refuse him this, and from the slain
Thou shalt see Mortham rise again.'

XII.
"This billet while the baron read,
His faltering accents show'd his dread;
He press'd his forehead with his palm,
Then took a scornful tone and calm;
'Wild as the winds, as billows wild!
What wot I of his spouse or child?
Hither he brought a joyous dame,
Unknown her lineage or her name:
Her, in some frantic fit, he slew;
The nurse and child in fear withdrew.
Heaven be my witness! wist I where
To find this youth, my kinsman's heir,—
Unguerdon'd, I would give with joy
The father's arms to fold his boy,
And Mortham's lands and towers resign
To the just heirs of Mortham's line.'—
Thou know'st that scarcely e'en his fear
Suppresses Denzil's cynic sneer;—
'Then happy is thy vassal's part,'
He said, 'to ease his patron's heart!
In thine own jailer's watchful care
Lies Mortham's just and rightful heir;
Thy generous wish is fully won,—
Redmond O'Neale is Mortham's son.'—

XIII.
"Up starting with a frenzied look,
His clenched hand the Baron shook:
'Is Hell at work? or dost thou rave,
Or darest thou palter with me, slave!
Perchance thou wot'st not, Barnard's towers
Have racks, of strange and ghastly powers.'
Denzil, who well his safety knew,
Firmly rejoin'd, 'I tell thee true.
Thy racks could give thee but to know
The proofs, which I, untortured, show.—
It chanced upon a winter night,
When early snow made Stanmore white.
That very night, when first of all
Redmond O'Neale saw Rokeby-hall,
It was my goodly lot to gain
A reliquary and a chain,
Twisted and chased of massive gold.
—Demand not how the prize I hold!
It was not given, nor lent, nor sold.—
Gilt tablets to the chain were hung;
With letters in the Irish tongue.
I hid my spoil, for there was need
That I should leave the land with speed;
Nor then I deem'd it safe to bear
On mine own person gems so rare.
Small heed I of the tablets took,
But since have spell'd them by
the book,
When some sojourn in Erin's land
Of their wild speech had given command.
But darkling was the sense; the phrase
And language those of other days,
Involved of purpose, as to foil
An interloper's prying toil.
The words, but not the sense, I knew,
Till fortune gave the guiding clue.

XIV.
"'Three days since, was that clue reveal'd,
In Thorsgill as I lay conceal'd,
And heard at full when Rokeby's Maid
Her uncle's history display'd;
And now I can interpret well
Each syllable the tablets tell.
Mark, then: Fair Edith was the joy
Of old O'Neale of Clandeboy;
But from her sire and country fled,
In secret Mortham's Lord to wed.
O'Neale, his first resentment o'er,
Despatch'd his son to Greta's shore,
Enjoining he should make him known
(Until his farther will were shown)
To Edith, but to her alone.
What of their ill-starr'd meeting fell,
Lord Wycliffe knows, and none so well.

XV.
"'O'Neale it was, who, in despair,
Robb'd Mortham of his infant heir;
He bred him in their nurture wild,
And call'd him murder'd Connel's child.
Soon died the nurse; the Clan believed
What from their Chieftain they received
His purpose was, that ne'er again
The boy should cross the Irish main;
But, like his mountain sires, enjoy
The woods and wastes of Clandeboy.
Then on the land wild troubles came,
And stronger Chieftains urged a claim,
And wrested from the old man's hands
His native towers, his father's lands.
Unable then, amid the strife,
To guard young Redmond's rights or life,
Late and reluctant he restores
The infant to his native shores,
With goodly gifts and letters stored,
With many a deep conjuring word,
To Mortham and to Rokeby's Lord.
Nought knew the clod of Irish earth,
Who was the guide, of Redmond's birth;
But deem'd his Chief's commands were laid
On both, by both to be obey'd.
How he was wounded by the way,
I need not, and I list not say.'—

XVI.

'A wondrous tale! and, grant it true,
What,' Wycliffe answer'd, 'might I do?
Heaven knows, as willingly as now
I raise the bonnet from my brow,
Would I my kinsman's manors fair
Restore to Mortham, or his heir;
But Mortham is distraught—O'Neale
Has drawn for tyranny his steel,
Malignant to our rightful cause,
And train'd in Rome's delusive laws.
Hark thee apart!'—They whisper'd long,
Till Denzil's voice grew bold and strong:—

'My proofs! I never will,' he said,
'Show mortal man where they are laid.
Nor hope discovery to foreclose,
By giving me to feed the crows;
For I have mates at large, who know
Where I am wont such toys to stow.
Free me from peril and from band,
These tablets are at thy command;
Nor were it hard to form some train,
To wile old Mortham o'er the main.
Then, lunatic's nor papist's hand
Should wrest from thine the goodly land.'—

'I like thy wit,' said Wycliffe, 'well;
But here in hostage shalt thou dwell.
Thy son, unless my purpose err,
May prove the trustier messenger.
A scroll to Mortham shall he bear
From me, and fetch these tokens rare.
Gold shalt thou have, and that good store,
And freedom, his commission o'er;
But if his faith should chance to fail,
The gibbet frees thee from the jail.'—

XVII.

'Mesh'd in the net himself had twined,
What subterfuge could Denzil find?
He told me, with reluctant sigh,
That hidden here the tokens lie;
 Conjured my swift return and aid,
 By all he scoff'd and disobey'd,
 And look'd as if the noose were tied,
 And I the priest who left his side.
 This scroll for Mortham Wycliffe gave,
 Whom I must seek by Greta's wave;
 Or in the hut where chief he hides,
 Where Thorsgill's forester resides.
 (Thence chanced it, wandering in the glade,
 That he descried our ambuscade.)
 I was dismiss'd as evening fell,
 And reach'd but now this rocky cell."

"Give Oswald's letter."—Bertram read,
 And tore it fiercely, shred by shred:
 "All lies and villany! to blind
 His noble kinsman's generous mind,
 And train him on from day to day,
 Till he can take his life away.—
 And now, declare thy purpose, youth,
 Nor dare to answer, save the truth;
 If aught I mark of Denzil's art,
 I'll tear the secret from thy heart!"—

XVIII.

"It needs not. I renounce," he said,
 "My tutor and his deadly trade.
 Fix'd was my purpose to declare
 To Mortham, Redmond is his heir;
 To tell him in what risk he stands,
 And yield these tokens to his hands.
 Fix'd was my purpose to atone,
 Far as I may, the evil done;
 And fix'd it rests—if I survive
 This night, and leave this cave alive."—
 "And Denzil?" — "Let them ply the rack
 Even till his joints and sinews crack!
 If Oswald tear him limb from limb,
 What ruth can Denzil claim from him,
 Whose thoughtless youth he led astray,
 And damn'd to this unhallow'd way?
 He school'd me faith and vows were vain;
 Now let my master reap his gain."—
 "True," answer'd Bertram, "'tis his meed;
 There's retribution in the deed.
 But thou—thou art not for our course,
 Hast fear, hast pity, hast remorse:
 And he, with us the gale who braves,
 Must heave such cargo to the waves,
 Or lag with overloaded prore,
 While barks unburden'd reach the shore."

XIX.

He paused, and, stretching him at length,
 Seem'd to repose his bulky strength.
Communing with his secret mind,
As half he sat, and half reclined,
One ample hand his forehead press'd,
And one was dropp'd across his breast.
The shaggy eyebrows deeper came
Above his eyes of swarthy flame;
His lip of pride a while forebore
The haughty curve till then it wore;
The unalter'd fierceness of his look
A shade of darken'd sadness took,—
For dark and sad a presage press'd
Resistlessly on Bertram's breast,—
And when he spoke, his wonted tone,
So fierce, abrupt, and brief, was gone.
His voice was steady, low, and deep,
Like distant waves when breezes sleep;
And sorrow mix'd with Edmund's fear,
Its low unbroken depth to hear.

Yet less from thirst of sordid gain,
Than to avenge supposed disdain.
Say, Bertram rues his fault;—
a word,
Till now, from Bertram never heard:
Say, too, that Mortham's Lord he prays
To think but on their former days;
On Quariana's beach and rock,
On Cayo's bursting battle-shock,
On Darien's sands and deadly dew,
And on the dart Tlatzeca threw;—
Perchance my patron yet may hear
More that may grace his comrade's bier.
My soul hath felt a secret weight,
A warning of approaching fate:
A priest had said, 'Return, repent!'
As well to bid that rock be rent.
Firm as that flint I face mine end;
My heart may burst, but cannot bend.

XX.
"Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
The woe that warp'd my patron's mind:
'Twould wake the fountains of the eye
In other men, but mine are dry.
Mortham must never see the fool,
That sold himself base Wycliffe's tool;
To bring their best my brand to prove,
O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove; 337
But Tynedale, nor in tower nor town,
Held champion meet to take it down.
My noontide, India may declare;
Like her fierce sun, I fired the air!
Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
Her natives, from mine angry eye.
Panama's maids shall long look pale
When Risingham inspires the tale;
Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
The froward child with Bertram's name.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eye of tropic sun!
No pale gradations quench his ray,
No twilight dews his wrath allay;
With disk like battle-target red,
He rushes to his burning bed,
Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
Then sinks at once—and all is night.—

XXII.

"Now to thy mission, Edmund. Fly,
Seek Mortham out, and bid him hie
To Richmond, where his troops are laid,
And lead his force to Redmond's aid.

Say, till he reaches Egliston,
A friend will watch to guard his son.
Now, fare-thee-well; for night draws on,
And I would rest me here alone."

Despite his ill-dissembled fear,
There swam in Edmund's eye a tear;
A tribute to the courage high,
Which stoop'd not in extremity,
But strove, irregularly great,
To triumph o'er approaching fate!
Bertram beheld the dewdrop start,
It almost touch'd his iron heart:—
"I did not think there lived," he said,
"One, who would tear for Bertram shed."
He loosen'd then his baldric's hold,
A buckle broad of massive gold;—
"Of all the spoil that paid his pains,
But this with Risingham remains;
And this, dear Edmund, thou shalt take
And wear it long for Bertram's sake.
Once more—to Mortham speed amain;
Farewell! and turn thee not again."

XXIII.

The night has yielded to the morn,
And far the hours of prime are worn.
Oswald, who, since the dawn of day,
Had cursed his messenger's delay,
Impatient question'd now his train,
"Was Denzil's son return'd again?"
It chanced there answer'd of the crew,
A menial, who young Edmund knew:
"No son of Denzil this,"—he said;
"A peasant boy from Winston glade,
For song and minstrelsy renown'd,
And knavish pranks, the hamlets round."—
"Not Denzil's son!—From Winston vale!—
Then it was false, that specious tale;
Or, worse—he hath despatch'd the youth
To show to Mortham's Lord its truth.
Fool that I was!—but 'tis too late;—
This is the very turn of fate!—
The tale, or true or false, relies
On Denzil's evidence! He dies!
Ho! Provost Marshall! instantly
Lead Denzil to the gallows-tree!
Allow him not a parting word;
Short be the shrift, and sure the cord!
Then let his gory head appal
Marauders from the Castle-wall.
Lead forth thy guard, that duty done,
With best despatch to Egliston.—
—Basil, tell Wilfrid he must straight
Attend me at the Castle-gate."—

XXIV.
"Alas!" the old domestic said,
And shook his venerable head,
"Alas, my Lord! full ill to-day
May my young master brook the way!
The leech has spoke with grave alarm,
Of unseen hurt, of secret harm,
Of sorrow lurking at the heart,
That mars and lets his healing art."—
"Tush, tell not me!—Romantic boys
Pine themselves sick for airy toys,
I will find cure for Wilfrid soon;
Bid him for Egliston be boune,
And quick!—I hear the dull death-drum
Tell Denzil's hour of fate is come."
He paused with scornful smile, and then
Resumed his train of thought agen.
"Now comes my fortune's crisis near!
Entreaty boots not—instant fear,
Nought else, can bend Matilda's pride,
Or win her to be Wilfrid's bride.
But when she sees the scaffold placed,
With axe and block and headsmen graced,
And when she deems, that to deny
Dooms Redmond and her sire to die,
She must give way.—Then, were the line
Of Rokeby once combined with mine;
I gain the weather-gage of fate!
If Mortham come, he comes too late,
While I, allied thus and prepared,
Bid him defiance to his beard.—
—If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
To drop the axe?—Soft! pause we there.
Mortham still lives—yon youth may tell
His tale—and Fairfax loves him well;—
Else, wherefore should I now delay
To sweep this Redmond from my way?
But she to piety perforce
Must yield.—Without there! Sound to horse.”

XXV.
'Twas bustle in the court below,—
"Mount, and march forward!"—
Forth they go.
Steeds neigh and trample all around,
Steel rings, spears glimmer, trumpets sound.—
Just then was sung his parting hymn;
And Denzil turn'd his eyeballs dim,
And, scarcely conscious what he sees,
Follows the horsemen down the Tees;
And scarcely conscious what he hears,
The trumpets tingle in his ears.

O'er the long bridge they're sweeping now,
The van is hid by greenwood bough;
But ere the rearward had pass'd o'er,
Guy Denzil heard and saw no more!
One stroke, upon the Castle bell,
To Oswald rung his dying knell.

XXVI.
O, for that pencil, erst profuse
Of chivalry's emblazon'd hues,
That traced of old in Woodstock bower,
The pageant of the Leaf and Flower,
And bodied forth the tourney high,
Held for the hand of Emily!
Then might I paint the tumult broad,
That to the crowded abbey flow'd,
And pour'd, as with an ocean's sound,
Into the church's ample bound!
Then might I show each varying mien,
Exulting, woeful, or serene;
Indifference, with his idiot stare,
And Sympathy, with anxious air,
Paint the dejected Cavalier,
Doubtful, disarm'd, and sad of cheer;
And his proud foe, whose formal eye
Claim'd conquest now and mastery;
And the brute crowd, whose envious zeal
Huzzas each turn of Fortune's wheel,
And loudest shouts when lowest lie
Exalted worth and station high.
Yet what may such a wish avail?
'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
Hurrying, as best I can, along,
The hearers and the hasty song;—
Like traveller when approaching home,
Who sees the shades of evening come,
And must not now his course delay,
Or choose the fair, but winding way;
Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
Where o'er his head the wildings bend,
To bless the breeze that cools his brow,
Or snatch a blossom from the bough.

XXVII.
The reverend pile lay wild and waste,
Profaned, dishonour'd, and defaced.
Through storied lattices no more
In soften'd light the sunbeams pour,
Gilding the Gothic sculpture rich
Of shrine, and monument, and niche.
The Civil fury of the time
Made sport of sacrilegious crime;
For dark Fanaticism rent
Altar, and screen, and ornament,
And peasant hands the tombs o'erthrew
Of Bowes, of Rokeby, and Fitz-Hugh.

And now was seen, unwonted sight,
In holy walls a scaffold dight!
Where once the priest, of grace divine
Dealt to his flock the mystic sign,
There stood the block display'd,
And there
The headsman grim his hatchet bare;
And for the word of Hope and Faith,
Resounded loud a doom of death.
Thrice the fierce trumpet's breath was heard,
And echo'd thrice the herald's word,
Dooming, for breach of martial laws,
And treason to the Commons' cause,
The Knight of Rokeby and O'Neale
To stoop their heads to block and steel.
The trumpets flourish'd high and shrill,
Then was a silence dead and still;
And silent prayers to heaven were cast,
And stifled sobs were bursting fast,
Till from the crowd begun to rise Murmurs of sorrow or surprise,
And from the distant aisles there came
Deep-mutter'd threats, with Wycliffe's name.

XXVIII.
But Oswald, guarded by his band,
Powerful in evil, waved his hand,
And bade Sedition's voice be dead,
On peril of the murmurer's head.
Then first his glance sought Rokeby's Knight;
Who gazed on the tremendous sight,
As calm as if he came a guest
To kindred Baron's feudal feast,
As calm as if that trumpet-call
Were summons to the banner'd hall;
Firm in his loyalty he stood,
And prompt to seal it with his blood.
With downcast look drew Oswald nigh,—
He durst not cope with Rokeby's eye!—
And said, with low and faltering breath,
"Thou know'st the terms of life and death."
The Knight then turn'd, and sternly smiled;
"The maiden is mine only child,
Yet shall my blessing leave her head,
If with a traitor's son she wed."
Then Redmond spoke: "The life of one
Might thy malignity atone,
On me be flung a double guilt!
Spare Rokeby's blood, let mine be spilt!"
Wycliffe had listen'd to his suit,
But dread prevail'd, and he was mute.

XXIX.

And now he pours his choice of fear
In secret on Matilda's ear;
"An union form'd with me and mine,
Ensures the faith of Rokeby's line.
Consent, and all this dread array,
Like morning dream, shall pass away;
Refuse, and, by my duty press'd,
I give the word—thou know'st the rest."
Matilda, still and motionless,
With terror heard the dread address,
Pale as the sheeted maid who dies
To hopeless love a sacrifice;
Then wrung her hands in agony,
And round her cast bewild'er'd eye.
Now on the scaffold glanced, and now
On Wycliffe's unrelenting brow.
She veil'd her face, and, with a voice
Scarce audible,—"I make my choice!
Spare but their lives!—for aught beside,
Let Wilfrid's doom my fate decide.
He once was generous!"—As she spoke,
Dark Wycliffe's joy in triumph broke:—
"Wilfrid, where loiter'd ye so late?
Why upon Basil rest thy weight?—
Art spell-bound by enchanter's wand?—
Kneel, kneel, and take her yielded hand;
Thank her with raptures, simple boy!
Should tears and trembling speak thy joy?"—
"O hush, my sire! To prayer and tear
Of mine thou hast refused thine ear;
But now the awful hour draws on,
When truth must speak in loftier tone."

XXX.

He took Matilda's hand: "Dear maid,
Couldst thou so injure me," he said,
"Of thy poor friend so basely deem,
As blend with him this barbarous scheme?
Alas! my efforts made in vain,
Might well have saved this added pain.
But now, bear witness earth and heaven,
That ne'er was hope to mortal given,
So twisted with the strings of life,
As this—to call Matilda wife!
I bid it now for ever part,
And with the effort bursts my heart!"

His feeble frame was worn so low,
With wounds, with watching, and with woe,
That nature could no more sustain
The agony of mental pain.
He kneel'd—his lip her hand had press'd,—
Just then he felt the stern arrest.
Lower and lower sunk his head,—
They raised him,—but the life was fled!

Then, first alarm'd, his sire and train
Tried every aid, but tried in vain.
The soul, too soft its ills to bear,
Had left our mortal hemisphere,
And sought in better world the mead,
To blameless life by Heaven decreed.

XXXI.

The wretched sire beheld, aghast,
With Wilfrid all his projects past,
All turn'd and centred on his son,
On Wilfrid all—and he was gone.
"And I am childless now," he said;
"Childless, through that relentless maid!
A lifetime's arts, in vain essay'd,
Are bursting on their artist's head!—
Here lies my Wilfrid dead—and there
Comes hated Mortham for his heir,
Eager to knit in happy band
With Rokeby's heiress Redmond's hand.
And shall their triumph soar o'er all
The schemes deep-laid to work their fall?
No!—deeds, which prudence might not dare,
Appal not vengeance and despair.
The murd'ress weeps upon his bier—
I'll change to real that feigned tear!
They all shall share destruction's shock;—
Ho! lead the captives to the block!"—
But ill his Provost could divine
His feelings, and forbore the sign.
"Slave! to the block!—or I, or they,
Shall face the judgment-seat this day!"

XXXII.
The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
Like horse’s hoofs on harden’d ground;
Nearer it came, and yet more near,—
The very death’s-men paused to hear.
’Tis in the churchyard now—the tread
Hath waked the dwelling of the dead!
Fresh sod, and old sepulchral stone,
Return the tramp in varied tone.
All eyes upon the gateway hung,
When through the Gothic arch there sprung
A horseman arm’d, at headlong speed—
Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed.
Fire from the flinty floor was spurn’d,
The vaults unwonted clang return’d!—
One instant’s glance around he threw,
From saddlebow his pistol drew.
Grimly determined was his look!
His charger with the spurs he strook—
All scatter’d backward as he came,
For all knew Bertram Risingham!

XXXIII.
While yet the smoke the deed conceals,
Bertram his ready charger wheels;
But flounder’d on the pavement-floor
The steed, and down the rider bore,
And, bursting in the headlong sway,
The faithless saddle-girths gave way.
’Twas while he toil’d him to be freed,
And with the rein to raise the steed,
That from amazement’s iron trance
All Wycliffe’s soldiers waked at once.
Sword, halberd, musket-but, their blows
Hail’d upon Bertram as he rose;

Three bounds that noble courser gave;
The first has reach’d the central nave,
The second clear’d the chancel wide,
The third—he was at Wycliffe’s side.
Full levell’d at the Baron’s head,
Rung the report—the bullet sped—
And to his long account, and last,
Without a groan dark Oswald past!
All was so quick, that it might seem
A flash of lightning, or a dream.
A score of pikes, with each a wound,
Bore down and pinn'd him to the ground;
But still his struggling force he rears,
'Gainst hacking brands and stabbing spears;
Thrice from assailants shook him free,
Once gain'd his feet, and twice his knee.
By tenfold odds oppress'd at length,
Despite his struggles and his strength,
He took a hundred mortal wounds,
As mute as fox 'mongst mangling hounds;
And when he died, his parting groan
Had more of laughter than of moan!
—They gazed, as when a lion dies,
And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
But bend their weapons on the slain,
Lest the grim king should rouse again;
Then blow and insult some renew'd,
And from the trunk, the head had hew'd,
But Basil's voice the deed forbade;
A mantle o'er the corse he laid:
"Fell as he was in act and mind,
He left no bolder heart behind:
Then give him, for a soldier meet,
A soldier's cloak for winding sheet."
But when brown August o'er the land
Call'd forth the reaper's busy band,
A gladsome sight the silvan road
From Egliston to Mortham show'd,
A while the hardy rustic leaves
The task to bind and pile the sheaves,
And maids their sickles fling aside,
To gaze on bridegroom and on bride,
And childhood's wondering group draws near,
And from the gleaner's hands the ear

Drops, while she folds them for a prayer
And blessing on the lovely pair.
'Twas then the Maid of Rokeby gave
Her plighted troth to Redmond brave;
And Teesdale can remember yet
How Fate to Virtue paid her debt,
And, for their troubles, bade them prove
A lengthen'd life of peace and love

Time and Tide had thus their sway,
Yielding, like an April day,
Smiling noon for sullen mornow,
Years of joy for hours of sorrow!
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

In the Edinburgh Annual Register for the year 1809, three Fragments were inserted, written in imitation of Living Poets. It must have been apparent, that by these prolixions, nothing burlesque, or disrespectful to the authors, was intended, but that they were offered to the public as serious, though certainly very imperfect, imitations of that style of composition by which each of the writers is supposed to be distinguished. As these exercises attracted a greater degree of attention than the author anticipated, he has been induced to complete one of them, and present it as a separate publication.

It is not in this place that an examination of the works of the master whom he has here adopted as his model, can, with propriety, be introduced; since his general acquiescence in the favourable suffrage the public must necessarily be inferred from the attempt he has now made. He is induced, by the nature of his subject, to offer a few remarks on what has been called ROMANTIC POETRY;—the popularity of which has been revived in the present day, under the auspices, and by the unparalleled success, of one individual.

The original purpose of poetry is either religious or historical, or, as must frequently happen, a mixture of both. To modern readers, the poems of Homer have many of the features of pure romance; but in the estimation of his contemporaries, they probably derived their chief value from their supposed historical authenticity. The same may be generally said of the poetry of all early ages. The marvels and miracles which the poet blends with his song do not exceed in number or extravagance the figments of the historians of the same period of society; and, indeed, the difference betwixt poetry and prose, as the vehicles of historical truth, is always of late introduction. Poets, under various denominations of Bards, Scalds, Chroniclers, and so forth, are the first historians of all nations. Their intention is to relate the events they have witnessed, or the traditions that have reached them; and they clothe the relation in rhyme, merely as the means of rendering it more solemn in the narrative or more easily committed to memory. But as the poetical historian improves in the art of conveying information, the authenticity of his narrative unavoidably declines. He is tempted to dilate and dwell upon the events that are interesting to his imagination, and, conscious how indifferent his audience is to the naked truth of his poem, his history gradually becomes a romance.

It is in this situation that those epics are found, which have been generally regarded as the standards of poetry; and it has happened somewhat strangely, that the moderns have pointed out as the characteristics and peculiar excellencies of narrative poetry the very circumstances which the authors themselves adopted, only because their art involved the duties of the historian as well as the poet. It cannot be believed, for example, that Homer selected the siege of Troy as the most appropriate subject for poetry; his purpose was to write the early history of his country; the event he has chosen, though not very fruitful in varied incident, nor perfectly well adapted for poetry, was nevertheless combined with traditionary and genealogical anecdotes extremely interesting to those who were to listen to him; and this he has adorned by the exertions of a genius, which, if it has been equalled, has certainly been never surpassed. It was not till comparatively a late period that the general accuracy of his narrative, or his purpose in composing it, was brought into question. Δικαίως τριτός [ὁ Ανάγλυφος]
THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

(καθά ψηφι Φαβορίνος ἐν παντοδαπῇ Ἱστορίᾳ) τὴν Ὀμήρου ποιήσεω ἀποφήμασαι εἶναι περὶ ἄρετῆς καὶ δικαιοσύνης. But whatever theories might be framed by speculative men, his work was of an historical, not of an allegorical nature. Εὐαντίλετο μετὰ τοῦ Μέντων καὶ ὄποιον ἐκκάστοτε ἄρεισσο, πάντα τὰ ἐπίγορα διεωράτα, καὶ ἱστορεῶν ἐπιπληθύντος ἐκόπος δὲ μὴν ἕν καὶ μηνόδωνα πάντων γράφεσθαι. Instead of recommending the choice of a subject similar to that of Homer, it was to be expected that critics should have exhorted the poets of these latter days to adopt or invent a narrative in itself more susceptible of poetical ornament, and to avail themselves of that advantage in order to compensate, in some degree, the inferiority of genius. The contrary course has been inculcated by almost all the writers upon the Ἐρωτεία; with what success, the fate of Homer's numerous imitators may best show. The nullimum suppliicum of criticism was inflicted on the author if he did not choose a subject which at once deprived him of all claim to originality, and placed him, if not in actual contest, at least in fatal comparison, with those giants in the land whom it was most his interest to avoid. The celebrated receipt for writing an epic poem, which appeared in the Guardian, was the first instance in which common sense was applied to this department of poetry; and, indeed, if the question be considered on its own merits, we must be satisfied that narrative poetry, if strictly confined to the great occurrences of history, would be deprived of the individual interest which it is so well calculated to excite. Modern poets may therefore be pardoned in seeking simpler subjects of verse, more interesting in proportion to their simplicity. Two or three figures, well grouped, suit the artist better than a crowd, for whatever purpose assembled. For the same reason, a scene immediately presented to the imagination, and directly brought home to the feelings, though involving the fate of but one or two persons, is more favourable for poetry than the political struggles and convulsions which influence the fate of kingdoms. The former are within the reach and comprehension of all, and, if depicted with vigour, seldom fail to fix attention: The other, if more sublime, are more vague and distant, less capable of being distinctly understood, and infinitely less capable of exciting those sentiments which it is the very purpose of poetry to inspire. To generalise is always to destroy effect. We would, for example, be more interested in the fate of an individual soldier in combat, than in the grand event of a general action; with the happiness of two lovers raised from misery and anxiety to peace and union, than with the successful exertions of a whole nation. From what causes this may originate, is a separate and obviously an immaterial consideration. Before ascribing this peculiarity to causes decidedly and odiously selfish, it is proper to recollect, that while men see only a limited space, and while their affections and conduct are regulated, not by aspiring to an universal good, but by exerting their power of making themselves and others happy within the limited scale allotted to each individual, so long will individual history and individual virtue be the reader and more accessible road to general interest and attention; and, perhaps, we may add, that it is the more useful, as well as the more accessible, inasmuch as it affords an example capable of being easily imitated.

According to the author's idea of Romantic Poetry, as distinguished from Epic, the former comprehends a fictitious narrative, framed and combined at the pleasure of the writer; beginning and ending as he may judge best: which neither exacts nor refuses the use of supernatural machinery; which is free from the technical rules of the Επέρ; and is subject only to those which good sense, good taste, and good morals, apply to every species of poetry without exception. The date may be in a remote age, or in the present; the story may detail the adventures of a prince or of a peasant. In a word, the author is absolute master of his country and its inhabitants, and everything is permitted to him excepting to be heavy or prosaic, for which, free and unembarrassed as he is, he has no manner of apology. Those, it is probable, will be found the peculiarities of this species of composition; and before joining the outcry against the vitiated
INTRODUCTION.

I.

COME, Lucy! while 'tis morning hour,
The woodland brook we needs must pass;
So, ere the sun assume his power,
We shelter in our poplar bower,
Where dew lies long upon the flower,
Though vanish'd from the velvet grass.
Curbing the stream, this stony ridge
May serve us for a sylvan bridge;
For here compell'd to disunite,
Round petty isles the runnels glide,
And chafing off their puny spite,
The shallow murmurers waste their might,
Yielding to footstep free and light
A dry-shod pass from side to side.

II.

Nay, why this hesitating pause?
And, Lucy, as thy step withdraws,
Why sidelong eye the streamlet's brim?
Titania's foot without a slip,
Like thine, though timid, light, and slim,
From stone to stone might safely trip,
Nor risk the glow-worm clasp to dip
That binds her slipper's silken rim.
Or trust thy lover's strength: nor fear
That this same stalwart arm of mine,

Which could yon oak's prone trunk uprear,
Shall shrink beneath the burden dear
Of form so slender, light, and line—
So,—now, the danger dared at last,
Look back, and smile at perils past!

III.

And now we reach the favourite glade,
Paled in by copsewood, cliff, and stone,
Where never harsher sounds invade,
To break affection's whispering tone,
Than the deep breeze that waves the shade,
Than the small brooklet's feeble moan.
Come! rest thee on thy wonted seat;
Moss'd is the stone, the turf is green,
A place where lovers best may meet,
Who would that not their love be seen.
The boughs, that dim the summer sky,
Shall hide us from each lurking spy,
That fain would spread the invidious tale,
How Lucy of the lofty eye,
Noble in birth, in fortunes high,
She for whom lords and barons sigh,
Meets her poor Arthur in the dale.

IV.

How deep that blush!—how deep that sigh!
And why does Lucy shun mine eye?
Is it because that crimson draws
Its colour from some secret cause,
Some hidden movement of the breast,
She would not that her Arthur guessed?
O! quicker far is lovers' ken
Than the dull glance of common men,
And, by strange sympathy, can spell
The thoughts the loved one will not tell!
And mine, in Lucy's blush, saw met
The hues of pleasure and regret;
Pride mingled in the sigh her voice,
And shared with Love the crimson glow;
Well pleased that thou art Arthur's choice,
Yet shamed thine own is placed so low:
Thou turn'st thy self-confessing cheek,
As if to meet the breeze's cooling;
Then, Lucy, hear thy tutor speak,
For Love, too, has his hours of schooling.

V.

Too oft my anxious eye has spied
That secret grief thou fain wouldst hide,
The passing pang of humbled pride;
Too oft, when through the splendid hall,
The load-star of each heart and eye,
My fair one leads the glittering ball,
Will her stol'n glance on Arthur fall,
With such a blush and such a sigh!
Thou wouldst not yield, for wealth or rank,
The heart thy worth and beauty won,
Nor leave me on this mossy bank,
To meet a rival on a throne:
Why, then, should vain repinings rise,
That to thy lover fate denies
A nobler name, a wide domain,
A Baron's birth, a menial train,
Since Heaven assign'd him, for his part,
A lyre, a falchion, and a heart?

VI.

My sword—its master must be dumb;
But, when a soldier names my name,
Approach, my Lucy! fearless come,
Nor dread to hear of Arthur's shame.
My heart—mid all yon courtly crew,
Of lordly rank and lofty line,
Is there to love and honour true,
That boasts a pulse so warm as mine?
They praised thy diamonds' lustre rare—
Match'd with thine eyes, I thought it faded;
They praised the pearls that bound thy hair—
I only saw the locks they braided;
They talk'd of wealthy dower and land,
And titles of high birth the token—
I thought of Lucy's heart and hand,
Nor knew the sense of what was spoken.
And yet, if rank'd in Fortune's roll,
I might have learn'd their choice unwise,
Who rate the dower above the soul,
And Lucy's diamonds o'er her eyes.

VII.

My lyre—it is an idle toy,
That borrows accents not its own,
Like warbler of Colombian sky,
That sings but in a mimic tone.
Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,
Nor boasts it aught of Border spell;
Its strings no feudal slogan pour
Its heroes draw no broad claymore;
No shouting clans applause raise,
Because it sung their fathers' praise;
On Scottish moor, or English down,
It ne'er was graced by fair renown;
Nor won,—best meed to minstrel true,—
One favouring smile from fair Buccleuch!
By one poor streamlet sounds its tone,
And heard by one dear maid alone.

VIII.

But, if thou bid'st, these tones shall tell
Of errant knight, and damozelle;
Of the dread knot a Wizard tied,
In punishment of maiden's pride,
In notes of marvel and of fear,
That best may charm romantic ear.
For Lucy loves,—like Collins, ill-starred name
Whose lay's requital, was that tardy fame,
Who bound no laurel round his living head,
Should hang it o'er his monument when dead,—
For Lucy loves to tread enchanted strand,
And thread, like him, the maze of fairy land; 339
Of golden battlements to view the gleam,
And slumber soft by some Elysian stream;
Such lays she loves,—and, such my Lucy's choice
What other song can claim her Poet's voice?

CANTO FIRST.

I.

Where is the Maiden of mortal strain,
That may match with the Baron of Triermain 340
She must be lovely, and constant, and kind,
Holy and pure, and humble of mind,
Blithe of cheer, and gentle of mood,
Courteous, and generous, and noble of blood—
Lovely as the sun's first ray,
When it breaks the clouds of an April day;

Constant and true as the widow'd dove,
Kind as a minstrel that sings of love;
Pure as the fountain in rocky cave,
Where never sunbeam kiss'd the wave;
Humble as maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as breeze that but whispers and dies,
Yet blithe as the light leaves that dance in its sighs;
Courteous as monarch the morn he is crown'd,
Generous as spring-dews that bless the glad ground;
Noble her blood as the currents that met
In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet—
Such must her form be, her mood, and her strain,
That shall match with Sir Roland of Triermain.

II.

Sir Roland de Vaux he hath laid him to sleep,
His blood it was fever'd, his breathing was deep,
He had been pricking against the Scot,
The foray was long, and the skirmish hot;
His dented helm and his buckler's plight
Bore token of a stubborn fight.
All in the castle must hold them still,
Harpers must hush him to his rest,
With the slow soft tunes he loves the best,
Till sleep sink down upon his breast
Like the dew on a summer hill.

III.

It was the dawn of an autumn day;
The sun was struggling with frost-fog gray,
That like a silvery crape was spread
Round Skiddaw's dim and distant head,
And faintly gleam'd each painted pane
Of the lordly halls of Triermain,
    When that Baron bold awoke.
Starting he woke, and loudly did call,
Rousing his menials in bower and hall,
    While hastily he spoke.

IV.

"Hearken, my minstrels! Which of ye all
Touch'd his harp with that dying fall,
    So sweet, so soft, so faint,
It seem'd an angel's whisper'd call
    To an expiring saint?
And hearken, my merry-men! What time or where
Did she pass, that maid with her heavenly brow,
With her look so sweet and her eyes so fair,
And her graceful step and her angel air,
And the eagle plume in her dark-brown hair,
That pass'd from my bower e'en now?"

V.

Answer'd him Richard de Bretville; he
Was chief of the Baron's minstrelsy,—
"Silent, noble chieftain, we
    Have sat since midnight close,
When such lulling sounds as the brooklet sings,
Murmur'd from our melting strings,
    And hush'd you to repose,
Had a harp-note sounded here,
    It had caught my watchful ear,
Although it fell as faint and shy
As bashful maiden's half-form'd sigh,
    When she thinks her lover near."

Answer'd Philip of Fasthwaite tall,
He kept guard in the outer-hall,—
"Since at eve our watch took post,
Not a foot has thy portal cross'd;
    Else had I heard the steps, though low
And light they fell, as when earth receives,
In morn of frost, the wither'd leaves,
    That drop when no winds blow."—

VI.

"Then come thou hither, Henry, my page,
Whom I saved from the sack of Hermitage,
When that dark castle, tower, and spire,
Rose to the skies a pile of fire,
    And redd'n'd all the Nine-stane Hill,
And the shrieks of death, that wildly broke
Through devouring flame and smothering smoke,
    Made the warrior's heart-blood chill.
The trustiest thou of all my train,
    My fleetest courser thou must rein,
And ride to Lyulph's tower,
    And from the Baron of Triermain
Greet well that sage of power.
He is sprung from Druid sires,
    And British bards that tuned their lyres
To Arthur's and Pendragon's praise.
And his who sleeps at Dunmailraise
Gifted like his gifted race,
    He the characters can trace,
Graven deep in elder time
Upon Helvellyn's cliffs sublime
    Sign and sigil well doth he know
And can bode of weal and woe,
    Of kingdoms' fall, and fate of wars,
From mystic dreams and course of stars.
He shall tell if middle earth
    To that enchanting shape gave birth,
Or if 'twas but an airy thing,  
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,  
Framed from the rainbow's varying  
ydies,  
Or fading tints of western skies.  
For, by the Blessed Rood I swear,  
If that fair form breathe vital air,  
No other maiden by my side  
Shall ever rest De Vaux's bride!  

VII.

The faithful Page he mounts his  
steed,  
And soon he cross'd green Irthing's  
mead,  
Dash'd o'er Kirkoswald's verdant  
plain,  
And Eden barr'd his course in vain.  
He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round,  
For feats of chivalry renown'd,  
Left Mayburgh's mound and stones  
of power;  
By Druids raised in magic hour,  
And traced the Eamont's winding  
way,  
Till Ulfo's lake beneath him lay.

VIII.

Onward he rode, the pathway still  
Winding betwixt the lake and hill;  
Till, on the fragment of a rock,  
Struck from its base by lightning  
shock,  
He saw the hoary Sage:  
The silver moss and lichen twined,  
With fern and deer-hair check'd and  
lined,  
A cushion fit for age;  
And o'er him shook the aspin-tree,  
A restless rustling canopy.  
Then sprung young Henry from his  
selle,  
And greeted Lyulph grave,  
And then his master's tale did tell,  
And then for counsel crave.  
The Man of Years mused long and  
deep,  
Of time's lost treasures taking keep,  
And then, as rousing from a sleep,  
His solemn answer gave.

IX.

"That maid is born of middle earth,  
And may of man be won,  
Though there have glided since her  
birth  
Five hundred years and one.  
But where's the Knight in all the  
north,  
That dare the adventure follow forth,  
So perilous to knightly worth,  
In the valley of St. John?  
Listen, youth, to what I tell,  
And bind it on thy memory well;  
Nor muse that I commence the  
rhyme  
Far distant 'mid the wrecks of  
time.  
The mystic tale, by bard and sage,  
Is handed down from Merlin's age.

X.

Lyulph's Tale.

"King Arthur has ridden from  
merry Carlisle  
When Pentecost was o'er:  
He journey'd like errant-knight the  
while,  
And sweetly the summer sun did  
smile  
On mountain, moss, and moor.  
Above his solitary track  
Rose Glaramara's ridgy back,  
Amid whose yawning guls the sun  
Cast umber'd radiance red and dun,  
Though never sunbeam could discern  
The surface of that sable tarn,  
In whose black mirror you may spy  
The stars, while noontide lights the  
sky.  
The gallant King he skirted still  
The margin of that mighty hill;  
Rocks upon rocks incumbent hung,  
And torrents, down the gullies flung,  
Join'd the rude river that brawl'd  
on,  
Recoiling now from crag and stone,  
Now diving deep from human ken,  
And raving down its darksome glen.
The Monarch judged this desert wild,
With such romantic ruin piled,
Was theatre by Nature's hand
For feat of high achievement plann'd.

XI.
"O rather he chose, that Monarch bold,
On vent'rous quest to ride,
In plate and mail, by wood and wold,
Than, with ermine trapp'd and cloth of gold,
In princely bower to bide;
The bursting' crash of a foeman's spear
As it shiver'd against his mail,
Was merrier music to his ear
Than courtier's whisper'd tale:
And the clash of Caliburn more dear,
When on the hostile casque it rung,
Than all the lays
To their monarch's praise
That the harpers of Reged sung.
He loved better to rest by wood or river,
Than in bower of his bride, Dame Guenever,
For he left that lady, so lovely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear;
And the frank-hearted Monarch full little did wet,
That she smiled, in his absence, on brave Lancelot.

XII.
"He rode, till over down and dell
The shade more broad and deeper fell;
And though around the mountain's head
Flow'd streams of purple, and gold, and red,
Dark at the base, unblest by beam,
Frown'd the black rocks, and roar'd the stream.

With toil the King his way pursued
By lonely Threlkeld's waste and wood,
Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow valley of Saint John,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sunbeams love to lie.
Right glad to feel those beams again,
The King drew up his charger's rein;
With gauntlet raised he screen'd his sight,
As dazzled with the level light,
And, from beneath his glove of mail,
Scann'd at his ease the lovely vale,
While 'gainst the sun his armour bright
Gleam'd ruddy like the beacon's light.

XIII.
"Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still,
And, down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.
But, midst of the vale, a mound
Arose with airy turrets crown'd,
Buttress, and rampire's circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower;
Seem'd some primeval giant's hand
The castle's massive walls had plann'd,
A ponderous bulwark to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod's power.
Above the moated entrance swung,
The balanced drawbridge trembling hung,
As jealous of a foe;
Wicket of oak, as iron hard,
With iron studded, clench'd, and barr'd,
And prong'd portcullis, join'd to guard
The gloomy pass below.
But the gray walls no banners crown'd,
Upon the watch-tower's airy round
Stirling Castle.
No warder stood his horn to sound,  
No guard beside the bridge was found,  
And, where the Gothic gateway frown'd,  
Glanced neither bill nor bow.  

XIV.

"Beneath the castle's gloomy pride  
In ample round did Arthur ride  
Three times; nor living thing he spied,  
Nor heard a living sound,  
Save that, awakening from her dream,  
The owlet now began to scream,  
In concert with the rushing stream,  
That wash'd the battled mound.  
He lighted from his goodly steed,  
And he left him to graze on bank and mead;  
And slowly he climb'd the narrow way,  
That reach'd the entrance grim and gray,  
And he stood the outward arch below,  
And his bugle-horn prepared to blow,  
In summons blithe and bold,  
Deeming to rouse from iron sleep  
The guardian of this dismal Keep,  
Which well he guess'd the hold  
Of wizard stern, or goblin grim,  
Or pagan of gigantic limb,  
The tyrant of the wold.  

XV.

"The ivory bugle's golden tip  
Twice touch'd the monarch's manly lip,  
And twice his hand withdrew.  
—Think not but Arthur's heart was good!  
His shield was cross'd by the blessed rood,  
Had a pagan host before him stood,  
He had charged them through and through;  
S C.  

Yet the silence of that ancient place  
Sunk on his heart, and he paused a space  
Ere yet his horn he blew.  
But, instant as its 'larum rung,  
The castle gate was open flung,  
Portcullis rose with crashing groan  
Full harshly up its groove of stone;  
The balance-beams obey'd the blast,  
And down the trembling drawbridge cast,  
The vaulted arch before him lay,  
With nought to bar the gloomy way,  
And onward Arthur paced, with hand  
On Caliburn's resistless brand.  

XVI.

"A hundred torches, flashing bright,  
Dispell'd at once the gloomy night  
That pour'd along the walls,  
And show'd the King's astonish'd sight  
The inmates of the halls.  
Nor wizard stern, nor goblin grim,  
Nor giant huge of form and limb,  
Nor heathen knight, was there;  
But the cressets, which odours flung aloft,  
Show'd by their yellow light and soft,  
A band of damsels fair.  
Onward they came, like summer wave  
That dances to the shore;  
An hundred voices welcome gave,  
And welcome o'er and o'er!  
An hundred lovely hands assail  
The bucklers of the monarch's mail  
And busy labour'd to unhasp  
Rivet of steel and iron clasp.  
One wrapp'd him in a mantle fair,  
And one flung odours on his hair;  
His short curl'd ringlets one smooth'd down,  
One wreathed them with a myrtle crown.  
A bride upon her wedding-day,  
Was tended ne'er by troop so gay.
XVII.

"Loud laugh'd they all,—the King, in vain,
With questions task'd the giddy train;
Let him entreat, or crave, or call,
'Twas one reply,—loud laugh'd they all.
Then o'er him mimic chains they flung,
Framed of the fairest flowers of spring,
While some their gentle force unite,
Onward to drag the wondering knight,
Some, bolder, urge his pace with blows,
Dealt with the lily or the rose.
Behind him were in triumph borne
The warlike arms he late had worn.
Four of the train combined to rear
The terrors of Tintadgel's spear;
Two, laughing at their lack of strength,
Dragg'd Caliburn in cumbrous length;
One, while she aped a martial stride,
Placed on her brows the helmet's pride;
Then scream'd, 'twixt laughter and surprise,
To feel its depth o'erwhelm her eyes.
With revel-shout, and triumph-song,
Thus gaily march'd the giddy throng.

XVIII.

"Through many a gallery and hall
They led, I ween, their royal thrall;
At length, beneath a fair arcade
Their march and song at once they staid.
The eldest maiden of the band,
(The lovely maid was scarce eighteen.)
Raised, with imposing air, her hand,
And reverent silence did command,
On entrance of their Queen,
And they were mute.—But as a glance
They steal on Arthur's countenance
Bewilder'd with surprise,
Their smother'd mirth again 'gan speak,
In archly dimpled chin and cheek,
And laughter-lighted eyes.

XIX.

"The attributes of those high days
Now only live in minstrel-lays;
For Nature, now exhausted, still
Was then profuse of good and ill.
Strength was gigantic, valour high,
And wisdom soar'd beyond the sky,
And beauty had such matchless beam
As lights not now a lover's dream.
Yet e'en in that romantic age,
Ne'er were such charms by mortal seen,
As Arthur's dazzled eyes engage,
When forth on that enchanted stage,
With glittering train of maid and page,
Advanced the castle's Queen!
While up the hall she slowly pass'd,
Her dark eye on the King she cast,
That flash'd expression strong;
The longer dwelt that lingering look,
Her cheek the livelier colour took,
And scarce the shame-faced King could brook
The gaze that lasted long.
A sage, who had that look espied,
Where kindling passion strove with pride,
Had whisper'd, 'Prince, beware!
From the chafed tiger rend the prey,
Rush on the lion when at bay,
Bar the fell dragon's blighted way,
But shun that lovely snare!'

XX.

"At once that inward strife suppress'd
The dame approach'd her warlike guest,
With greeting in that fair degree,
Where female pride and courtesy
Are blended with such passing art
As awes at once and charms the heart.
A courtly welcome first she gave,
Then of his goodness 'gan to crave
Construction fair and true
Of her light maidens' idle mirth,
Who drew from lonely glens their
Nor knew to pay to stranger worth
And dignity their due;
And then she pray'd that he would rest
That night her castle's honour'd guest.
The Monarch meetly thanks express'd;
The banquet rose at her behest,
With lay and tale, and laugh and jest,
Apace the evening flew.

XXI.

"The Lady sate the Monarch by,
Now in her turn abash'd and shy,
And with indifference seem'd to hear
The toys he whispered in her ear.
Her bearing modest was and fair,
Yet shadows of constraint were there,
That show'd an over-cautious care
Some inward thought to hide;
Oft did she pause in full reply,
And oft cast down her large dark eye,
Oft check'd the soft voluptuous sigh,
That heaved her bosom's pride.
Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know
How hot the midday sun shall glow,
From the mist of morning sky;
And so the wily Monarch guess'd,
That this assumed restraint express'd
More ardent passions in the breast,
Than ventured to the eye.
Closer he press'd, while bakers rang,
While maidens laugh'd and minstrels sang,
Still closer to her ear—
But why pursue the common tale?
Or wherefore show how knights prevail
When ladies dare to hear?

Or wherefore trace, from what slight cause
Its source one tyrant passion draws,
Till, mastering all within,
Where lives the man that has not tried,
How mirth can into folly glide,
And folly into sin!"

CANTO SECOND.

I.

Lyulph's Tale, continued.

"Another day, another day,
And yet another, glides away!
The Saxon stern, the pagan Dane,
Maraud on Britain's shores again.
Arthur, of Christendom the flower,
Lies loitering in a lady's bower;
The horn, that foemen wont to fear,
Sounds but to wake the Cumbrian deer,
And Caliburn, the British pride,
Hangs useless by a lover's side.

II.

"Another day, another day,
And yet another, glides away!
Heroic plans in pleasure drown'd,
He thinks not of the Table Round;
In lawless love dissolved his life,
He thinks not of his beauteous wife:
Better he loves to snatch a flower
From bosom of his paramour,
Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
The honours of his heathen crest!
Better to wreathe 'mid tresses brown,
The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
Than o'er the altar give to flow
The banners of a Paynim foe.
Thus, week by week, and day by day,
His life inglorious glides away:
But she, that soothes his dream,
Beholds his hour of waking near.
III.

"Much force have mortal charms to stay
Our peace in virtue's toilsome way
But Guendolen's might far outshine
Each maid of merely mortal line.
Her mother was of human birth,
Her sire a Genie of the earth,
In days of old deem'd to preside
O'er lovers' wiles and beauty's pride,
By youths and virgins worshipp'd long,
With festive dance and choral song,
Till, when the cross to Britain came,
On heathen altars died the flame.
Now, deep in Wastdale solitude,
The downfall of his rights he rued,
And, born of his resentment heir,
He train'd to guile that lady fair,
To sink in slothful sin and shame
The champions of the Christian name.
Well skill'd to keep vain thoughts alive,
And all to promise, nought to give,—
The timid youth had hope in store,
The bold and pressing gain'd no more.
As wilder'd children leave their home,
After the rainbow's arch to roam,
Her lovers barter'd fair esteem,
Faith, fame, and honour, for a dream.

IV.

"Her sire's soft arts the soul to tame
She practised thus—till Arthur came;
Then, frail humanity had part,
And all the mother claim'd her heart.
Forgot each rule her father gave,
Sunk from a princess to a slave,
Too late must Guendolen deplore,
He, that has all, can hope no more!
Now must she see her lover strain,
At every turn her feeble chain;
Watch, to new-bind each knot, and shrink
To view each fast-decaying link.

Art she invokes to Nature's aid,
Her vest to zone, her locks to braid;
Each varied pleasure heard her call,
The feast, the tourney, and the ball:
Her storied lore she next applies,
Taxing her mind to aid her eyes;
Now more than mortal wise, and then
In female softness sunk again;
Now, raptured, with each wish complying,
With feign'd reluctance now denying;
Each charm she varied, to retain
A varying heart—and all in vain!"

V.

"Thus in the garden's narrow bound,
Flank'd by some castle's Gothic round,
Fain would the artist's skill provide,
The limits of his realms to hide.
The walks in labyrinths he twines,
Shade after shade with skill combines,
With many a varied flowery knot,
And copse, and arbour, decks the spot,
Tempting the hasty foot to stay,
And linger on the lovely way——
Vain art! vain hope! 'tis fruitless all!
At length we reach the bounding wall,
And, sick of flower and trim-dress'd tree,
Long for rough glades and forest tree.

VI.

"Three summer months had scantly flown,
When Arthur, in embarrass'd tone,
Spoke of his liegemen and his throne;
Said, all too long had been his stay,
And duties, which a Monarch sway,
Duties, unknown to humble men,
Must tear her knight from Guendolen.—
She listen'd silently the while,
Her mood express'd in bitter smile;
Beneath her eye must Arthur quail,
And oft resume the unfinish'd tale,
Confessing, by his downcast eye,
The wrong he sought to justify.
He ceased. A moment mute she gazed,
And then her looks to heaven she raised
One palm her temples veiled, to hide
The tear that sprung in spite of pride!
The other for an instant press'd
The foldings of her silken vest!

VII.

"At her reproachful sign and look,
The hint the Monarch's conscience took.
Eager he spoke—'No, lady, no!
Deem not of British Arthur so,
Nor think he can deserter prove
To the dear pledge of mutual love.
I swear by sceptre and by sword,
As belted knight and Britain's lord,
That if a boy shall claim my care,
That boy is born a kingdom's heir;
But, if a maiden Fate allows,
To choose that maid a fitting spouse,
A summer-day in lists shall strive
My knights,—the bravest knights alive,—
And he, the best and bravest tried,
Shall Arthur's daughter claim for bride.'—
He spoke, with voice resolved and high—
The lady deign'd him not reply.

VIII.

"At dawn of morn, ere on the brake
His matins did a warbler make,
Or stirr'd his wing to brush away
A single dew-drop from the spray.
Ere yet a sunbeam, through the mist,
The castle-battlements had kiss'd,
The gates revolve, the drawbridge falls,
And Arthur sallies from the walls.
Doff'd his soft garb of Persia's loom,
And steel from spur to helmet-plume,
His Lybian steed full proudly trode,
And joyful neigh'd beneath his load.
The Monarch gave a passing sigh
To penitence and pleasures by,
When, lo! to his astonish'd ken
Appear'd the form of Guendolen.

IX.

"Beyond the outmost wall she stood,
Attired like huntress of the wood:
Sandall'd her feet, her ankles bare,
And eagle-plumage deck'd her hair;
Firm was her look, her bearing bold,
And in her hand a cup of gold.
'Thou goest!' she said, 'and ne'er again
Must we two meet, in joy or pain.
Full fain would I this hour delay,
Though weak the wish—yet, wilt thou stay?
—No! thou look'st forward. Still attend,—
Part we like lover and like friend,'
She raised the cup—'Not this the juice
The sluggish vines of earth produce;
Pledge we, at parting, in the draught
Which Genii love!'—she said, and quaff'd;
And strange unwonted lustres fly
From her flush'd cheek and sparkling eye.

X.

"The courteous Monarch bent him low,
And, stooping down from saddlebow,
Lifted the cup, in act to drink.
A drop escaped the goblet's brink—
Intense as liquid fire from hell,
Upon the charger's neck it fell.
Screaming with agony and fright,
He bolted twenty feet upright—
—The peasant still can show the dint,
Where his hoofs lighted on the flint.—
From Arthur's hand the goblet flew,
Scattering a shower of fiery dew,
That burn'd and blighted where it fell!
The frantic steed rush'd up the dell,
As whistles from the bow the reed;
Nor bit nor rein could check his speed,

Until he gain'd the hill;
Then breath and sinew fail'd apace,
And, reeling from the desperate race,
He stood, exhausted, still.
The Monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed—
Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky;  

But, on the spot where once they frown'd,
The lonely streamlet brawl'd around
A tufted knoll, where dimly shone
Fragments of rock and rifted stone.
Musing on this strange hap the while,
The king wends back to fair Carlisle:
And cares, that cumber royal sway
Wore memory of the past away.

XI.

"Full fifteen years, and more, were sped,
Each brought new wreaths to Arthur's head.
Twelve bloody fields, with glory fought,
The Saxons to subjection brought:
Ryton, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne:
The Pictish Gillamore in flight,
And Roman Lucius, own'd his might;
And wide were through the world renown'd
The glories of his Table Round.

Each knight who sought adventurous fame,
To the bold court of Britain came,
And all who suffer'd causeless wrong,
From tyrant proud, or faitour strong,
Sought Arthur's presence to complain,
Nor there for aid implored in vain.

XII.

"For this the King, with pomp and pride,
Held solemn court at Whitsuntide,
And summon'd Prince and Peer,
All who owed homage for their land,
Or who craved knighthood from his hand,
Or who had succour to demand,
To come from far and near.
At such high tide, were glee and game
Mingled with feats of martial fame,
For many a stranger champion came,
In lists to break a spear;
And not a knight of Arthur's host,
Save that he trode some foreign coast,
But at this feast of Pentecost
Before him must appear.
Ah, Minstrels! when the Table Round
Arose, with all its warriors crown'd,
There was a theme for bards to sound
In triumph to their string!
Five hundred years are past and gone,
But time shall draw his dying groan,
Ere he behold the British throne
Begirt with such a ring!

XIII.

"The heralds named the appointed spot,
As Caerleon or Camelot,
Or Carlisle fair and free.
At Penrith, now, the feast was set,
And in fair Eamont's vale were met
The flower of Chivalry."
There Galaad sate with manly grace,
Yet maiden meekness in his face;
There Morolt of the iron mace,
   And love-lorn Tristrem there:
And Dinadam with lively glance
And Lanval with the fairy lance,
And Mordred with his look askance,
   Brunor and Bevidere.
Why should I tell of numbers more?
   Sir Cay, Sir Banier, and Sir Bore,
   Sir Carodac the keen,
The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
And Lancelot, that ever more
Look'd stol'n-wise on the Queen.\(^315\)

XIV.
``When wine and mirth did most abound,
And harpers play'd their blythest round,
A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
   And marshals clear'd the ring;
A maiden, on a palfrey white,
Heading a band of damsels bright,
Paced through the circle, to alight
   And kneel before the King.
Arthur, with strong emotion, saw
Her graceful boldness check'd by awe,
Her dress, like huntress of the wold,
Her bow and baldric trapp'd with gold,
Her sandall'd feet, her ankles bare,
And the eagle-plume that deck'd her hair.
Graceful her veil she backward flung—
The King, as from his seat he sprung,
Almost cried, 'Guendolen!' But 'twas a face more frank and wild,
Betwixt the woman and the child,
Where less of magic beauty smiled
   Than of the race of men;
And in the forehead's haughty grace,
The lines of Britain's royal race,
Pendragon's you might ken.

XV.
``Faltering, yet gracefully, she said—
'Great Prince! behold an orphan maid,
In her departed mother's name,
A father's vow'd protection claim!
The vow was sworn in desert lone,
In the deep valley of St. John.'
At once the King the suppliant raised,
And kiss'd her brow, her beauty praised;
His vow, he said, should well be kept,
Ere in the sea the sun was dipp'd,—
Then, conscious, glanced upon his queen;
But she, unruffled at the scene
Of human frailty, construed mild,
Look'd upon Lancelot and smiled.

XVI.
``'Up! up! each knight of gallant crest
Take buckler, spear, and brand!
He that to-day shall bear him best,
   Shall win my Gyneth's hand.
And Arthur's daughter, when a bride,
   Shall bring a noble dower;
Both fair Strath-Clyde and Reged wide,
   And Carlisle town and tower.'
Then might you hear each valiant knight,
To page and squire that cried,
'Bring my armour bright, and my courser wight!
'Tis not each day that a warrior's might
May win a royal bride.
Then cloaks and caps of maintenance
In haste aside they fling;
The helmets glance, and gleams the lance,
   And the steel-weaved hauberks ring.
Small care had they of their peaceful array,
They might gather it that wolde;
For brake and Bramble glitter'd gay,
With pearls and cloth of gold.
XVII.

"Within trumpet sound of the Table Round
Were fifty champions free,
And they all arise to fight that prize,—
They all arise but three.
Nor love's fond troth, nor wedlock's oath,
One gallant could withhold,
For priests will allow of a broken vow,
For penance or for gold.
But sigh and glance from ladies bright
Among the troop were thrown,
To plead their right, and true-love plight,
And 'plain of honour flown.
The knights they busied them so fast,
With buckling spur and belt,
That sigh and look, by ladies cast,
Were neither seen nor felt.
From pleading, or upbraiding glance,
Each gallant turns aside,
And only thought, 'If speeds my lance,
A queen becomes my bride!'
She has fair Strath-Clyde, and Reged wide,
And Carlisle tower and town;
She is the loveliest maid, beside,
That ever heir'd a crown.'
So in haste their coursers they bestride,
And strike their visors down.

XVIII.

"The champions, arm'd in martial sort,
Have throng'd into the list,
And but three knights of Arthur's court
Are from the tourney miss'd.
And still these lovers' fame survives
For faith so constant shown,—
There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,
And one who loved his own,316

The first was Lancelot de Lac,
The second Tristrem bold,
The third was valiant Carodac,
Who won the cup of gold,
What time, of all King Arthur's crew
(Thereof came jeer and laugh,)
He, as the mate of lady true,
Alone the cup could quaff.
Though envy's tongue would fain surmise,
That but for very shame,
Sir Carodac, to fight that prize,
Had given both cup and dame;
Yet, since but one of that fair court
Was true to wedlock's shrine,
Brand him who will with base report,—
He shall be free from mine.

XIX.

"Now caracoled the steeds in air,
Now plumes and pennons wanton'd fair,
As all around the lists so wide
In panoply the champions ride,
King Arthur saw with startled eye,
The flower of chivalry march by,
The bulwark of the Christian creed,
The kingdom's shield in hour of need.
Too late he thought him of the woe
Might from their civil conflict flow;
For well he knew they would not part
Till cold was many a gallant heart.
His hasty vow he 'gan to rue,
And Gyneth then apart he drew;
To her his leading-staff resign'd,
But added caution grave and kind.

XX.

"'Thou see'st, my child, as promise-bound,
I bid the trump for tourney sound.
Take thou my warder as the queen
And umpire of the martial scene;
But mark thou this:— as Beauty bright
Is polar star to valiant knight,
As at her word his sword he draws,  
His fairest guerdon her applause,  
So gentle maid should never ask  
Of knighthood vain and dangerous task;  
And Beauty's eyes should ever be  
Like the twin stars that soothe the sea,  
And Beauty's breath shall whisper peace,  
And bid the storm of battle cease.  
I tell thee this, lest all too far,  
These knights urge tourney into war.  
Blithe at the trumpet let them go,  
And fairly counter blow for blow;—  
No striplings these, who succour need  
For a razed helm or falling steed.  
But, Gyneth, when the strife grows warm,  
And threatens death or deadly harm,  
Thy sire entreats, thy king commands,  
Thou drop the warder from thy hands,  
Trust thou thy father with thy fate,  
Doubt not he choose thee fitting mate;  
Nor be it said, through Gyneth's pride  
A rose of Arthur's chaplet died.

XXI.

"A proud and discontented glow  
O'ershadow'd Gyneth's brow of snow;  
She put the warder by:—  
'Reserve thy boon, my liege,' she said,  
'Thus chaffer'd down and limited,  
Debased and narrow'd for a maid  
Of less degree than I.  
No petty chief, but holds his heir  
At a more honour'd price and rare  
Than Britain's King holds me!  
Although the sun-burn'd maid, for dower,  
Has but her father's rugged tower,  
His barren hill and lee,—  
King Arthur swore, "By crown and sword,  
As belted knight and Britain's lord,  
That a whole summer's day should strive  
His knights, the bravest knights alive!'"  
Recall thine oath! and to her glen  
Poor Gyneth can return again;  
Not on thy daughter will the stain,  
That soils thy sword and crown remain.  
But think not she will e'er be bride  
Save to the bravest, proved and tried;  
Pendragon's daughter will not fear  
For clashing sword or splinter'd spear,  
Nor shrink though blood should flow;  
And all too well sad Guendolen  
Hath taught the faithlessness of men,  
That child of hers should pity, when  
Their need they undergo."—

XXII.

"He frown'd and sigh'd, the Monarch bold:—  
'I give—what I may not withhold;  
For, not for danger, dread, or death,  
Must British Arthur break his faith.  
Too late I mark, thy mother's art  
Hath taught thee this relentless part.  
I blame her not, for she had wrong,  
But not to these my faults belong.  
Use, then, the warder as thou wilt;  
But trust me, that, if life be spilt,  
InArthur's love, in Arthur's grace,  
Gyneth shall lose a daughter's place.'  
With that he turn'd his head aside,  
Nor brook'd to gaze upon her pride,  
As, with the truncheon raised, she sate  
The arbitress of mortal fate;  
Nor brook'd to mark, in ranks disposed,  
How the bold champions stood opposed,  
For shrill the trumpet-flourish fell  
Upon his ear like passing bell!  
Then first from sight of martial fray  
Did Britain's hero turn away.
XXIII.

"But Gyneth heard the clangour high,
As hears the hawk the partridge cry.
Oh, blame her not! the blood was hers,
That at the trumpet's summons stirs!—
And e'en the gentlest female eye
Might the brave strife of chivalry
A while untroubled view;
So well accomplish'd was each knight,
To strike and to defend in fight,
Their meeting was a goodly sight,
While plate and mail held true.
The lists with painted plumes were strown,
Upon the wind at random thrown,
But helm and breastplate bloodless shone,
It seem'd their feather'd crests alone
Should this encounter rue.
And ever, as the combat grows,
The trumpet's cheery voice arose,
Like lark's shrill song the flourish flows,
Heard while the gale of April blows
The merry greenwood through.

XXIV.

"But soon to earnest grew their game,
The spears drew blood, the swords struck flame,
And, horse and man, to ground there came
Knights, who shall rise no more!
Gone was the pride the war that graced
Gay shields were cleft, and crests defaced.
And steel coats riven, and helms unbraced,
And pennons stream'd with gore.
Gone, too, were fence and fair array,
And desperate strength made deadly way
At random through the bloody fray,
And blows were dealt with headlong sway
Unheeding where they fell;
And now the trumpet's clamours seem
Like the shrill sea-bird's wailing scream,
Heard o'er the whirlpool's gulping stream,
The sinking seaman's knell!

XXV.

"Seem'd in this dismal hour, that Fate
Would Camlan's ruin antedate,
And spare dark Mordred's crime;
Already gasping on the ground
Lie twenty of the Table Round,
Of chivalry the prime.
Arthur, in anguish, tore away
From head and beard his tresses gray,
And she, proud Gyneth, felt dismay,
And quaked with ruth and fear;
But still she deem'd her mother's shade
Hung o'er the tumult, and forbade
The sign that had the slaughter staid,
And chid the rising tear.
Then Brunor, Taulas, Mador, fell,
Helias the White, and Lionel,
And many a champion more;
Rochemont and Dinadam are down,
And Ferrand of the Forest Brown
Lies gasping in his gore.
Vanoc, by mighty Morolt press'd
even to the confines of the list,
Young Vanoc of the beardless face,
(Fame spoke the youth of Merlin's race,)""O'erpower'd at Gyneth's footstool bled,
His heart's-blood dyed her sandals red.
But then the sky was overcast.
Then howl'd at once a whirlwind's blast,
And, rent by sudden throes,
Yawn'd in mid lists the quaking earth,
And from the gulf,—tremendous birth!—
The form of Merlin rose.
XXVI.

"Sternly the Wizard Prophet eyed
The dreary lists with slaughter dyed,
And sternly raised his hand:—
'Madmen,' he said, 'your strife
forbear;
And thou, fair cause of mischief, hear
The doom thy fates demand!
Long shall close in stony sleep
Eyes for ruth that would not weep;
Iron lethargy shall seal
Heart that pity scorn'd to feel.
Yet, because thy mother's art
Warp'd thine unsuspicious heart,
And for love of Arthur's race,
Punishment is blent with grace,
Thou shalt bear thy penance long
In the Valley of Saint John,
And this weird shall overtake thee;
Sleep, until a knight shall wake thee,
For feats of arms as far renown'd
As warrior of the Table Round.
Long endurance of thy slumber
Well may teach the world to number
All their woes from Gyneth's pride,
When the Red Cross champions died.'

XXVII.

"As Merlin speaks, on Gyneth's eye
Slumber's load begins to lie;
Fear and anger vainly strive
Still to keep its light alive.
Twice, with effort and with pause,
O'er her brow her hand she draws;
Twice her strength in vain she tries,
From the fatal chair to rise,
Merlin's magic doom is spoken.
Vanoc's death must now be broken,
Slow the dark-fringed eyelids fall,
Curtaining each azure ball,
Slowly as on summer eves
Violets fold their dusky leaves,
The weighty baton of command
Now bears down her sinking hand,
On her shoulder droops her head;
Net of pearl and golden thread,
Bursting, gave her locks to flow
O'er her arm and breast of snow.
And so lovely seem'd she there,
Spell-bound in her ivory chair,
That her angry sire, repenting,
Craved stern Merlin for relenting,
And the champions, for her sake,
Would again the contest wake;
Till, in necromantic night,
Gyneth vanish'd from their sight.

XXVIII.

"Still she bears her weird alone,
In the Valley of Saint John;
And her semblance oft will seem,
Mingling in a champion's dream,
Of her weary lot to plain,
And crave his aid to burst her chain.
While her wondrous tale was new,
Warriors to her rescue drew,
East and west, and south and north,
From the Lilly, Thames, and Forth.
Most have sought in vain the glen,
Tower nor castle could they ken;
Not at every time or tide,
Nor by every eye, descried.
Fast and vigil must be borne,
Many a night in watching worn,
Ere an eye of mortal powers
Can discern those magic towers.
Of the persevering few,
Some from hopeless task withdrew,
When they read the dismal threat
Graved upon the gloomy gate.
Few have braved the yawning door,
And those few return'd no more.
In the lapse of time forgot,
Wellnigh lost in Gyneth's lot;
Sound her sleep as in the tomb,
Till waken'd by the trump of doom.

END OF LYULPH'S TALE.
Here pause my tale; for all too soon,
My Lucy, comes the hour of noon.
Already from thy lofty dome
Its courtly inmates 'gin to roam,
And each, to kill the goodly day
That God has granted them, his way
Of lazy sauntering has sought;
Lordlings and witlings not a few,
Incapsible of doing aught,
Yet ill at ease with nought to do.
Here is no longer place for me;
For, Lucy, thou would'st blush to see
Some phantom, fashionably thin,
With limb of lath and kerchief'd chin,
And lounging gape, or sneering grin,
Steal sudden on our privacy.
And how should I, so humbly born,
Endure the graceful spectre's scorn?
Faith! ill, I fear, while conjuring wand
Of English oak is hard at hand.

II.
Or grant the hour be all too soon
For Hessian boot and pantaloon.
And grant the loungier seldom strays
Beyond the smooth and gravell'd maze,
Laud we the gods, that Fashion's train
Holds hearts of more adventurous strain.
Artists are hers, who scorn to trace
Their rules from Nature's boundless grace,
But their right paramount assert
To limit her by pedant art,
Damning what'er of vast and fair
Exceeds a canvass three feet square.
This thicket, for their gumption fit,
May furnish such a happy bit.
Bards, too, are hers, wont to recite
Their own sweet lays by waxen light,
Half in the salver's tingle drownd,
While the chasse-caf'e glides around;
And such may hither secret stray,
To labour an extempro:

Or sportsman, with his boisterous hollo
May here his wiser spaniel follow,
Or stage-struck Juliet may presume
To choose this bower for tiring-room;
And we alike must shun regard,
From painter, player, sportsman, bard.
Insects that skim in Fashion's sky,
Wasp, blue-bottle, or butterfly,
Lucy, have all alarms for us,
For all can hum and all can buzz.

III.
But oh, my Lucy say how long
We still must dread this trifling throng,
And stoop to hide, with coward art,
The genuine feelings of the heart!
No parents thine whose just command
Should rule their child's obedient hand;
Thy guardians, with contending voice,
Press each his individual choice.
And which is Lucy's?—Can it be
That puny fop, trimm'd cap-a-pee,
Who loves in the saloon to show
The arms that never knew a foe;
Whose sabre trails along the ground,
Whose legs in shapeless boots are drownd;
A new Achilles, sure,—the steel
Fled from his breast to fence his heel;
One, for the simple manly grace
That wont to deck our martial race,
Who comes in foreign trashery
Of tinkling chain and spur,
A walking haberdashery,
Of feathers, lace, and fur:
In Rowley's antiquated phrase,
Horse-milliner of modern days?

IV.
Or is it he, the wordy youth,
So early train'd for statesman's part,
Who talks of honour, faith, and truth,
As themes that he has got by heart;
Whose ethics Chesterfield can teach,
Whose logic is from Single-speech;
Who scorns the meanest thought to
vent,
Save in the phrase of Parliament;
Who, in a tale of cat and mouse,
Calls “order,” and “divides the
house,”
Who “craves permission to reply,”
Whose “noble friend is in his eye;”
Whose loving tender some have
reckon’d
A motion, you should gladly second?

V.
What, neither? Can there be a
third,
To such resistless swains preferr’d?—
O why, my Lucy, turn aside,
With that quick glance of injured
pride?
Forgive me, love, I cannot hear
That alter’d and resentful air.
Were all the wealth of Russel mine,
And all the rank of Howard’s line,
All would I give for leave to dry
That dew drop trembling in thine eye.
Think not I fear such fops can wield
From Lucy more than careless smile;
But yet if wealth and high degree
Give gilded counters currency,
Must I not fear, when rank and birth
Stamp the pure ore of genuine worth?
Nobles there are, whose martial fires
Rival the fame that raised their sires,
And patriots, skill’d through storms of fate
To guide and guard the reeling state.
Such, such there are—If such should come,
Arthur must tremble and be dumb,
Self-exiled seek some distant shore,
And mourn till life and grief are o’er.

VI.
What sight, what signal of alarm,
That Lucy clings to Arthur’s arm?
Or is it, that the rugged way
Makes Beauty lean on lover’s stay?
Oh, no! for on the vale and brake,
Nor sight nor sounds of danger wake,
And this trim sward of velvet green,
Were carpet for the Fairy Queen.
That pressure slight was but to tell,
That Lucy loves her Arthur well,
And fain would banish from his mind
Suspicious fear and doubt unknight

VII.
But wouldst thou bid the demons fly
Like mist before the dawning sky,
There is but one resistless spell—
Say, wilt thou guess, or must I tell?
’Twere hard to name, in minstrel
phrase,
A landaulet and four blood-bays,
But bards agree this wizard band
Can but be bound in Northern land.
’Tis there—nay, draw not back thy
hand!—
’Tis there this slender finger round
Must golden amulet be bound,
Which, bless’d with many a holy
prayer,
Can change to rapture lovers’ care,
And doubt and jealousy shall die,
And fears give place to ecstasy.

VIII.
Now, trust me, Lucy, all too long
Has been thy lover’s tale and song.
O, why so silent, love, I pray?
Have I not spoke the livelong day?
And will not Lucy deign to say
One word her friend to bless:
I ask but one—a simple sound,
Within three little letters bound,
O, let the word be YES!

CANTO THIRD.

INTRODUCTION.

I.
Long loved, long woo’d, and lately
won,
My life’s best hope, and now mine
own!
Doth not this rude and Alpine glen
Recall our favourite haunts agen?
THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

A wild resemblance we can trace,
Though reft of every softer grace,
As the rough warrior's brow may bear
A likeness to a sister fair.
Full well advised our Highland host,
That this wild pass on foot be cross'd,
While round Ben-Cruach's mighty base
Wheel the slow steeds and lingering chaise,
The keen old carle, with Scottish pride,
He praised his glen and mountains wide;
An eye he bears for nature's face,
Ay, and for woman's lovely grace.
Even in such mean degree we find
The subtle Scot's observing mind;
For, nor the chariot nor the train
Could gape of vulgar wonder gain,
But when old Allan would expound
Of Beal-na-paish the Celtic sound.
His bonnet duff'd, and bow, applied
His legend to my bonny bride;
While Lucy blush'd beneath his eye,
Courteous and cautious, shrewd and sly.

II.

Enough of him.—Now, ere we lose,
Plunged in the vale, the distant views,
Turn thee, my love! look back once more
To the blue lake's retiring shore.
On its smooth breast the shadows seem
Like objects in a morning dream,
What time the slumberer is aware
He sleeps, and all the vision's air:
Even so, on yonder liquid lawn,
In hues of bright reflection drawn,
Distinct the shaggy mountains lie,
Distinct the rocks, distinct the sky;
The summer-clouds so plain we note,
That we might count each dappled spot:
We gaze and we admire, yet know
The scene is all delusive show.

Such dreams of bliss would Arthur draw,
When first his Lucy's form he saw;
Yet sigh'd and sicken'd as he drew,
Despairing they could ere prove true!

III.

But, Lucy, turn thee now, to view
Up the fair glen, our destined way:
The fairy path that we pursue,
Distinguish'd but by greener hue,
Winds round the purple brae,
While Alpine flowers of varied dye
For carpet serve, or tapestry.
See how the little runnels leap,
In threads of silver, down the steep,
To swell the brooklet's moan!
Seems that the Highland Naiad grieves,
Fantastic while her crown she weaves,
Of rowan, birch, and alder leaves,
So lovely, and so lone.
There's no illusion there; these flowers,
That wailing brook, these lovely bower,
Are, Lucy, all our own;
And, since thine Arthur call'd thee wife,
Such seems the prospect of his life,
A lovely path, on-winding still,
By gurgling brook and sloping hill.
'Tis true, that mortals cannot tell
What waits them in the distant dell;
But be it hap, or be it harm,
We tread the pathway arm in arm.

IV.

And now, my Lucy, wot'st thou why
I could thy bidding twice deny,
When twice you pray'd I would again
Resume the legendary strain
Of the bold knight of Triermain?
At length you peevish vow you swore,
That you would sue to me no more,
Until the minstrel fit drew near,
And made me prize a listening ear.
THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

But, loveliest, when thou first didst pray
Continuance of the knightly lay,
Was it not on the happy day
That made thy hand mine own?
When, dizzied with mine ecstasy,
Nought past, or present, or to be,
Could I or think on, hear, or see,
Save, Lucy, thee alone!
A giddy draught my rapture was,
As ever chemist's magic gas.

V.

Again the summons I denied
In yon fair capital of Clyde:
My Harp—or let me rather choose
The good old classic form—my Muse,
(For Harp's an over-scathed phrase,
Worn out by bards of modern days,)
My Muse, then—seldom will she wake,
Save by dim wood and silent lake;
She is the wild and rustic Maid,
Whose foot unsandall'd loves to tread
Where the soft greensward is inlaid
With varied moss and thyme;
And, lest the simple lily-braid,
That coronets her temples, fade,
She hides her still in greenwood shade,
To meditate her rhyme.

VI.

And now she comes! The murmur dear
Of the wild brook hath caught her ear,
The glade hath won her eye;
She longs to join with each bithe rill
That dances down the Highland hill,
Her blither melody.
And now, my Lucy's way to cheer,
She bids Ben-Cruach's echoes hear
How closed the tale, my love whilered
Loved for its chivalry.
List how she tells, in notes of flame,
"Child Roland to the dark tower came!"

I.

BEWCASLING now must keep the Hold,
Speir-Adam's steeds must bide in stall,
Of Hartley-burn the bowmen bold
Must only shoot from battled wall;
And Liddesdale may buckle spur,
And Teviot now may belt the brand,
Taras and Ewes keep nightly stir,
And Eskdale foray Cumberland.
Of wasted fields and plundered flocks
The Borderers bootless may complain;
They lack the sword of brave de Vaux,
There comes no aid from Triermain.
That lord, on high adventure bound,
Hath wander'd forth alone,
And day and night keeps watchful round
In the Valley of Saint John.

II.

When first began his vigil bold,
The moon twelve summer nights was old,
And shone both fair and full;
High in the vault of cloudless blue,
O'er streamlet, dale, and rock, she threw
Her light composed and cool.
Stretch'd on the brown hill's heathy breast,
Sir Roland eyed the vale;
Chief where, distinguish'd from the rest,
Those clustering rocks uprear'd their crest,
The dwelling of the fair distress'd,
As told gray Lyulpth's tale.
Thus as he lay, the lamp of night
Was quivering on his armour bright,
In beams that rose and fell,
And danced upon his buckler's boss,
That lay beside him on the moss,
As on a crystal well.
III.

Ever he watch'd, and oft he deem'd,
While on the mound the moonlight stream'd,
   It alter'd to his eyes;
Fain would he hope the rocks 'gan change
To buttress'd walls their shapeless range,
Fain think, by transmutation strange,
   He saw gray turrets rise.
But scarce his heart with hope throb'd high,
Before the wild illusions fly,
Which fancy had conceived,
Abetted by an anxious eye
   That long'd to be deceived.
It was a fond deception all,
Such as, in solitary hall,
   Beguiles the musing eye,
When, gazing on the sinking fire,
Bulwark, and battlement, and spire,
   In the red gulf we spy.
For, seen by moon of middle night,
Or by the blaze of noon-tide bright,
Or by the dawn of morning light,
   Or evening's western flame,
In every tide, at every hour,
In mist, in sunshine, and in shower,
   The rocks remain'd the same.

IV.

Oft has he traced the charmed mound,
Oft climb'd its crest, or paced it round,
   Yet nothing might explore,
Save that the crags so rudely piled,
At distance seen, resemblance wild
   To a rough fortress bore.
Yet still his watch the Warrior keeps,
Feeds hard and spare, and seldom sleeps,
   And drinks but of the well;
Ever by day he walks the hill,
And when the evening gale is chill,
   He seeks a rocky cell,
Like hermit poor to bid his bead,
And tell his Ave and his Creed,
   Invoking every saint at need,
For aid to burst the spell.

V.

And now the moon her orb has hid,
And dwindled to a silver thread,
   Dim seen in middle heaven,
While o'er its curve careering fast,
   Before the fury of the blast
   The midnight clouds are driven.
The brooklet raved, for on the hills
The upland showers had swoln the rills,
   And down the torrents came;
Mutter'd the distant thunder dread,
And frequent o'er the vale was spread
   A sheet of lightning flame.
De Vaux, within his mountain cave,
(No human step the storm durst brave,
   To moody meditation gave
   Each faculty of soul,
Till, lull'd by distant torrent sound,
And the sad winds that whistled round,
Upon his thoughts, in musing drown'd,
   A broken slumber stole.

VI.

'Twas then was heard a heavy sound,
   (Sound, strange and fearful there to hear,
'Mongst desert hills, where, leagues around,
   Dwelt but the gorcock and the deer;)
As, starting from his couch of fern,
Again he heard in clangour stern,
   That deep and solemn swell,—
Twelve times, in measured tone, it spoke,
Like some proud minster's pealing clock,
   Or city's larum-bell.
What thought was Roland's first when fell,
In that deep wilderness, the knell
   Upon his startled ear?
To slander warrior were I loth,
Yet must I hold my minstrel troth,—
   It was a thought of fear.
VII.

But lively was the mingled thrill
That chased that momentary chill,
For Love's keen wish was there,
And eager Hope, and Valour high,
And the proud glow of Chivalry,
That burn'd to do and dare.
Forth from the cave the Warrior
rush'd,
Long ere the mountain-voice was
hush'd,
That answer'd to the knell;
For long and far the unwonted
sound,
Eddying in echoes round and round,
Was toss'd from fell to fell;
And Grisamara answer flung,
And Glaramara answer flung,
And Legbert heights their echoes
swung,
As far as Derwent's dell.

VIII.

Forth upon trackless darkness gazed
The Knight, bedaefen'd and amazed,
Till all was hush'd and still,
Save the swoln torrent's sullen roar,
And the night-blast that wildly bore
Its course along the hill.
Then on the northern sky there came
A light, as of reflected flame,
And over Legbert-head,
As if by magic art controll'd,
A mighty meteor slowly roll'd
Its orb of fiery red;
Thou would'st have thought some
demon dire
Came mounted on that car of fire,
To do his errant dread.
Far on the sloping valley's course,
On thicket, rock, and torrent hoarse,
Shingle and Scrae, and Fell and
Force,
A dusky light arose:
Display'd, yet alter'd was the scene;
Dark rock, and brook of silver sheen,
Even the gay thicket's summer
green,
In bloody tincture glows.

IX.

De Vaux had mark'd the sunbeams
set,
At eve, upon the coronet
Of that enchanted mound,
And seen but crags at random flung,
That, o'er the brawling torrent
hung,
In desolation frown'd.
What sees he by that meteor's
lour?—
A banner'd Castle, keep, and tower,
Retrun the lurid gleam,
With battled walls and buttress fast,
And barbacan and ballium vast,
And airy flanking towers, that cast
Their shadows on the stream.
'Tis no deceit!—distinctly clear
Crenell and parapet appear,
While o'er the pile that meteor drear
Makes momentary pause;
Then forth its solemn path it drew,
And fainter yet and fainter grew
Those gloomy towers upon the view,
As its wild light withdraws.

X.

Forth from the cave did Roland rush,
O'er crag and stream, through brier
and bush
Yet far he had not sped,
Ere sunk was that portentous light
Behind the hills, and utter night
Was on the valley spread.
He paused perforce, and blew his
horn,
And, on the mountain-echoes
borne,
Was heard an answering sound,
A wild and lonely trumpet-note,—
In middle air it seem'd to float
High o'er the batted mound;
And sounds were heard, as when a
guard,
Of some proud castle, holding ward,
Pace forth their nightly round.
The valiant Knight of Triermain
Rung forth his challenge - blast
again,
But answer came there none;
And 'mid the mingled wind and rain,
Darkling he sought the vale in vain,
   Until the dawning shone;
And when it dawn'd, that wondrous sight,
Distinctly seen by meteor light,
   It all had pass'd away!
And that enchanted mount once more
A pile of granite fragments bore,
   As at the close of day.

XI.

Steel'd for the deed, De Vaux's heart,
Scorn'd from his venturous quest to part,
   He walks the vale once more;
But only sees, by night or day,
That shatter'd pile of rocks so gray,
   Hears but the torrent's roar,
Till when, through hills of azure borne,
The moon renew'd her silver horn,
Just at the time her waning ray
   Had faded in the dawning day,
A summer mist arose;
Adown the vale the vapours float,
And cloudy undulations moat
   That tufted mound of mystic note,
As round its base they close.
And higher now the fleecy tide
Ascends its stern and shaggy side,
   Until the airy billows hide
   The rock's majestic isle;
It seem'd a veil of filmy lawn,
By some fantastic fairy drawn,
   Around enchanted pile.

XII.

The breeze came softly down the brook,
   And, sighing as it blew,
The veil of silver mist it shook,
And to De Vaux's eager look
   Renew'd that wondrous view.
For, though the loitering vapour braved
The gentle breeze, yet oft it waved
   Its mantle's dewy fold;
And still, when shook that filmy screen,
Were towers and bastions dimly seen,
And Gothic battlements between
   Their gloomy length unroll'd.
Speed, speed, De Vaux, ere on thine eye
Once more the fleeting vision die!
   —The gallant knight 'gan speed
As prompt and light as, when the hound
Is opening, and the horn is wound,
   Careers the hunter's steed.
Down the steep dell his course amain
   Hath rivell'd archer's shaft;
But ere the mound he could attain,
The rocks their shapeless form regain,
And, mocking loud his labour vain,
   The mountain spirits laugh'd.
Far up the echoing dell was born
   Their wild unearthly shout of scorn.

XIII.

Wroth wax'd the Warrior.—"Am I then
Fool'd by the enemies of men,
   Like a poor hind, whose homeward way
Is haunted by malicious fay?
Is Triermain become your taunt,
   De Vaux your scorn? False fiends, ayaunt!"
   A weighty curtal-axe he bare;
The baleful blade so bright and square,
   And the tough shaft of heben wood,
Were oft in Scottish gore imbrued.
Backward his stately form he drew,
   And at the rocks the weapon threw,
Just where one crag's projected crest
   Hung proudly balanced o'er the rest.
Hurl'd with main force, the weapon's shock
Rent a huge fragment of the rock.
If by mere strength, 'twere hard to tell,
   Or if the blow dissolved some spell,
THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

But down the headlong ruin came,
With cloud of dust and flash of flame.
Down bank, o'er bush, its course was borne,
Crush'd lay the copse, the earth was torn,
Till staid at length, the ruin dread
Cumber'd the torrent's rocky bed,
And bade the waters' high-swoln tide
Seek other passage for its pride.

XIV.

When ceased that thunder, Triermain
Survey'd the mound's rude front again;
And, lo! the ruin had laid bare,
Hewn in the stone, a winding stair,
Whose moss'd and fractured steps might lend
The means the summit to ascend;
And by whose aid the brave De Vaux
Began to scale these magic rocks,
And soon a platform won,
Where, the wild witchery to close,
Within three lances' length arose
The Castle of Saint John!
No misty phantom of the air,
No meteor-blazon'd show was there;
In morning splendour, full and fair,
The massive fortress shone.

XV.

Embattled high and proudly tower'd,
Shaded by pond'rous flankers, lower'd
The portal's gloomy way,
Though for six hundred years and more,
Its strength had brook'd the tempest's roar,
The scutcheon'd emblems which it bore
Had suffer'd no decay:
But from the eastern battlement
A turret had made sheer descent,
And, down in recent ruin rent,
In the mid torrent lay.

Else, o'er the Castle's brow sublime,
Insults of violence or of time,
Unfelt had pass'd away.
In shapeless characters of yore,
The gate this stern inscription bore:—

XVI.

Inscription.

"Patience waits the destined day,
Strength can clear the cumber'd way.
Warrior, who hast waited long,
Firm of soul, of sinew strong,
It is given to thee to gaze
On the pile of ancient days.
Never mortal builder's hand
This enduring fabric plann'd;
Sign and sigil, word of power,
From the earth raised keep and tower.
View it o'er, and pace it round,
Rampart, turret, battled mound.
Dare no more! To cross the gate
Were to tamper with thy fate;
Strength and fortitude were vain,
View it o'er—and turn again."—

XVII.

"That would I," said the Warrior bold,
"If that my frame were bent and old,
And my thin blood dropp'd slow and cold
As icicle in thaw;
But while my heart can feel it dance,
Blithe as the sparkling wine of France,
And this good arm yields sword or lance,
I mock these words of awe!"
He said; the wicket felt the sway
Of his strong hand, and straight gave way;
And, with rude crash and jarring bray,
The rusty bolts withdraw;
But o'er the threshold as he strode,
And forward took the vaulted road,
An unseen arm, with force amain,
The ponderous gate flung close again,
And rusted bolt and bar
Spontaneous took their place once more,
While the deep arch with sullen roar
Return'd their surly jar.
"Now closed is the gin and the prey within
By the Rood of Lanercost!
But he that would win the war-wolf's skin,
May rue him of his boast."
Thus muttering, on the Warrior went,
By dubious light down steep descent.

XVIII.

Unbarr'd, unlock'd, unwatch'd, a port
Led to the Castle's outer court:
There the main fortress, broad and tall,
Spread its long range of bower and hall,
And towers of varied size,
Wrought with each ornament extreme,
That Gothic art, in wildest dream
Of fancy, could devise;
But full between the Warrior's way
And the main portal arch, there lay
An inner moat;
Nor bridge nor boat
Affords De Vaux the means to cross
The clear, profound, and silent fosse.
His arms aside in haste he flings,
Cuirass of steel and hauberk rings,
And down falls helm, and down the shield,
Rough with the dints of many a field.
Fair was his manly form, and fair
His keen dark eye, and close curl'd hair

When, all unarm'd, save that the brand
Of well-proved metal graced his hand,
With nought to fence his dauntless breast
But the close gipon's under-vest,
Whose sullied buff the sable stains
Of hauberk and of mail retains,—
Roland De Vaux upon the brim
Of the broad moat stood prompt to swim.

XIX.

Accoutred thus he dared the tide,
And soon he reach'd the farther side,
And enter'd soon the Hold,
And paced a hall, whose walls so wide
Were blazon'd all with feats of pride,
By warriors done of old.
In middle lists they counter'd here,
While trumpets seem'd to blow;
And there, in den or desert drear,
They quell'd gigantic foe,
Braved the fierce griffon in his ire,
Or faced the dragon's breath of fire.
Strange in their arms, and strange in face,
Heroes they seem'd of ancient race,
Whose deeds of arms, and race, and name,
Forgotten long by later fame,
Were here depicted, to appal
Those of an age degenerate,
Whose bold intrusion braved their fate
In this enchanted hall.
For some short space the venturous Knight
With these high marvels fed his sight,
Then sought the chamber's upper end,
Where three broad easy steps ascend
To an arch'd portal door,
In whose broad folding leaves of state
Was framed a wicket window-grate,
And, ere he ventured more,
The gallant Knight took earnest view
The grated wicket-window through.

XX.

O, for his arms! Of martial weed
Had never mortal Knight such need!—
He spied a stately gallery; all
Of snow-white marble was the wall,
The vaulting, and the floor;
And, contrast strange! on either hand
There stood array'd in sable band
Four Maids whom Africa bore;
And each a Libyan tiger led,
Held by as bright and frail a thread
As Lucy's golden hair,—
For the leash that bound these monsters dread
Was but of gossamer.
Each Maiden's short barbaric vest
Left all unclosed the knee and breast,
And limbs of shapely jet;
White was their vest and turban's fold,
On arms and ankles rings of gold
In savage pomp were set;
A quiver on their shoulders lay,
And in their hand an assagay.
Such and so silent stood they there,
That Roland wellnigh hoped
He saw a band of statues rare,
Station'd the gazer's soul to scare;
But when the wicket oped,
Each grisly beast 'gan upward draw,
Roll'd his grim eye, and spread his claw,
Scented the air, and licked his jaw;
While these weird Maids, in Moorish tongue,
A wild and dismal warning sung.

XXI.
"Rash Adventurer, bear thee back!
Dread the spell of Dahomay!
Fear the race of Zaharak,
Daughters of the burning day!

"When the whirlwind's gusts are wheeling,
Ours it is the dance to braid;
Zarah's sands in pillars reeling,
Join the measure that we tread,
When the Moon has donn'd her cloak,
And the stars are red to see,
Shrill when pipes the sad Siroc,
Music meet for such as we.

"Where the shatter'd columns lie,
Showing Carthage once had been,
If the wandering Santon's eye
Our mysterious rites hath seen,—
Oft he cons the prayer of death,
To the nations preaches doom,
'Azrael's brand hath left the sheath!
Moslems, think upon the tomb!"

"Ours the scorpion, ours the snake,
Ours the hydra of the fen,
Ours the tiger of the brake,
All that plague the sons of men.
Ours the tempest's midnight wrack,
Pestilence that wastes by day—
Dread the race of Zaharak!
Fear the spell of Dahomay!"

XXII.
Uncouth and strange the accents shrill
Rung those vaulted roofs among,
Long it was ever faint and still,
Died the far resounding song.
While yet the distant echoes roll,
The Warrior communed with his soul.
"When first I took this venturous quest,
I swore upon the rood,
Neither to stop, nor turn, nor rest,
For evil or for good.
My forward path too well I ween,
Lies yonder fearful ranks between!
For man unarm'd, 'tis bootless hope
With tigers and with fiends to cope—
Yet, if I turn, what waits me there,
Save famine dire and fell despair?—
Other conclusions let me try,
Since, choose howe'er I list, I die.
Forward, lies faith and knightly fame;
Behind, are perjury and shame.
In life or death, I hold my word!"
With that he drew his trusty sword,
Caught down a banner from the wall,
And enter'd thus the fearful hall.

XXIII.
On high each wayward Maiden threw
Her swarthy arm, with wild halloo!
On either side a tiger sprung—
Against the leftward foe he flung
The ready banner, to engage
With tangling folds the brutal rage;
The right-hand monster in mid air
He struck so fiercely and so fair,
Through gullet and through spinal bone,
The trenchant blade had sheerly gone.

His grisly brethren ramp’d and yell’d,
But the slight leash their rage withheld,
Whilst, ’twixt their ranks, the dangerous road
Firmly, though swift, the champion strode.
Safe to the gallery’s bound he drew,
Safe pass’d an open portal through; And when against pursuit he flung
The gate, judge if the echoes rung!
Onward his daring course he bore,
While, mix’d with dying growl and roar,
Wild jubilee and loud hurra
Pursued him on his venturous way.

XXIV.

"Hurra, hurra! Our watch is done!
We hail once more the tropic sun.
Pallid beams of northern day,
Farewell, farewell! Hurra, hurra!

"Five hundred years o’er this cold glen
Hath the pale sun come round again;
Foot of man, till now, hath ne’er dared to cross the Hall of Fear.

"Warrior! thou, whose dauntless heart
Gives us from our ward to part,
Be as strong in future trial,
Where resistance is denial.

"Now for Afric’s glowing sky,
Zwenga wide and Atlas high,
Zaharak and Dahomay!—
Mount the winds! Hurra, hurra!"

XXV.

The wizard song at distance died,
As if in ether borne astray,
While through waste halls and chambers wide
The knight pursued his steady way,
Till to a lofty dome he came,
That flash’d with such a brilliant flame,
As if the wealth of all the world
Were there in rich confusion hurl’d.
For here the gold, in sandy heaps,
With duller earth, incorporate, sleeps;
Was there in ingots piled, and there
Coin’d badge of empery it bare;
Yonder, huge bars of silver lay,
Dimm’d by the diamond’s neighbouring ray,
Like the pale moon in morning day;
And in the midst four maidens stand,
The daughters of some distant land.
Their hue was of the dark-red dye,
That fringes oft a thunder sky;
Their hands palmetto baskets bare,
And cotton fillets bind their hair; Slim was their form, their mien was shy,

To earth they bent the humbled eye,
Folded their arms, and suppliant kneel’d,
And thus their proffer’d gifts revealed.

XXVI.

CHORUS.

"See the treasures Merlin piled,
Portion meet for Arthur’s child.
Bathe in Wealth’s unbounded stream,
Wealth that Avarice ne’er could dream!"

FIRST MAIDEN.

"See these clots of virgin gold!
Sever’d from the sparry mould,
Nature’s mystic alchemy
In the mine thus bade them lie;
And their orient smile can win
Kings to stoop, and saints to sin.—"
SECOND MAIDEN.

"See these pearls, that long have slept;
These were tears by Naiads wept
For the loss of Marinel.
Tritons in the silver shell
Treasured them, till hard and white
As the teeth of Amphitrite."—

THIRD MAIDEN.

"Does a livelier hue delight?
Here are rubies blazing bright,
Here the emerald's fairy green,
And the topaz glows between;
Here their varied hues unite,
In the changeful chrysolite."—

FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Leave these gems of poorer shine,
Leave them all, and look on mine!
While their glories I expand,
Shade thine eyebrows with thy hand.
Mid-day sun and diamond's blaze
Blind the rash beholder's gaze."—

CHORUS.

"Warrior, seize the splendid store;
Would 'twere all our mountains bore!
We should ne'er in future story,
Read, Peru, thy perish'd glory!"

XXVII.

Calmly and unconcern'd, the Knight
Waved aside the treasures bright:—
"Gentle Maidens, rise, I pray!
Bar not thus my destined way.
Let these boasted brilliant toys
Braid the hair of girls and boys!
Bid your streams of gold expand
O'er proud London's thirsty land.
De Vaux of wealth saw never need,
Save to purvey him arms and steed,
And all the ore he deign'd to hoard
Inlays his helm, and hilt's his sword."
Thus gently parting from their hold,
He left, unmoved, the dome of gold.

XXVIII.

And now the morning sun was high,
De Vaux was weary, faint, and dry;
When, lo! a plashing sound he hears,
A gladsome signal that he hears
Some frolic water-run;
And soon he reach'd a court-yard square,
Where, dancing in the sultry air,
Toss'd high aloft, a fountain fair
Was sparkling in the sun.
On right and left, a fair arcade,
In long perspective view display'd
Alleys and bowers, for sun or shade:
But, full in front, a door,
Low-brow'd and dark, seem'd as it led
To the lone dwelling of the dead,
Whose memory was no more.

XXIX.

Here stopp'd De Vaux an instant's space,
To bathe his parched lips and face,
And mark'd with well-pleased eye,
Reflected on the fountain stream,
In rainbow hues the dazzling beam
Of that gay summer sky.
His senses felt a mild control,
Like that which lulls the weary soul
From contemplation high
Relaxing, when the ear receives
The music that the greenwood leaves
Make to the breezes' sigh.

XXX.

And oft in such a dreamy mood,
The half-shut eye can frame
Fair apparitions in the wood,
As if the nymphs of field and flood
In gay procession came.
Are these of such fantastic mould,
Seen distant down the fair arcade,
These Maids enlink'd in sister-fold,
Who, late at bashful distance staid,
Now tripping from the greenwood shade,
Nearer the musing champion draw,
And, in a pause of seeming awe,
    Again stand doubtful now?—
Ah, that sly pause of witching powers!
That seems to say, "To please be ours,
Be yours to tell us how."
Their hue was of the golden glow
That suns of Candahar bestow,
O'er which in slight suffusion flows
A frequent tinge of paly rose;
Their limbs were fashion'd fair and free,
In nature's justest symmetry;
And, wreathed with flowers, with odours graced,
Their raven ringlets reach'd the waist:
In eastern pomp, its gilding pale
The hennah lent each shapely nail,
And the dark sumah gave the eye
More liquid and more lustrous dye.
The spotless veil of misty lawn,
In studied disarrangement, drawn
The form and bosom o'er,
To win the eye, or tempt the touch,
For modesty show'd all too much—
    Too much—yet promised more.

XXXI.
"Gentle Knight, a while delay,”
Thus they sung, "thy toilsome way,
While we pay the duty due
To our Master and to you.
Over Avarice, over Fear,
Love triumphant led thee here;
Warrior, list to us, for we
Are slaves to Love, are friends to thee.
Though no treasured gems have we,
To proffer on the bended knee,
Though we boast nor arm nor heart,
For the assagay or dart,
Swains allow each simple girl
Ruby lip and teeth of pearl;
Or, if dangers more you prize,
Flatterers find them in our eyes.
"Stay, then, gentle Warrior, stay,
Rest till evening steal on day;
Stay, O, stay!—in yonder bowers
We will braid thy locks with flowers,
Spread the feast and fill the wine,
Charm thy ear with sounds divine.
Weave our dances till delight
Yield to languor, day to night.
"Then shall she you most approve
Sing the lays that best you love,
Soft thy mossy couch shall spread,
Watch thy pillow, prop thy head,
Till the weary night be o'er
Gentle Warrior, wouldst thou more?
Wouldst thou more, fair Warrior,—
she
Is slave to Love and slave to thee."

XXXII.
O, do not hold it for a crime
In the bold hero of my rhyme,
For Stoic look,
And meet rebuke,
He lack'd the heart or time;
As round the band of sirens trip,
He kiss'd one damsel's laughing lip,
And press'd another's proffer'd hand.
Spoke to them all in accents bland,
But broke their magic circle through;
"Kind Maids," he said, "adieu, adieu!
My fate, my fortune, forward lies."
He said, and vanish'd from their eyes;
But, as he dared that darksome way,
Still heard behind their lovely lay:
"Fair Flower of Courtesy, depart!
Go, where the feelings of the heart
With the warm pulse in concord move;
Go, where Virtue sanctions Love!"

XXXIII.
Downward De Vaux through darksome ways
And ruin'd vaults has gone,
Till issue from their wilder'd maze,
Or safe retreat, seem'd none,—
And e'en the dismal path he strays
Grew worse as he went on.
For cheerful sun, for living air,
Foul vapours rise and mine-fires glare,
Whose fearful light the dangers show'd
That dogg'd him on that dreadful road.
Deep pits, and lakes of waters dun,
They show'd, but show'd not how to shun.
These scenes of desolate despair,
These smothering clouds of poison'd air,
How gladly had De Vaux exchanged,
Though 'twere to face yon tigers ranged!
Nay, soothful bards have said
So perilous his state seem'd now,
He wish'd him under arbour bough
With Asia's willing maid.
When, joyful sound! at distance near
A trumpet flourish'd loud and clear,
And as it ceased, a lofty lay
Seem'd thus to chide his lagging way.

XXXIV.
"Son of Honour, theme of story,
Think on the reward before ye!
Danger, darkness, toil despise;
'Tis Ambition bids thee rise.

"He that would her heights ascend,
Many a weary step must wend;
Hand and foot and knee he tries;
Thus Ambition's minions rise.

"Lag not now, though rough the way,
Fortune's mood brooks no delay;
Grasp the boon that's spread before ye,
Monarch's power, and Conqueror's glory!"

It ceased. Advancing on the sound,
A steep ascent the Wanderer found,
And then a turret stair:
Nor climb'd he far its steepy round
Till fresher blew the air,
And next a welcome glimpse was given,
That cheer'd him with the light of heaven.

At length his toil had won
A lofty hall with trophies dressed,
Where, as to greet imperial guest,
Four Maidens stood, whose crimson vest
Was bound with golden zone.

XXXV.
Of Europe seem'd the damsels all;
The first a nymph of lively Gaul,
Whose easy step and laughing eye
Her borrow'd air of awe belie;
The next a maid of Spain,
Dark-eyed, dark-hair'd, sedate, yet bold;
White ivory skin and tress of gold,
Her shy and bashful comrade told
For daughter of Almaine.
These maidens bore a royal robe,
With crown, with sceptre, and with globe,
Emblems of empery;
The fourth a space behind them stood
And leant upon a harp, in mood
Of minstrel ecstazy.
Of merry England she, in dress
Like ancient British Druidess.
Her hair an azure fillet bound,
Her graceful vesture swept the ground,
And, in her hand display'd,
A crown did that fourth Maiden hold,
But unadorn'd with gems and gold,
Of glossy laurel made.

XXXVI.
At once to brave De Vaux knelt down
These foremost Maidens three,
And proffer'd sceptre, robe, and crown,
Liegedom and seignorie,
O'er many a region wide and fair,
Destined, they said, for Arthur's heir;
But homage would he none:
"Rather," he said, "De Vaux would ride,
A Warden of the Border-side,
In plate and mail, than, robed in pride,
A monarch's empire own;
Rather, far rather, would he be
A free-born knight of England free,
Than sit on Despot's throne.
So pass'd he on, when that fourth
Maid,
As starting from a trance,
Upon the harp her finger laid;
Her magic touch the chords obey'd,
Their soul awaked at once!

SONG OF THE FOURTH MAIDEN.

"Quake to your foundations deep,
Stately Towers, and Banner'd Keep,
Bid your vaulted echoes moan,
As the dreaded step they own.

"Fiends, that wait on Merlin's spell,
Hear the foot-fall! mark it well!
Spread your dusky wings abroad,
Boune ye for your homeward road!

"It is His, the first who e'er
Dared the dismal Hall of Fear;
His, who hath the snares deh'd
Spread by Pleasure, Wealth, and Pride.

Quake to your foundations deep,
Bastion huge, and Turret steep!
Tremble, Keep! and totter, Tower!
This is Gyneth's waking hour."

XXXVII.
Thus while she sung, the venturous Knight
Has reach'd a bower, where milder light
Through crimson curtains fell;
Such soften'd shade the hill receives,
Her purple veil when twilight leaves
Upon its western swell.

That bower, the gazer to bewitch,
 Hath wondrous store of rare and rich
As e'er was seen with eye;
For there by magic skill, I wis,
Form of each thing that living is
Was limn'd in proper dye.

All seem'd to sleep—the timid hare
On form, the stag upon his lair,
The eagle in her eyrie fair
Between the earth and sky.

But what of pictured rich and rare
Could win De Vaux's eye-glance, where,
Deep slumbering in the fatal chair,
He saw King Arthur's child!
Doubt, and anger, and dismay,
From her brow had pass'd away,
Forgot was that fell tourney-day,
For, as she slept, she smiled:
It seem'd, that the repentant Seer
Her sleep of many a hundred year
With gentle dreams beguiled.

XXXVIII.
That form of maiden loveliness,
'Twixt childhood and 'twixt youth,
That ivory chair, that sylvan dress,
The arms and ankles bare, express
Of Lyulph's tale the truth.

Still upon her garment's hem
Vanoc's blood made purple gem,
And the warder of command
Cumber'd still her sleeping hand;
Still her dark locks dishevell'd flow
From net of pearl o'er breast of snow;
And so fair the slumberer seems,
That De Vaux impeach'd his dreams,
Vapid all and void of might,

Hiding half her charms from sight.
Motionless a while he stands,
Folds his arms and clasps his hands,
Trembling in his fitful joy,

Doubtful how he should destroy
Long-enduring spell;
Doubtful, too, when slowly rise
Dark-fringed lids of Gyneth's eyes,
What these eyes shall tell.—

"St. George! St. Mary! can it be,
That they will kindly look on me!"

XXXIX.
Gently, lo! the Warrior kneels,
Soft that lovely hand he steals,
Soft to kiss, and soft to clasp—
But the warder leaves her grasp;
Lightning flashes, rolls the thunder!

Gyneth startles from her sleep,
Totters Tower, and trembles Keep,
Burst the Castle-walls asunder!
Fierce and frequent were the shocks,—
Melt the magic halls away;
— But beneath their mystic rocks,
In the arms of bold De Vaux,
Safe the princess lay;
Safe and free from magic power,
Blushing like the rose's flower
Opening to the day;
And round the Champion's brows were bound
The crown that Druidess had wound,
Of the green laurel leaf
And this was what remain'd of all
The wealth of each enchanted hall,
The Garland and the Dame:
But where should Warrior seek the meed,
Due to high worth for daring deed,
Except from Love and Fame!

CONCLUSION.

I.

My Lucy, when the Maid is won,
The Minstrel's task, thou know'st, is done;
And to require of bard
That to his dregs the tale should run,
Were ordinance too hard.
Our lovers, briefly be it said,
Wedded as lovers wont to wed,
When tale or play is o'er;
Lived long and blest, loved fond and true,
And saw a numerous race renew
The honours that they bore.
Know, too, that when a pilgrim strays
In morning mist or evening maze,
Along the mountain lone,
That fairy fortress often mocks
His gaze upon the castled rocks
Of the Valley of St. John;

But never man since brave De Vaux
The charmed portal won.
'Tis now a vain illusive show,
That melts when'er the sunbeams glow
Or the fresh breeze hath blown.

II.

But see, my love, where far below
Our lingering wheels are moving slow,
The whiles, up-gazing still,
Our menials eye our steepy way,
Marvelling, perchance, what whim can stay
Our steps, when eve is sinking gray,
On this gigantic hill.
So think the vulgar—Life and time
Ring all their joys in one dull chime
Of luxury and ease;
And, O! beside these simple knaves,
How many better born are slaves
To such coarse joys as these,—
Dead to the nobler sense that glows
When nature's grander scenes unclose!
But, Lucy, we will love them yet,
The mountain's misty coronet,
The greenwood, and the wold;
And love the more, that of their maze
Adventure high of other days
By ancient bards is told,
Bringing, perchance, like my poor tale,
Some moral truth in fiction's veil:
Nor love them less, than o'er the hill
The evening breeze, as now, comes chill:
My love shall wrap her warm,
And, fearless of the slippery way,
While safe she trips the heathy brae,
Shall hang on Arthur's arm.
THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The scene of this Poem lies, at first, in the Castle of Artornish, on the coast of Argyleshire; and, afterwards, in the Islands of Skye and Arran, and upon the coast of Ayrshire. Finally, it is laid near Stirling. The story opens in the spring of the year 1307, when Bruce, who had been driven out of Scotland by the English, and the Barons who adhered to that foreign interest, returned from the Island of Rachrin on the coast of Ireland, again to assert his claims to the Scottish crown. Many of the personages and incidents introduced are of historical celebrity. The authorities used are chiefly those of the venerable Lord Hailes, as well entitled to be called the restorer of Scottish history, as Bruce the restorer of Scottish monarchy; and of Archdeacon Barbour, a correct edition of whose Metrical History of Robert Bruce will soon, I trust, appear under the care of my learned friend, the Rev. Dr. Jamieson.

ABBOTSFORD, 10th December, 1814.

CANTO FIRST.

Autumn departs—but still his mantle's fold
Rests on the groves of noble Somerville,
Beneath a shroud of russet dropp'd with gold
Tweed and his tributaries mingle still;
Hoarser the wind, and deeper sounds the rill,
Yet lingering notes of sylvan music swell,
The deep-toned cushat, and the red-breast shrill;
And yet some tints of summer splendour tell
When the broad sun sinks down on Ettrick's western fell.

Autumn departs—from Gala's fields no more
Come rural sounds our kindred banks to cheer;
Blent with the stream, and gale that wafts it o'er,
No more the distant reaper's mirth we hear.

The last blithe shout hath died upon our ear,
And harvest-home hath hush'd the clanging wain,
On the waste hill no forms of life appear,
Save where, sad laggard of the autumnal train,
Some age-struck wanderer gleans few ears of scatter'd grain.

Deem'st thou these sadden'd scenes have pleasure still,
Lovest thou through Autumn's fading realms to stray,
To see the heath-flower wither'd on the hill,
To listen to the wood's expiring lay,
To note the red leaf shivering on the spray,
To mark the last bright tints the mountain stain,
On the waste fields to trace the gleaner's way,
And moralize on mortal joy and pain?—
O! if such scenes thou lovest, scorn not the minstrel strain.
No! do not scorn, although its hoarser note
Scarce with the cushat’s homely song can vie,
Though faint its beauties as the tints remote
That gleam through mist in autumn’s evening sky,
And few as leaves that tremble, sear and dry,
When wild November hath his bugle wound;
Nor mock my toil—a lonely gleaner I,
Through fields time-wasted, on sad inquest bound,
Where happier bards of yore have richer harvest found.

So shalt thou list, and haply not unmoved,
To a wild tale of Albyn’s warrior day;
In distant lands, by the rough West reproved,
Still live some relics of the ancient lay.
For, when on Coolin’s hills the lights decay.
With such the Seer of Skye the eve beguiles;
’Tis known amid the pathless wastes of Reay.
In Harries known, and in Iona’s piles,
Where rest from mortal coil the Mighty of the Isles.

I.

“Wake, Maid of Lorn!” the Minstrels sung;
Thy rugged halls, Artornish! rung,
And the dark seas, thy towers that lave,
Heaved on the beach a softer wave,
As ’mid the tuneful choir to keep
The diapason of the Deep.
Lull’d were the winds on Innin-more,
And green Loch-Alline’s woodland shore.

As if wild woods and waves had pleasure
In listing to the lovely measure.
And ne’er to symphony more sweet
Gave mountain echoes answer meet,
Since, met from mainland and from isle,
Ross, Arran, Ilay, and Argyle,
Each minstrel’s tributary lay
Paid homage to the festal day.
Dull and dishonour’d were the bard,
Worthless of guerdon and regard,
Deaf to the hope of minstrel fame,
Or lady’s smiles, his noblest aim,
Who on that morn’s resistless call
Were silent in Artornish hall.

II.

“Wake, Maid of Lorn!” ’twas thus they sung,
And yet more proud the descant rung,
“Wake, Maid of Lorn! high right is ours,
To charm dull sleep from Beauty’s bowers;
Earth, Ocean, Air, have nought so shy
But owns the power of minstrelsy.
In Lettermore the timid deer
Will pause, the harp’s wild chime to hear;
Rude Heiskar’s seal through surges dark
Will long pursue the minstrel’s bark;
To list his notes, the eagle proud
Will poise him on Ben-Cailliach’s cloud;
Then let not Maiden’s ear disdain
The summons of the minstrel train,
But, while our harps wild music make,
Edith of Lorn, awake, awake!

III.

“O wake, while Dawn, with dewy shine,
Wakes Nature’s charms to vie with thine!
She bids the mottled thrush rejoice
To mate thy melody of voice;
The dew that on the violet lies
Mocks the dark lustre of thine eyes;
But, Edith, wake, and all we see
Of sweet and fair shall yield to thee!—
"She comes not yet," gray Ferrand cried;
"Brethren, let softer spell be tried,
Those notes prolong'd, that soothing theme,
Which best may mix with Beauty's dream,
And whisper, with their silvery tone,
The hope she loves, yet fears to own."
He spoke, and on the harp-strings died
The strains of flattery and of pride;
More soft, more low, more tender fell
The lay of love he bade them tell.

IV.
"Wake, Maid of Lorn! the moments fly,
Which yet that maiden-name allow;
Wake, Maiden, wake! the hour is nigh,
When love shall claim a plighted vow.
By Fear, thy bosom's fluttering guest,
By Hope, that soon shall fears remove,
We bid thee break the bonds of rest,
And wake thee at the call of Love!
"Wake, Edith, wake! in yonder bay
Lies many a galley gaily mann'd,
We hear the merry pibrochs play,
We see the streamers' silken band.
What Chieftain's praise these pibrochs swell,
What crest is on these banners wove,
The harp, the minstrel, dare not tell—
The riddle must be read by Love."

V.
Retired her maiden train among,
Edith of Lorn received the song,
But tamed the minstrel's pride had been
That had her cold demeanour seen;
For not upon her cheek awoke
The glow of pride when Flattery spoke,
Nor could their tenderest numbers bring
One sigh responsive to the string.
As vainly had her maidens vied
In skill to deck the princely bride.
Her locks, in dark-brown length array'd,
Cathleen of Ulne, 'twas thine to braid;
Young Eva with meet reverence drew
On the light foot the silken shoe,
While on the ankle's slender round
Those strings of pearl fair Bertha wound,
That, bleach'd Lochryan's depths within,
Seem'd dusky still on Edith's skin.
But Einion, of experience old,
Had weightiest task—the mantle's fold
In many an artful plait she tied,
To show the form it seem'd to hide,
Till on the floor descending roll'd
Its waves of crimson blent with gold.

VI.
O! lives there now so cold a maid,
Who thus in beauty's pomp array'd,
In beauty's proudest pitch of power,
And conquest won—the bridal hour—
With every charm that wins the heart,
By Nature given, enhanced by Art,
Could yet the fair reflection view,
In the bright mirror pictured true,
And not one dimple on her cheek
A tell-tale consciousness bespeak?—
Lives still such maid?—Fair damsels, say,
For further vouches not my lay,
Save that such lived in Britain's isle,
When Lorn's bright Edith scorn'd to smile.
VII.

But Morag, to whose fostering care
Proud Lorn had given his daughter
fair,
Morag, who saw a mother's aid
By all a daughter's love repaid,
(Strict was that bond—most kind of all—
Inviolate in Highland hall)—
Gray Morag sate a space apart,
In Edith's eyes to read her heart.
In vain the attendants' fond appeal
To Morag's skill, to Morag's zeal;
She mark'd her child receive their care,
Cold as the image sculptured fair,
(Form of some sainted patroness,)
Which cloister'd maids combine to dress;
She mark'd—and knew her nursling's heart
In the vain pomp took little part.
Wistful a while she gazed—then press'd
The maiden to her anxious breast
In finish'd loveliness—and led
To where a turret's airy head,
Slender and steep, and battled round,
O'erlook'd, dark Mull! thy mighty Sound,
Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
Part thy swarth hills from Morven's shore.

VIII.

"Daughter," she said, "these seas behold,
Round twice a hundred islands roll'd,
From Hirt, that hears their northern roar,
To the green Hay's fertile shore; or
Or mainland turn, where many a tower
Owens thy bold brother's feudal power,
Each on its own dark cape reclined,
And listening to its own wild wind,
From where Mingarry, sternly placed,
O'erawes the woodland and the waste.

To where Dunstaffnaghe hears the raging
Of Connal with his rocks engaging.
Think'st thou, amid this ample round,
A single brow but thine has frown'd,
To sadden this auspicious morn,
That bids the daughter of high Lorn
Impledge her spousal faith to wed
The heir of mighty Somerled?

Ronald, from many a hero sprung,
The fair, the valiant, and the young,
Lord of the Isles, whose lofty name
A thousand bards have given to fame,
The mate of monarchs, and allied
On equal terms with England's pride.—
From chieftain's tower to bondsman's cot,
Who hears the tale, and triumphs not?
The damsel dons her best attire,
The shepherd lights his beltane fire,
Joy, joy! each warden's horn hath sung,
Joy, joy! each matin bell hath rung;
The holy priest says grateful mass,
Loud shouts each hardy galla-glass,
No mountain den holds outcast boor,
Of heart so dull, of soul so poor,
But he hath flung his task aside,
And claim'd this morn for holy-tide;
Yet, empress of this joyful day,
Edith is sad while all are gay."—

IX.

Proud Edith's soul came to her eye,
Resentment check'd the struggling sigh.
Her hurrying hand indignant dried
The burning tears of injured pride—
"Morag, forbear! or lend thy praise
To swell yon hireling harpers' lays;
Make to yon maids thy boast of power,
That they may waste a wondering hour,
Telling of banners proudly borne,
Of pealing bell and bugle-horn,
Or, theme more dear, of robes of price,
Crownelets and gauds of rare device.
But thou, experienced as thou art,
Think'st thou with these to cheat the heart,
That, bound in strong affection's chain,
Looks for return and looks in vain?
No! sum thine Edith's wretched lot
In these brief words—He loves her not!

X.
"Debate it not—too long I strove
To call his cold observance love,
All blinded by the league that styled
Edith of Lorn,—while yet a child,
She tripp'd the heath by Morag's side,—
The brave Lord Ronald's destined bride.
Ere yet I saw him, while afar
His broadsword blazed in Scotland's war,
Train'd to believe our fates the same,
My bosom throb'd when Ronald's name
Came gracing Fame's heroic tale,
Like perfume on the summer gale.
What pilgrim sought our halls, nor told
Of Ronald's deeds in battle bold;
Who touch'd the harp to heroes' praise,
But his achievements swell'd the lays?
Even Morag—not a tale of fame
Was hers but closed with Ronald's name.
He came! and all that had been told
Of his high worth seem'd poor and cold,
Tame, lifeless, void or energy,
Unjust to Ronald and to me!

XI.
"Since then, what thought had Edith's heart
And gave not plighted love its part!—

And what requital? cold delay—
Excuse that shunn'd the spousal day.—
It dawns, and Ronald is not here!—
Hunts he Bentalla's nimble deer,
Or loiters he in secret dell
To bid some lighter love farewell,
And swear, that though he may not scorn
A daughter of the House of Lorn,
Yet, when these formal rites are o'er,
Again they meet, to part no more?"

XII.
"Hush, daughter, hush! thy doubts remove,
More nobly think of Ronald's love.
Look, where beneath the castle gray
His fleet unmoor from Aros bay!
See'st not each galley's topmast bend,
As on the yards the sails ascend?
Hiding the dark-blue land, they rise
Like the white clouds on April skies;
The shouting vassals man the oars,
Behind them sink Mull's mountain shores,
Onward their merry course they keep,
Through whistling breeze and foaming deep.
And mark the headmost, seaward cast,
Stoop to the freshening gale her mast,
As if she vail'd its banner'd pride,
To greet afar her prince's bride!
Thy Ronald comes, and while in speed
His galley mates the flying steed,
He chides her sloth!"—Fair Edith sighed,
Blush'd, sadly smiled, and thus replied:—

XIII.
"Sweet thought, but vain!—No,
Morag! mark,
Type of his course, yon lonely bark,
That oft hath shifted helm and sail,
To win its way against the gale.
Since peep of morn, my vacant eyes
Have view'd by fits the course she tries;
Now, though the darkening scud comes on,
And dawn's fair promises be gone,
And though the weary crew may see
Our sheltering haven on their lee,
Still closer to the rising wind
They strive her shivering sail to bind,
Still nearer to the shelves' dread verge
At every tack her course they urge,
As if they fear'd Artornish more
Than adverse winds and breakers' roar."

XIV.

Sooth spoke the maid.—Amid the tide
The skiff she mark'd lay tossing sore,
And shifted oft her stooping side,
In weary tack from shore to shore.
Yet on her destined course no more
She gain'd, of forward way,
Than what a minstrel may compare
To the poor meed which peasants share,
Who toil the livelong day;
And such the risk her pilot braves,
That oft, before she wore,
Her boltsprit kiss'd the broken waves,
Where in white foam the ocean raves
Upon the shelving shore.
Yet, to their destined purpose true,
Undaunted toil'd her hardy crew,
Nor look'd where shelter lay,
Nor for Artornish Castle drew;
Nor steer'd for Aros bay.

XV.

Thus while they strove with wind and seas,
Borne onward by the willing breeze,
Lord Ronald's fleet swept by,
Streamer'd with silk, and trick'd with gold,
Mann'd with the noble and the bold
Of Island chivalry.
Around their prows the ocean roars,
And chafes beneath their thousand oars,
Yet bears them on their way:
So chafes the war-horse in his might,
That fieldward bears some valiant knight,
Champs, till both bit and boss are white,
But, foaming, must obey.
On each gay deck they might behold
Lances of steel and crests of gold,
And hauberks with their burnish'd fold,
That shimmer'd fair and free;
And each proud galley, as she pass'd,
To the wild cadence of the blast
Gave wilder minstrelsy.
Full many a shrill triumphant note
Saline and Scallastle bade float
Their misty shores around;
And Morven's echoes answer'd well,
And Duart heard the distant swell
Come down the darksome Sound.

XVI.

So bore they on with mirth and pride,
And if that labouring bark they spied,
'Twas with such idle eye
As nobles cast on lowly boor,
When, toiling in his task obscure,
They pass him heedless by.
Let them sweep on with heedless eyes!
But, had they known what mighty prize
In that frail vessel lay,
The famish'd wolf, that prowls the wold,
Had scatheless pass'd the unguarded fold,
Ere, drifting by these galleys bold,
Unchallenged were her way!
And thou, Lord Ronald, sweep thou on,
With mirth, and pride, and minstrel tone!
But hadst thou known who sail'd so nigh,
Far other glance were in thine eye!
Far other flush were on thy brow,
That, shaded by the bonnet, now
Assumes but ill the blithesome cheer
Of bridegroom when the bride is near!

XVII.

Yes, sweep they on!—We will not leave,
For them that triumph, those who grieve.
With that armada gay
Be laughter loud and jocund shout,
And bards to cheer the wassail route,
With tale, romance, and lay;
And of wild mirth each clamorous art,
Which, if it cannot cheer the heart,
May stupefy and stun its smart,
For one loud busy day.
Yes, sweep they on!—But with that skiff
Abides the minstrel tale,
Where there was dread of surge and cliff,
Labour that strain'd each sinew stiff,
And one sad Maiden's wail.

XVIII.

All day with fruitless strife they toil'd,
With eve the ebbing currents boil'd
More fierce from strait and lake;
And midday through the channel met
Conflicting tides that foam and fret,
And high their mingled billows jet,
As spears, that, in the battle set,
Spring upward as they break.
Then, too, the lights of eve were past,
And louder sung the western blast
On rocks of Linminmore;
Rent was the sail, and strain'd the mast,
And many a leak was gaping fast,
And the pale steersman stood aghast,
And gave the conflict o'er.

XIX.

'Twas then that One, whose lofty look
Nor labour dull'd nor terror shook,
Thus to the Leader spoke:
"Brother, how hopest thou to abide
The fury of this wilder'd tide,
Or how avoid the rock's rude side,
Until the day has broke?
Didst thou not mark the vessel reel,
With quivering planks, and groaning keel,
At the last billow's shock?
Yet how of better counsel tell,
Though here thou see'st poor Isabel
Half dead with want and fear;
For look on sea, or look on land,
Or yon dark sky—on every hand
Despair and death are near.
For her alone I grieve,—on me
Danger sits light, by land and sea,
I follow where thou wilt;
Either to bide the tempest's lour,
Or wend to yon unfriendly tower,
Or rush amid their naval power,
With war-cry wake their wassail-hour,
And die with hand on hilt."

XX.

That elder Leader's calm reply
In steady voice was given,
"In man's most dark extremity
Oft succour dawns from Heaven.
Edward, trim thou the shatter'd sail,
The helm be mine, and down the gale
Let our free course be driven;
So shall we 'scape the western bay,
The hostile fleet, the unequal fray,
So safely hold our vessel's way
Beneath the Castle wall;
For if a hope of safety rest,
'Tis on the sacred name of guest,
Who seeks for shelter, storm-distress'd,
Within a chieftain's hall.
If not—it best beseems our worth,
Our name, our right, our lofty birth,
By noble hands to fall."
XXI.
The helm, to his strong arm consign'd,
Gave the reef'd sail to meet the wind,
And on her alter'd way,
Fierce bounding, forward sprung the ship,
Like greyhound starting from the ship
To seize his flying prey.
Awaked before the rushing prow,
The mimic fires of ocean glow,
Those lightnings of the wave; \(^355\)
Wild sparkles crest the broken tides,
And, flashing round, the vessel's sides
With elvish lustre lave,
While, far behind, their livid light
To the dark billows of the night
A gloomy splendour gave.
It seems as if old Ocean shakes
From his dark brow the lucid flakes
In envious pageantry,
To match the meteor-light that streaks
Grim Hecla's midnight sky.

XXII.
Nor lack'd they steadier light to keep
Their course upon the darken'd deep;—
Artornish, on her frowning steep
'Twixt cloud and ocean hung,
Glanced with a thousand lights of glee,
And landward far, and far to sea,
Her festal radiance flung.
By that blithe beacon-light they steer'd,
Whose lustre mingled well
With the pale beam that now appear'd,
As the cold moon her head uprear'd
Above the eastern fell.

XXIII.
Thus guided, on their course they bore,
Until they near'd the mainland shore,
When frequent on the hollow blast
Wild shouts of merriment were cast,
And wind and wave and sea-birds' cry
With wassail sounds in concert vie,
Like funeral shrieks with revelry,
Or like the battle-shout
By peasants heard from cliffs on high,
When Triumph, Rage, and Agony,
Madden the fight and route.
Now nearer yet, through mist and storm
Dimly arose the Castle's form,
And deepen'd shadow made,
Far lengthen'd on the main below,
Where, dancing in reflected glow,
A hundred torches play'd,
Spangling the wave with lights as vain
As pleasures in this vale of pain,
That dazzle as they fade.

XXIV.
Beneath the Castle's sheltering lee,
They staid their course in quiet sea.
Hewn in the rock, a passage there
Sought the dark fortress by a stair; \(^356\)
So straight, so high, so steep,
With peasant's staff one valiant hand
Might well the dizzy pass have mann'd,
'Gainst hundreds arm'd with spear and brand,
And plunged them in the deep.
His bugle then the helmsman wound;
Loud answer'd every echo round,
From turret, rock, and bay,
The postern's hinges crash and groan,
And soon the warder's cresset shone
On those rude steps of slippery stone,
To light the upward way.
"Thrice welcome, holy Sire!" he said:
"Full long the spousal train have staid,
And, vex'd at thy delay,
Grant us the trivial boon we seek,  
And we in other realms will speak  
Fair of your courtesy;  
Deny—and be your niggard  
Hold  
Scorn'd by the noble and the bold,  
Shun'd by the pilgrim on the wold,  
And wanderer on the lea!"—

XXV.

"Warder," the younger stranger said,
"Thine erring guess some mirth had made
In mirthful hour; but nights like these,
When the rough winds wake western seas,
Brook not of glee. We crave some aid
And needful shelter for this maid
Until the break of day.
For, to ourselves, the deck's rude plank
Is easy as the mossy bank.
That's breath'd upon by May.
And for our storm-toss'd skiff we seek
Short shelter in this leeward creek,
Prompt when the dawn the east shall streak
Again to bear away."—
Answered the Warder,—"In what name
Assert ye hospitable claim?
Whence come, or whether bound?
Hath Erin seen your parting sails?
Or come ye on Norweyan gales?
And seek ye England's fertile vales,
Or Scotland's mountain ground?"

XXVI.

"Warriors—for other title none
For some brief space we list to own,
Bound by a vow—warriors are we;
In strife by land, and storm by sea,
We have been known to fame;
And these brief words have import dear,
When sounded in a noble ear,
To harbour safe, and friendly cheer,
That gives us rightful claim.

To land these two bold brethren leapt,
(The weary crew their vessel kept,)  
And, lighted by the torches' glare,  
That seaward flung their smoky glare,  
The younger knight that maiden bare
Half lifeless up the rock;
On his strong shoulder lean'd her head,  
And down her long dark tresses shed,  
As the wild vine in tendrils spread,
Droops from the mountain oak.
Him follow'd close that elder Lord,
And in his hand a sheathed sword,
Such as few arms could wield;
But when he boun'd him to such task,
Well could it cleave the strongest casque,
And rend the surest shield.

His brother, as the clansman bent
His sullen brow in discontent,
Made brief and stern excuse;—
"Vassal, were thine the cloak of pall
That decks thy Lord in bridal hall,
'Twere honour'd by her use."

The raised portcullis' arch they pass,
The wicket with its bars of brass,
The entrance long and low,
Flank'd at each turn by loop-holes strait,
Where bowmen might in ambush wait,
(If force or fraud should burst the gate.)
To gall an entering foe,
But every jealous post of ward
Was now defenceless and unbarr'd,
And all the passage free
To one low-brow'd and vaulted room,
Where squire and yeoman, page and groom,
Plied their loud revelry.

Proud was his tone, but calm; his eye
Had that compelling dignity,
His mien that bearing haught and high,
Which common spirits fear!
Needed nor word nor signal more,
Nod, wink, and laughter, all were o'er;
Upon each other back they bore,
And gazed like startled deer.
But now appear'd the Seneschal,
Commission'd by his lord to call
The strangers to the Baron's hall,
Where feasted fair and free
That Island Prince in nuptial tide,
With Edith there his lovely bride,
And her bold brother by her side,
And many a chief, the flower and pride
Of Western land and sea.

Here pause we, gentles, for a space;
And, if our tale hath won your grace,
Grant us brief patience, and again
We will renew the minstrel strain.

CANTO SECOND.

Fill the bright goblet, spread the festive board!
 Summon the gay, the noble, and the fair!
 Through the loud hall in joyous concert pour'd,
 Let mirth and music sound the dirge of Care!
But ask thou not if Happiness be there,
If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throe,
Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear;
Lift not the festal mask!—enough to know,
No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

II.

With beakers' clang, with harpers' lay,
With all that olden time deem'd gay,
The Island Chieftain feasted high;
But there was in his troubled eye
A gloomy fire, and on his brow
Now sudden flush'd, and faded now,
Emotions such as draw their birth
From deeper source than festal mirth.

By fits he paused, and harper's strain
And jester's tale went round in vain,
Or fell but on his idle ear
Like distant sounds which dreamers hear.
Then would he rouse him, and employ
Each art to aid the clamorous joy,
And call for pledge and lay,
And, for brief space, of all the crowd,
As he was loudest of the loud,
Seem gayest of the gay.

III.

Yet nought amiss the bridal throng
Mark'd in brief mirth, or musing long;
The vacant brow, the unlistening ear,
They gave to thoughts of raptures near,
And his fierce starts of sudden glee
Seem'd bursts of bridegroom's ecstasy.
Nor thus alone misjudged the crowd,
Since lofty Lorn, suspicious, proud,
And jealous of his honour'd line,
And that keen knight, De Argentine,
(From England sent on errand high,
The western league more firm to tie,)
Both deem'd in Ronald's mood to find
A lover's transport-troubled mind.
But one sad heart, one tearful eye,
Pierced deeper through the mystery,
And watch'd, with agony and fear,
Her wayward bridegroom's varied cheer.

IV.

She watch'd—yet fear'd to meet his glance,
And he shunn'd hers;—till when by chance
They met, the point of foeman's lance
Had given a milder pang!
Beneath the intolerable smart
He writhed—then sternly mann'd his heart
To play his hard but destined part,
And from the table sprang.
"Fill me the mighty cup!" he said,
"Erst own'd by royal Somerled!"
Fill it, till on the studded brim
In burning gold the bubbles swim,
And every gem of varied shine
Glow doubtly bright in rosy wine!
To you, brave lord, and brother mine,
Of Lorn, this pledge I drink—
The union of Our House with thine,
By this fair bridal-link!"—
V.

"Let it pass round!" quoth He of Lorn,
"And in good time—that winded horn
Must of the Abbot tell;
The laggard monk is come at last."

Lord Ronald heard the bugle-blast,
And on the floor at random cast,
The untasted goblet fell.
But when the warder in his ear
Tells other news, his blither cheer
Returns like sun of May,
When through a thunder-cloud it beams!—

Lord of two hundred isles, he seems
As glad of brief delay,
As some poor criminal might feel,
When, from the gibbet or the wheel,
Respited for a day.

VI.

"Brother of Lorn," with hurried voice
He said, "And you, fair lords, rejoice!
Here, to augment our glee,
Come wandering knights from travel far,
Well proved, they say, in strife of war,
And tempest on the sea.—
Ho! give them at your board such place
As best their presences may grace,
And bid them welcome free!"

With solemn step, and silver wand,
The Seneschal the presence scann'd
Of these strange guests; 330 and well he knew
How to assign their rank its due;
For though the costly furs
That erst had deck'd their caps were torn,
And their gay robes were over-worn,
And soil'd their gilded spurs,
Yet such a high commanding grace
Was in their mien and in their face,
As suited best the princely dais,
And royal canopy;
And there he marshall'd them their place,
First of that company.

VII.

Then lords and ladies spake aside,
And angry looks the error chide,
That gave to guests unnamed, unknown,
A place so near their prince's throne;
But Owen Erraught said,
"For forty years a seneschal,
To marshall guests in bower and hall
Has been my honour'd trade.
Worship and birth to me are known,
By look, by bearing, and by tone,
Not by furr'd robe or broider'd zone;
And 'gainst an oaken bough
I'll gage my silver wand of state,
That these three strangers oft have sate
In higher place than now."—

VIII.

"I, too," the aged Ferrand said,
"Am qualified by minstrel trade
Of rank and place to tell;—
Mark'd ye the younger stranger's eye,
My mates, how quick, how keen, how high,
How fierce its flashes fell,
Glancing among the noble rout
As if to seek the noblest out,
Because the owner might not brook
On any save his peers to look?
And yet it moves me more,
That steady, calm, majestic brow,
With which the elder chief even now
Scann'd the gay presence o'er,
Like being of superior kind,
In whose high-toned impartial mind
Degrees of mortal rank and state
Seem objects of indifferent weight.
The lady too—though closely tied
The mantle veil both face and eye,
Her motions' grace it could not hide,
Nor could her form's fair symmetry."

IX.
Suspicious doubt and lordly scorn
Lour'd on the haughty front of Lorn.
From underneath his brows of pride,
The stranger guests he sternly eyed,
And whisper'd closely what the ear
Of Argentine alone might hear;
Then question'd, high and brief,
If, in their voyage, aught they knew
Of the rebellious Scottish crew,
Who to Rath-Erin's shelter drew,
With Carrick's outlaw'd Chief?300
And if, their winter's exile o'er,
They harbour'd still by Uister's shore,
Or launch'd their galleys on the main,
To vex their native land again?

X.
That younger stranger, fierce and high,
At once confronts the Chieftain's eye
With look of equal scorn;
"Of rebels have we nought to show;
But if of Royal Bruce thou'dst know,
I warn thee he has sworn,
Ere thrice three days shall come and go,
His banner Scottish winds shall blow,
Despite each mean or mighty foe,
From England's every bill and bow,
To Allaster of Lorn."
Kindled the mountain Chieftain's ire,
But Ronald quench'd the rising fire;
"Brother, it better suits the time
To chase the night with Ferrand's rhyme,
Than wake, 'midst mirth and wine, the jars
That flow from these unhappy wars."
"Content," said Lorn; and spoke apart
With Ferrand, master of his art,
Then whisper'd Argentine,—
"The lay I named will carry smart
To these bold strangers' haughty heart,
If right this guess of mine."
He ceased, and it was silence all,
Until the minstrel waked the hall.

XI.
The Brooch of Lorn.301
"Whence the brooch of burning gold,
That clasps the Chieftain's mantle-fold,
Wrought and chased with rare device,
Studded fair with gems of price,302
On the varied tartans beaming,
As, through night's pale rainbow gleaming,
Fainter now, now seen afar,
Fitful shines the northern star?
"Gem! ne'er wrought on Highland mountain,
Did the fairy of the fountain,
Or the mermaid of the wave,
Frame thee in some coral cave?
XII.

Song continued.

"No!—thy splendours nothing tell
Foreign art or faery spell,
Moulded thou for monarch's use,
By the overweening Bruce,
When the royal robe he tied
O'er a heart of wrath and pride;
Thence in triumph went thou torn,
By the victor hand of Lorn!

"When the gem was won and lost,
Widely was the war-cry toss'd!
Rung aloud Bendourish fell,
Answer'd Douchart's sounding dell,
Fled the deer from wild Teyndrum,
When the homicide o'ercome,
Hardly 'scape'd, with scathe and scorn,
Left the pledge with conquering Lorn!

XIII.

Song concluded.

"Vain was then the Douglas brand, \(^{362}\)
Vain the Campbell's vaunted hand,
Vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk,
Making sure of murder's work; \(^{364}\)
Barendown fled fast away,
Fled the fiery De la Haye, \(^{365}\)
When this brooch, triumphant borne,
Beam'd upon the breast of Lorn.

"Farthest fled its former Lord,
Left his men to brand and cord,
Bloody brand of Highland steel,
English gibbet, axe, and wheel.
Let him fly from coast to coast,
Dogg'd by Comyn's vengeful ghost,
While his spoils, in triumph worn,
Long shall grace victorious Lorn!"

XIV.

As glares the tiger on his foes,
Hemm'd in by hunters, spears, and bows,
And, ere he bounds upon the ring,
Selects the object of his spring,—
Now on the bard, now on his Lord,
So Edward glared and grasp'd his sword—
But stern his brother spoke,—"Be still.
What! art thou yet so wild of will,
After high deeds and sufferings long,
To chafe thee for a menial's song?—
Well hast thou framed, Old Man,
thy strains,
To praise the hand that pays thy pains! \(^{366}\)
Yet something might thy song have told
Of Lorn's three vassals, true and bold,
Who rent their Lord from Bruce's hold,
As underneath his knee he lay,
And died to save him in the fray.
I've heard the Bruce's cloak and clasp
Was clench'd within their dying grasp,
What time a hundred foemen more
Rush'd in, and back the victor bore,
Long after Lorn had left the strife,
Full glad to 'scape with limb and life.—
Enough of this—And, Minstrel, hold,
As minstrel-hire, this chain of gold,
For future lays a fair excuse,
To speak more nobly of the Bruce."—

XV.

"Now, by Columba's shrine, I swear,
Aud every saint that's buried there,
'Tis he himself!" Lorn sternly cries,
"And for my kinsman's death he dies."
As loudly Ronald calls,—"Forbear!
Not in my sight while brand I wear,
O'ermatch'd by odds, shall warrior fall,
Or blood of stranger stain my hall!"
This ancient fortress of my race
Shall be misfortune’s resting-place,
Shelter and shield of the distress’d,
No slaughter-house for shipwreck’d guest.”—

“Talk not to me,” fierce Lorn replied,

“Of odds or match!—when Comyn died,
Three daggers clash’d within his side!
Talk not to me of sheltering hall,
The Church of God saw Comyn fall!
On God’s own altar stream’d his blood,
While o’er my prostrate kinsman stood
The ruthless murderer—e’en as now—
With armed hand and scornful brow!—
Up, all who love me! blow on blow!
And lay the outlaw’d felons low!”

XVI.

Then up sprang many a mainland Lord,
Obedient to their Chieftain’s word.
Barcaldine’s arm is high in air,
And Kinloch-Alline’s blade is bare,
Black Murthok’s dirk has left its sheath,
And clench’d is Dermid’s hand of death.
Their mutter’d threats of vengeance swell
Into a wild and warlike yell;
Onward they press with weapons high,
The affrighted females shriek and fly,
And, Scotland, then thy brightest ray
Had darken’d ere its noon of day,—
But every chief of birth and fame,
That from the Isles of Ocean came,
At Ronald’s side that hour withstood
Fierce Lorn’s relentless thirst for blood.

XVII.

Brave Torquil from Dunvegan high,
Lord of the misty hills of Skye,
Mac-Niel, wild Bara’s ancient thane,
Duart, of bold Clan-Gillian’s strain,
Fergus, of Canna’s castled bay,
Mac-Duffith, Lord of Colonsay,
Soon as they saw the broadswords glance,
With ready weapons rose at once,
More prompt, that many an ancient feud,
Full oft suppress’d, full oft renew’d,
Glow’d ‘twixt the chieftains of Argyle,
And many a lord of ocean’s isle.
Wild was the scene—each sword was bare,
Back stream’d each chieftain’s shaggy hair,
In gloomy opposition set,
Eyes, hands, and brandish’d weapons met;
Blue gleaming o’er the social board,
Flash’d to the torches many a sword;
And soon those bridal lights may shine
On purple blood for rosy wine.

XVIII.

While thus for blows and death prepared,
Each heart was up, each weapon bared,
Each foot advanced,—a surly pause
Still reverenced hospitable laws.
All menaced violence, but alike
Reluctant each the first to strike,
(For aye accursed in minstrel line
Is he who brawls ‘mid song and wine,)
And, match’d in numbers and in might,
Doubtful and desperate seem’d the fight.
Thus threat and murmur died away,
Till on the crowded hall there lay
Such silence, as the deadly still,
Ere bursts the thunder on the hill.
With blade advanced, each Chieftain bold
Show’d like the Sworder’s form of old,
As wanting still the torch of life,
To wake the marbe’ into strife.
XIX.

That awful pause the stranger maid,  
And Edith, seized to pray for aid.  
As to De Argentine she clung,  
Away her veil the stranger flung,  
And, lovely 'mid her wild despair,  
Fast stream'd her eyes, wide flow'd her hair.  

"O thou, of knighthood once the flower,  
Sure refuge in distressful hour,  
Thou, who in Judah well hast fought  
For our dear faith, and oft hast sought  
Renown in knightly exercise,  
When this poor hand has dealt the prize,  
Say, can thy soul of honour brook  
On the unequal strife to look,  
When, butcher'd thus in peaceful hall,  
Those once thy friends, my brethren, fall!"  

To Argentine she turn'd her word,  
But her eye sought the Island Lord.  
A flush like evening's setting flame  
Glow'd on his cheek; his hardy frame,  
As with a brief convulsion, shook:  
With hurried voice and eager look,—  "Fear not," he said, "my Isabel!  
What said I—Edith!—all is well—  
Nay, fear not—I will well provide  
The safety of my lovely bride—  
My bride?"—but there the accent clung  
In tremor to his faltering tongue.

XX.

Now rose De Argentine, to claim  
The prisoners in his sovereign's name,  
To England's crown, who, vassals sworn,  
'Gainst their liege lord had weapon borne—  
(Such speech, I ween, was but to hide  
His care their safety to provide;  
For knight more true in thought and deed  
Than Argentine ne'er spurr'd a steed)—  
And Ronald, who his meaning guess'd,  
Seem'd half to sanction the request.  
This purpose fiery Torquil broke:—  "Somewhat we've heard of England's yoke,"  
He said, "and, in our islands, Fame Hath whisper'd of a lawful claim,  
That calls the Bruce fair Scotland's Lord,  
Though dispossess'd by foreign sword.  
This craves reflection—but though right  
And just the charge of England's Knight,  
Let England's crown her rebels seize  
Where she has power;—in towers like these,  
'Midst Scottish Chieftains summon'd here  
To bridal mirth and bridal cheer,  
Be sure, with no consent of mine,  
Shall either Lorn or Argentine  
With chains or violence, in our sight,  
Oppress a brave and banish'd Knight.".

XXI.

Then waked the wild debate again,  
With brawling threat and clamour vain.  
Vassals and menials, thronging in,  
Lent their brute rage to swell the din;  
When, far and wide, a bugle-clang  
From the dark ocean upward rang.  "The Abbot comes!" they cry at once,  "The holy man, whose favour'd glance  
Hath sainted visions known;  
Angels have met him on the way,  
Beside the blessed martyrs' bay,  
And by Columba's stone,
His monks have heard their hymnings high
Sound from the summit of Dun-Y,
When at each cross, on girth and wold,
(Their number thrice a hundred-fold,)
His prayer he made, his beads he told,
With Aves many a one—
He comes our feuds to reconcile,
A sainted man from sainted isle;
We will his holy doom abide.
The Abbot shall our strife decide."

XXII.
Scarcefly this fair accord was o'er,
When through the wide revolving door
The black-stoled brethren wind;
Twelve sandall'd monks, who relics bore,
With many a torch-bearer before,
And many a cross behind.
Then sunk each fierce uplifted hand,
And dagger bright and flashing brand
Dropp'd swiftly at the sight;
They vanish'd from the Churchman's eye,
As shooting stars, that glance and die,
Dart from the vault of night.

XXIII.
The Abbot on the threshold stood,
And in his hand the holy rood;
Back on his shoulders flow'd his hood,
The torch's glaring ray
Show'd, in its red and flashing light,
His wither'd cheek and amice white,
His blue eye glistening cold and bright,
His tresses scant and gray.
"Fair Lords," he said, "Our Lady's love,
And peace be with you from above,
And Benedicite!—
—But what means this? no peace is here!—
Do dirks unsheathed suit bridal cheer?
Or are these naked brands
A seemly show for Churchman's sight,
When he comes summon'd to unite
Betrothed hearts and hands?"

XXIV.
Then, cloaking hate with fiery zeal,
Proud Lorn first answer'd the appeal;—
"Thou comest, O holy Man,
True sons of blessed church to greet,
But little deeming here to meet
A wretch, beneath the ban
Of Pope and Church, for murder done
Even on the sacred altar-stone!—
Well mayst thou wonder we should know
Such miscreant here, nor lay him low,
Or dream of greeting, peace, or truce,
With excommunicated Bruce!
Yet well I grant, to end debate,
Thy sainted voice decide his fate."

XXV.
Then Ronald pled the stranger's cause,
And knighthood's oath and honour's laws;
And Isabel, on bended knee,
Brought pray'rs and tears to back the plea:
And Edith lent her generous aid,
And wept, and Lorn for mercy pray'd.
"Hence," he exclaim'd, "degenerate maid!
Was't not enough to Ronald's bower
I brought thee, like a paramour,
Or bond-maid at her master's gate,
His careless cold approach to wait?—
But the bold Lord of Cumberland,
The gallant Clifford, seeks thy hand;
His it shall be—Nay, no reply!
Hence! till those rebel eyes be dry."
With grief the Abbot heard and saw,
Yet not relax'd his brow of awe.

**XXVI.**

Then Argentine, in England's name,
So highly urged his sovereign's claim,
He waked a spark, that, long suppress'd,
Had smoulder'd in Lord Ronald's breast;
And now, as from the flint the fire,
Flash'd forth at once his generous ire.
"Enough of noble blood," he said,
"By English Edward had been shed,
Since matchless Wallace first had been
In mock'ry crown'd with wreaths of green,\(^{308}\)
And done to death by felon hand,
For guarding well his father's land.
Where's Nigel Bruce? and De la Have,
And valiant Seton—where are they?
Where Somerville, the kind and free?
And Fraser, flower of chivalry?\(^{309}\)
Have they not been on gibbet bound,
Their quarters flung to hawk and hound,
And hold we here a cold debate,
To yield more victims to their fate?
What! can the English Leopard's mood
Never be gorged with northern blood?
Was not the life of Athole shed,
To soothe the tyrant's sicken'd bed?\(^{370}\)
And must his word, till dying day,
Be nought but quarter, hang, and slay!—\(^{371}\)
Thou frown'st, De Argentine,—My gage
Is prompt to prove the strife I wage."—

**XXVII.**

"Nor deem," said stout Dunvegan's knight,
"That thou shalt brave alone the fight!"
By saints of isle and mainland both,
By Woden wild, (my grandsire's oath,)
Let Rome and England do their worst,
Howe'er attainted or accursed,
If Bruce shall e'er find friends again,
Once more to brave a battle-plain,
If Douglas couch again his lance,
Or Randolph dare another chance,
Old Torquill will not be to lack
With twice a thousand at his back—
Nay, chafe not at my bearing bold,
Good Abbot! for thou know'st of old,
Torquill's rude thought and stubborn will
Smack of the wild Norwegian still;
Nor will I barter Freedom's cause
For England's wealth, or Rome's applause."

**XXVIII.**

The Abbot seem'd with eye severe
The hardy Chieftain's speech to hear;
Then on King Robert turn'd the Monk,
But twice his courage came and sunk,
Confronted with the hero's look;
Twice fell his eye, his accents shook;
At length, resolved in tone and brow,
Sternly he question'd him—"And thou,
Unhappy! what hast thou to plead,
Why I denounce not on thy deed
That awful doom which canons tell
Shuts paradise, and opens hell;
Anathema of power so dread,
It blends the living with the dead,
Bids each good angel soar away,
And every ill one claim his prey;
The Lord of the Isles.

Expels thee from the church’s care,  
And deafens Heaven against thy prayer;
Arms every hand against thy life,  
Bans all who aid thee in the strife,
Nay, each whose succour, cold and scant,
With meanest alms relieves thy want;

Haunts thee while living,—and, when dead,
Dwells on thy yet devoted head,
Rends Honour’s scutcheon from thy hearse,
Stills o’er thy bier the holy verse,
And spurns thy corpse from hallow’d ground,
Flung like vile carrion to the hound;
Such is the dire and desperate doom
For sacrilege, decreed by Rome;
And such the well-deserved meed
Of thine unhallow’d, ruthless deed.”—

XXIX.

“Abbot!” The Bruce replied, “thy charge
It boots not to dispute at large.
This much, howe’er, I bid thee know,
No selfish vengeance dealt the blow,
For Comyn died his country’s foe,
Nor blame I friends whose ill-timed speed
Fulfill’d my soon-repented deed,
Nor censure those from whose stern tongue
The dire anathema has rung.
I only blame mine own wild ire,
By Scotland’s wrongs incensed to fire.
Heaven knows my purpose to atone,
Far as I may, the evil done,
And hears a penitent’s appeal
From papal curse and prelate’s zeal.
My first and dearest task achieved,
Fair Scotland from her thrall relieved,
Shall many a priest in cope and stole
Say requiem for Red Comyn’s soul,

While I the blessed cross advance,
And expiate this unhappy chance
In Palestine, with sword and lance.
But, while content the Church should know
My conscience owns the debt I owe,
Unto De Argentine and Lorn
The name of traitor I return,
Bid them defiance stern and high,
And give them in their throats the lie!
These brief words spoke, I speak no more.
Do what thou wilt; my shrift is o’er.”—

XXX.

Like man by prodigy amazed,
Upon the King the Abbot gazed;
Then o’er his pallid features glance,
Convulsions of ecstatic trance.
His breathing came more thick and fast,
And from his pale blue eyes were cast
Strange rays of wild and wandering light
Uprise his locks of silver white,
Flush’d is his brow, through every vein
In azure tide the currents strain,
And undistinguish’d accents broke
The awful silence ere he spoke.

XXXI.

“De Bruce! I rose with purpose dread
To speak my curse upon thy head,
And give thee as an outcast o’er
To him who burns to shed thy gore;—
But, like the Midianite of old,
Who stood on Zophim, heaven—controll’d,
I feel within mine aged breast
A power that will not be repress’d.
It prompts my voice, it swells my veins,
It burns, it maddens, it constrains!—
De Bruce, thy sacrilegious blow
Hath at God’s altar slain thy foe:
O'ermaster'd yet by high behest,
I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!"
He spoke, and o'er the astonish'd throng
Was silence, awful, deep, and long.

XXXII.

Again that light has fired his eye,
Again his form swells bold and high,
The broken voice of age is gone,
'Tis vigorous manhood's lofty tone:—
"Thrice vanquish'd on the battle-plain,
Thy followers slaughter'd, fled, or ta'en,
A hunted wanderer on the wild,
On foreign shores a man exiled.\(^375\)
Disown'd, deserted, and distress'd,
I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!
Bless'd in the hall and in the field,
Under the mantle as the shield.
Avenger of thy country's shame,
Restorer of her injured fame,
Bless'd in thy sceptre and thy sword,
De Bruce, fair Scotland's rightful Lord,
Bless'd in thy deeds and in thy fame,
What lengthen'd honours wait thy name!
In distant ages, sire to son
Shall tell thy tale of freedom won,
And teach his infants, in the use
Of earliest speech, to falter Bruce.
Go, then, triumphant! sweep along
Thy course, the theme of many a song!
The Power, whose dictates swell my breast,
Hath bless'd thee, and thou shalt be bless'd!—
Enough — my short-lived strength decays,
And sinks the momentary blaze.—
Heaven hath our destined purpose broke,
Not here must nuptial vow be spoke;
Brethren, our errand here is o'er,
Our task discharged. — Unmoor, unmoor!"

His priests received the exhausted Monk,
As breathless in their arms he sunk.
Punctual his orders to obey,
The train refused all longer stay,
Embark'd, raised sail, and bore away.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

Hast thou not mark'd, when o'er thy startled head
Sudden and deep the thunder-peal has roll'd,
How, when its echoes fell, a silence dead
Sunk on the wood, the meadow, and the wold?
The rye-grass shakes not on the sod-built fold,
The rustling aspen's leaves are mute and still,
The wall-flower waves not on the ruin'd hold,
Till, murmuring distant first, then near and shrill,
The savage whirlwind wakes, and sweeps the groaning hill.

II.

Artornish! such a silence sunk
Upon thy halls, when that gray Monk
His prophet-speech had spoke;
And his obedient brethren's sail
Was stretch'd to meet the southern gale
Before a whisper woke.
Then murmuring sounds of doubt and fear,
Close pour'd in many an anxious ear,
The solemn stillness broke;
And still they gazed with eager guess,
Where, in an oriel's deep recess,
The Island Prince seem'd bent to press
What Lorn, by his impatient cheer,
And gesture fierce, scarce deign'd to hear.
III.

Starting at length, with frowning look,
His hand he clench'd, his head he shook,
And sternly flung apart;—
"And deem'st thou me so mean of mood,
As to forget the mortal feud,
And clasp the hand with blood imbruèd
From my dear Kinsman's heart?
Is this thy rede?—a due return
For ancient league and friendship sworn!
But well our mountain proverb shows
The faith of Islesmen ebbs and flows.
Be it even so—believe, ere long,
He that now bears shall wreak the wrong.—
Call Edith—call the Maid of Lorn!
My sister, slaves!—for further scorn,
Be sure nor she nor I will stay.—
Away, De Argentine, away!—
We nor ally nor brother know,
In Bruce’s friend, or England’s foe."

IV.

But who the Chieftain’s rage can tell,
When, sought from lowest dungeon cell
To highest tower the castle round,
No Lady Edith was there found!
He shouted, "Falsehood!—
Revenge and blood!—a lordly meed
To him that will avenge the deed!
A Baron’s lands!"—His frantic mood
Was scarcely by the news withstood,
That Morag shared his sister’s flight,
And that, in hurry of the night,
Scaped noteless, and without remark,
Two strangers sought the Abbot’s bark.—
"Man every galley!—fly—pursue!
The priest his treachery shall rue!
Ay, and the time shall quickly come,
When we shall hear the thanks that Rome
Will pay his seigned prophecy!"
Such was fierce Lorn’s indignant cry;
And Cormac Doil in haste obey’d,
Hoisted his sail, his anchor weigh’d,
(For, glad of each pretext for spoil,
A pirate sworn was Cormac Doil.)
But others, lingering, spoke apart,—
"The Maid has given her maiden heart
To Ronald of the Isles,
And, fearful lest her brother’s word
Bestow her on that English Lord,
She seeks Iona’s piles,
And wisely deems it best to dwell
A votaress in the holy cell,
Until these feuds so fierce and fell
The Abbot reconciles."

V.

As, impotent of ire, the hall
Echo’d to Lorn’s impatient call,
"My horse, my mantle, and my train!
Let none who honours Lorn re-main!"—
Courteous, but stern, a bold request
To Bruce De Argentine express’d.
"Lord Earl," he said,—"I cannot chuse
But yield such title to the Bruce,
Though name and earldom both are gone,
Since he braced rebel’s armour on—
But, Earl or Serf—rude phrase was thine
Of late, and launch’d at Argentine:
Such as compels me to demand
Redress of honour at thy hand.
We need not to each other tell,
That both can wield their weapons well;
Then do me but the soldier grace,
This glove upon thy helm to place
Where we may meet in fight;
And I will say, as still I’ve said,
Though by ambition far misled,
Thou art a noble knight."—
VI.

"And I," the princely Bruce replied,
"Might term it stain on knighthood's pride,
That the bright sword of Argentine
Should in a tyrant's quarrel shine;
But, for your brave request,
Be sure the honour'd pledge you gave
In every battle-field shall wave
Upon my helmet-crest;
Believe, that if my hasty tongue
Hath done thine honour causeless wrong,
It shall be well redress'd.
Not dearer to my soul was glove,
Bestow'd in youth by lady's love,
Than this which thou hast given!
Thus, then, my noble foe I greet;
Health and high fortune till we meet,
And then—what pleases Heaven."

VII.

Thus parted they—for now, with sound
Like waves roll'd back from rocky ground,
The friends of Lorn retire;
Each mainland chieftain, with his train,
Draws to his mountain towers again,
Pondering how mortal schemes prove vain,
And mortal hopes expire.
But through the castle double guard,
By Ronald's charge, kept wakeful ward,
Wicket and gate were trebly barr'd,
By beam and bolt and chain;
Then of the guests, in courteous sort,
He pray'd excurse for mirth broke short,
And bade them in Artornish fort
In confidence remain.
Now torch and menial tendance led
Chieftain and knight to bower and bed,
And beads were told, and Aves said,
And soon they sunk away
Into such sleep as won't to shed
Oblivion on the weary head,
After a toilsome day.

VIII.

But soon uproused, the Monarch cried
To Edward slumbering by his side,
"Awake, or sleep for aye!"
Even now there jar'ld a secret door—
A taper-light gleams on the floor—
Up, Edward, up, I say!
Some one glides in like midnight ghost—
Nay, strike not! 'tis our noble Host."
Advancing then his taper's flame,
Ronald stept forth, and with him came
Dunvegan's chief—each bent the knee
To Bruce in sign of fealty,
And proffer'd him his sword,
And hail'd him, in a monarch's style,
As king of mainland and of isle,
And Scotland's rightful lord.
"And O," said Ronald, "Own'd of Heaven!
Say, is my erring youth forgiven,
By falsehood's arts from duty driven,
Who rebel falchion drew,
Yet ever to thy deeds of fame,
Even while I strove against thy claim,
Paid homage just and true?"
"Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time."
Answer'd the Bruce, "Must bear the crime,
Since, guiltier far than you,
Even I"—he paused; for Falkirk's woes
Upon his conscious soul arose. 377
The Chieftain to his breast he press'd,
And in a sigh conceal'd the rest.

IX.

They proffer'd aid, by arms and might,
To repossess him in his right;
But well their counsels must be weigh'd,
Ere banners raised and musters made,
For English hire and Lorn's intrigues
Bound many chiefs in southern
leagues.
In answer, Bruce his purpose bold
To his new vassals frankly told.
"The winter worn in exile o'er,
I long'd for Carrick's kindred shore.
I thought upon my native Ayr,
And long'd to see the burly fare
That Clifford makes, whose lordly
call
Now echoes through my father's
hall.
But first my course to Arran led,
Where valiant Lennox gathers head
And on the sea, by tempest toss'd,
Our barks dispersed, our purpose
cross'd,
Mine own, a hostile sail to shun,
Far from her destined course had
run,
When that wise will, which masters
ours,
Compell'd us to your friendly towers."

X.

Then Torquil spoke: — "The time
vanes speed!
We must not linger in our deed,
But instant pray our Sovereign
Liege,
To shun the perils of a siege.
The vengeful Lorn, with all his
powers,
Lies but too near Artornish towers,
And England's light-arm'd vessels
ride,
Not distant far, the waves of Clyde,
Prompt at these tidings to unmoor,
And sweep each strait, and guard
each shore.
Then, till this fresh alarm pass by,
Secret and safe my Liege must lie
In the far bounds of friendly Skye,
Torquil thy pilot and thy guide." —
"Not so, brave Chieftain," Ronald
cried;
"Myself will on my Sovereign wait,
And raise in arms the men of Sleate,
Whilst thou, renown'd where chiefs
debate,
Shalt sway their souls by council
sage,
And awe them by thy locks of age."
— "And if my words in weight shall fail,
This ponderous sword shall turn the
scale."

XI.

— "The scheme," said Bruce, "con-
tents me well;
Meantime, 'twere best that Isabel,
For safety, with my bark and crew,
Again to friendly Erin drew.
There Edward, too, shall with her
wend,
In need to cheer her and defend,
And muster up each scatter'd
friend."
—
Here seem'd it as Lord Ronald's ear
Would other council gladlier hear;
But, all achieved as soon as plann'd,
Both barks, in secret arm'd and
manned,
From out the haven bore;
On different voyage forth they ply,
This winged for the coast of Skye,
And that for Erin's shore.

XII.

With Bruce and Ronald bides the
tale.
To favouring winds they gave the
sail,
Till Mull's dark headlands scarce
they knew,
And Ardnamurchan's hills were blue.
But then the squalls blew close and
hard,
And, fain to strike the galley's yard,
And take them to the oar,
With these rude seas, in weary plight,
They strove the livelong day and
night,
Nor till the dawning had a sight
Of Skye's romantic shore.
Where Coolin stoops him to the west,
They saw upon his shiver'd crest
The sun's arising gleam;
But such the labour and delay,
Ere they were moor'd in Scavigh bay,
(For calmer heaven compell'd to stay,)
He shot a western beam.
Then Ronald said, "If true mine eye,
These are the savage wilds that lie
North of Strathnardill and Dun-
skye; 378
No human foot comes here,
And, since these adverse breezes blow,
If my good Liege love hunter's bow,
What hinders that on land we go,
And strike a mountain-deer?
Allan, my page, shall with us wend;
A bow full dastly can he bend,
And, if we meet a herd, may send
A shaft shall mend our cheer."
Then each took bow and bolts in hand,
Their row-boat launch'd and leapt to land,
And left their skiff and train,
Where a wild stream, with headlong shock,
Came brawling down its bed of rock,
To mingle with the main.

XIII.

A while their route they silent made,
As men who stalk for mountain-deer,
Till the good Bruce to Ronald said,
"St. Mary! what a scene is here!
I've traversed many a mountain-strand,
Abroad and in my native land,
And it has been my lot to tread
Where safety more than pleasure led;
Thus, many a waste I've wander'd o'er,
Clombe many a crag, cross'd many a moor,
But, by my halidome,
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness,
Ne'er did my wandering footsteps press,
Where'er I happ'd to roam."

XIV.

No marvel thus the Monarch spake;
For rarely human eye has known
A scene so stern as that dread lake,
With its dark ledge of barren stone.
Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way
Through the rude bosom of the hill,
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
Tells of the outrage still.
The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of Nature's genial glow;
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroie,
And copee on Cruchan-Ben;
But here,—above, around, below,
On mountain or in glen,
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
Nor 'aught of vegetative power,
The weary eye may ken.
For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
As if were here denied
The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,
That clothe with many a varied hue
The bleakest mountain-side.

XV.

And wilder, forward as they wound,
Were the proud cliffs and lake profound.
Huge terraces of granite black
Afforded rude and cumber'd track;
For from the mountain hoar,
Hurl'd headlong in some night of fear,
When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,
Loose crags had toppled o'er;
And some, chance-poised and balanced, lay,
So that a stripling arm might sway
A mass no host could raise,
In Nature's rage at random thrown,
Yet trembling like the Druid's stone
On its precarious base.

The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,
Now left their foreheads bare,
And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,
Or on the sable waters curl'd,
Or on the eddying breezes whirl'd,
Dispersed in middle air.
And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
When, brief and fierce, the mountain shower
Pours like a torrent down,
And when return the sun's glad beams,
Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
Leap from the mountain's crown.

**XVI.**

"This lake," said Bruce, "whose barriers dear
Are precipices sharp and sheer,
Yielding no track for goat or deer,
Save the black shelves we tread,
How term you its dark waves? and how
Yon northern mountain's pathless brow,
And yonder peak of dread,
That to the evening sun uplifts
The griesly gulfs and slaty riifs,
Which seam its shiver'd head?"

"Coriskin call the dark lake's name,
Coolin the ridge, as bards proclaim,
From old Cuchullin, chief of fame.
But bards, familiar in our isles
Rather with Nature's frowns than smiles,
Full oft their careless humours please
By sportive names from scenes like these.
I would old Turquil were to show
His maidens with their breasts of snow,
Or that my noble Liege were nigh
To hear his Nurse sing lullaby!
(The Maids—tall cliffs with breakers white,
The Nurse—a torrent's roaring might,)
Or that your eye could see the mood
Of Corryvrekin's whirlpool rude,
When dons the Hag her whiten'd hood—
'Tis thus our Islesmen's fancy frames,
For scenes so stern, fantastic names."

**XVII.**

Answer'd the Bruce, "And musing mind
Might here a graver moral find.
These mighty cliffs, that heave on high
Their naked brow to middle sky,
Indifferent to the sun or snow,
Where nought can fade, and nought can blow,
May they not mark a Monarch's fate,—
Raised high 'mid storms of strife and state,
Beyond life's lowlier pleasures placed,
His soul a rock, his heart a waste?
O'er hope and love and fear aloft
High rears his crowned head—But soft!
Look, underneath yon jutting crag
Are hunters and a slaughter'd stag.
Who may they be? But late you said
No steps these desert regions tread?"

**XVIII.**

"So said I—and believed in sooth,"
Ronald replied, "I spoke the truth.
Yet now I spy, by yonder stone,
Five men—they mark us, and come on;
And by their badge on bonnet borne,  
I guess them of the land of Lorn,  
Foes to my Liege."—"So let it be;  
I've faced worse odds than five to three—  
—But the poor page can little aid;  
Then be our battle thus array'd,  
If our free passage they contest;  
Cope thou with two, I'll match the rest."—  
"Not so, my Liege—for, by my life,  
This sword shall meet the treble strife;  
My strength, my skill in arms, more small,  
And less the loss should Ronald fall.  
But islesmen soon to soldiers grow,  
Allan has sword as well as bow,  
And were my Monarch's order given,  
Two shafts should make our number even."—  
"No! not to save my life!" he said;  
"Enough of blood rests on my head,  
Too rashly spill'd—we soon shall know,  
Whether they come as friend or foe."

XIX.

Nigh came the strangers, and more nigh;—  
Still less they pleased the Monarch's eye.  
Men were they all of evil mien,  
Down-look'd, unwilling to be seen;  
They moved with half-resolved pace,  
And bent on earth each gloomy face.  
The foremost two were fair array'd,  
With brogue and bonnet, trews and plaid,  
And bore the arms of mountaineers,  
Daggers and broadswords, bows and spears.  
The three, that lagg'd small space behind,  
Seem'd serfs of more degraded kind;  
Goat-skins or deer-hides o'er them cast,  
Made a rude fence against the blast;  
Their arms and feet and heads were bare,  
Matted their beards, unshorn their hair;  
For arms, the caitiffs bore in hand,  
A club, an axe, a rusty brand.

XX.

Onward, still mute, they kept the track;—  
"Tell who ye be, or else stand back,"  
Said Bruce; "In deserts when they meet,  
Men pass not as in peaceful street."  
Still, at his stern command, they stood,  
And proffer'd greeting brief and rude,  
But acted courtesy so ill,  
As seem'd of fear, and not of will.  
"Wanderers we are, as you may be;  
Men hither driven by wind and sea,  
Who, if you list to taste our cheer,  
Will share with you this fallow deer."—  
"If from the sea, where lies your bark?"—  
"Ten fathom deep in ocean dark!  
Wreck'd yesternight: but we are men,  
Who little sense of peril ken.  
The shades come down—the day is shut—  
Will you go with us to our hut?"—  
"Our vessel waits us in the bay;  
Thanks for your proffer—have good-day."—  
"Was that your galley, then, which rode  
Not far from shore when evening glow'd?"—  
"It was," — "Then spare your needless pain,  
There will she now be sought in vain.  
We saw her from the mountain head,  
When, with St. George's blazon red,  
A southern vessel bore in sight,  
And yours raised sail, and took to flight."—
XXI.

"Now, by the rood, unwelcome news!"
Thus with Lord Ronald communed Bruce;
"Nor rests there light enough to show
If this their tale be true or no.
The men seem bred of churlish kind,
Yet mellow nuts have hardest rind;
We will go with them—food and fire
And sheltering roof our wants require.
Sure guard 'gainst teachery will we keep,
And watch by turns our comrades' sleep.—
Good fellows, thanks; your guests we'll be,
And well will pay the courtesy.
Come, lead us where your lodging lies,—
—Nay, soft! wemix not companies.—
Show us the path o'er crag and stone,
And we will follow you;—lead on."

XXII.

They reach'd the dreary cabin, made
Of sails against a rock display'd,
And there, on entering, found
A slender boy, whose form and mien
Ill suited with such savage scene,
In cap and cloak of velvet green,
Low seated on the ground.
His garb was such as minstrels wear,
Dark was his hue, and dark his hair,
His youthful cheek was marr'd by care,
His eyes in sorrow drown'd.
"Whence this poor boy?"—As Ronald spoke,
The voice his trance of anguish broke;
As if awaked from ghastly dream,
He raised his head with start and scream,
And wildly gazed around;
Then to the wall his face he turn'd,
And his dark neck with blushes burn'd.

XXIII.

"Whose is the boy?" again he said.
"By chance of war our captive made;
He may be yours, if you should hold
That music has more charms than gold;
For, though from earliest childhood mute,
The lad can deftly touch the lute,
And on the rote and viol play,
And well can drive the time away
For those who love such glee;
For me, the favouring breeze, when loud
It pipes upon the galley's shroud,
Makes blither melody."—
"Hath he, then, sense of spoken sound?"—
"Aye; so his mother bade us know,
A crone in our late shipwreck drown'd,
And hence the silly stripling's woe.
More of the youth I cannot say,
Our captive but since yesterday;
When wind and weather wax'd so grim,
We little listed think of him.—
But why waste time in idle words?
Sit to your cheer—unbelt your swords."
Sudden the captive turn'd his head,
And one quick glance to Ronald sped.
It was a keen and warning look,
And well the Chief the signal took.

XXIV.

"Kind host," he said, "our needs require
A separate board and separate fire;
For know, that on a pilgrimage
Wend I, my comrade, and this page.
And, sworn to vigil and to fast,
Long as this hallow'd task shall last,
We never doff the plaid or sword,
Or feast us at a stranger's board;
And never share one common sleep,
But one must still his vigil keep.
Thus, for our separate use, good friend,
We'll hold this hut's remoter end."—
"A churlish vow," the eldest said,
"And hard, methinks, to be obey'd.
How say you, if, to wreak the scorn
That pays our kindness harsh return,
We should refuse to share our meal?"—
"Then say we, that our swords are steel!
And our vow binds us not to fast,
Where gold or force may buy past."—
Their host's dark brow grew keen and fell,
His teeth are clench'd, his features swell;
Yet sunk the felon's moody ire
Before Lord Ronald's glance of fire,
Nor could his craven courage brook
The Monarch's calm and dauntless look.
With laugh constrain'd,—"Let every man
Follow the fashion of his clan!
Each to his separate quarters keep,
And feed or fast, or wake or sleep."

XXV.
Their fire at separate distance burns,
By turns they eat, keep guard by turns;
For evil seem'd that old man's eye,
Dark and designing, fierce yet shy.
Still he avoided forward look,
But slow and circumspectly took
A circling, never-ceasing glance,
By doubt and cunning mark'd at once,
Which shot a mischief-boding ray,
From under eyebrows shagg'd and gray.
The younger, too, who seem'd his son,
Had that dark look the timid shun;
The half-clad serfs behind them sate,
And scowl'd a glare 'twixt fear and hate—
Till all, as darkness onward crept,
Couch'd down, and seem'd to sleep, or slept.
Nor he, that boy, whose powerless tongue
Must trust his eyes to wail his wrong,
A longer watch of sorrow made,
But stretch'd his limbs to slumber laid.

XXVI.
Not in his dangerous host confides
The King, but wary watch provides.
Ronald keeps ward till midnight past,
Then wakes the King, young Allan last;
Thus rank'd, to give the youthful page
The rest required by tender age.
What is Lord Ronald's wakeful thought,
To chase the languor toil had brought?—
(For deem not that he deign'd to throw
Much care upon such coward foe),—
He thinks of lovely Isabel,
When at her foeman's feet she fell,
Nor less when, placed in princely selle,
She glanced on him with favouring eyes,
At Woodstock when he won the prize.
Nor, fair in joy, in sorrow fair,
In pride of place as 'mid despair,
Must she alone engross his care.
His thoughts to his betrothed bride,
To Edith, turn—O how decide,
When here his love and heart are given,
And there his faith stands plight to Heaven!
No drowsy ward 'tis his to keep,
For seldom lovers long for sleep.
Till sung his midnight hymn the owl,
Answer'd the dog-fox with his howl,
Then waked the King—at his request,
Lord Ronald stretch'd himself to rest.

XXVII.
What spell was good King Robert's, say,
To drive the weary night away?
His was the patriot's burning thought,
Of Freedom's battle bravely fought,
Of castles storm'd, of cities freed,
Of deep design and daring deed,
Of England's roses rest and torn,
And Scotland's cross in triumph worn,
Of rout and rally, war and truce,—As heroes think, so thought the Bruce.
No marvel, 'mid such musings high,
Sleep shunn'd the Monarch's thoughtful eye.
Now over Coolin's eastern head
The grayish light begins to spread,
The otter to his cavern drew,
And clamour'd shrill the wakening mew;
Then watch'd the page—to needful rest
The King resign'd his anxious breast.

XXVIII.
To Allan's eyes was harder task,
The weary watch their safeties ask.
He trimm'd the fire, and gave to shine
With bickering light the splinter'd pine;
Then gazed awhile, where silent laid Their hosts were shrouded by the plaid.
But little fear waked in his mind, For he was bred of martial kind,
And, if to manhood he arrive,
May match the boldest knight alive.
Then thought he of his mother's tower,
His little sisters' greenwood bower,
How there the Easter-gambols pass,
And of Dan Joseph's lengthen'd mass.
But still before his weary eye
In rays prolong'd the blazes die—
Again he roused him—on the lake
Look'd forth, where now the twilight-flake
Of pale cold dawn began to wake.
On Coolin's cliffs the mist lay furl'd,
The morning breeze the lake had curl'd,
The short dark waves, heaved to the land,
With ceaseless plush kiss'd cliff or sand;—
It was a slumbrous sound—he turn'd
To tales at which his youth had burn'd,
Of pilgrim's path by demon cross'd,
Of sprightly elf or yelling ghost,
Of the wild witch's baneful cot,
And mermaid's alabaster grot, Who bathes her limbs in sunless well,
Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.380
Thither in fancy rapt he flies,
And on his sight the vaults arise; That hut's dark walls he sees no more,
His foot is on the marble floor, And o'er his head the dazzling spars
Gleam like a firmament of stars!—Hark! hears he not the sea-nymph speak
Her anger in that thrilling shriek!—No! all too late, with Allan's dream Mingled the captive's warning scream.
As from the ground he strives to start, A ruffian's dagger finds his heart! Upward he casts his dizzy eyes, . . .
Murmurs his master's name, . . . and dies!
"Speak yet again, and speak the truth
For thy soul's sake!—from whence this youth?
His country, birth, and name declare,
And thus one evil deed repair."—
—"Vex me no more!... my blood runs cold...
No more I know than I have told.
We found him in a bark we sought
With different purpose... and I thought..."
Fate cut him short; in blood and broil,
As he had lived, died Cormac Doil.

XXXI.

Then resting on his bloody blade,
The valiant Bruce to Ronald said,
"Now shame upon us both!—that boy
Lifts his mute face to heaven,
And clasps his hands, to testify
His gratitude to God on high,
For strange deliverance given.
His speechless gesture thanks hath paid,
Which our free tongues have left unsaid!"
He raised the youth with kindly word,
But mark'd him shudder at the sword:
He cleansed it from its hue of death,
And plunged the weapon in its sheath.
"Alas, poor child! unfitting part
Fate doom'd, when with so soft a heart,
And form so slight as thine,
She made thee first a pirate's slave,
Then, in his stead, a patron gave
Of wayward lot like mine;
A landless prince, whose wandering life
Is but one scene of blood and strife—
Yet scant of friends the Bruce shall be,
But he'll find resting-place for thee.—
Come, noble Ronald! o'er the dead
Enough thy generous grief is paid,
And well has Allan's fate been broke;
Come, wend we hence—the day has broke
Seek we our bark—I trust the tale
Was false, that she had hoisted sail."

XXXII.

Yet, ere they left that charnel-cell,
The Island Lord bade sad farewell
To Allan:—"Who shall tell this tale,"
He said, "in halls of Donagaile!
Oh, who his widow'd mother tell,
That, ere his bloom, her fairest fell!—
Rest thee, poor youth! and trust my care
For mass and knell and funeral prayer;
While o'er those caitiffs, where they lie,
The wolf shall snarl, the raven cry!"
And now the eastern mountain's head
On the dark lake threw lustre red;
Bright gleams of gold and purple streak
Ravine and precipice and peak—
(Se earthly power at distance shows;
Reveals his splendour, hides his woes.)
O'er sheets of granite, dark and broad,
Rent and unequal, lay the road,
In sad discourse the warriors wind,
And the mute captive moves behind.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

Stranger! if e'er thine ardent step
hath traced
The northern realms of ancient Caledon,
Where the proud Queen of Wilderness hath placed,
By lake and cataract, her lonely throne;

Sublime but sad delight thy soul hath known,
Gazing on pathless glen and mountain high,
Listing where from the cliffs the torrents thrown
Mingle their echoes with the eagle's cry,
And with the sounding lake, and with the moaning sky.

Yes! 'twas sublime, but sad.—
The loneliness
Loaded thy heart, the desert tired thine eye;
And strange and awful fears began to press
Thy bosom with a stern solemnity.
Then hast thou wish'd some woodman's cottage nigh,
Something that show'd of life, though low and mean;
Glad sight, its curling wreath of smoke to spy,
Glad sound, its cock's blithe carol would have been,
Or children whooping wild beneath the willows green.

Such are the scenes, where savage grandeur wakes
An awful thrill that softens into sighs;
Such feelings rouse them by dim Rannoch's lakes,
In dark Glencoe such gloomy raptures rise:
Or farther, where, beneath the northern skies,
Chides wild Loch-Eribol his caverns hoar—
But, be the minstrel judge, they yield the prize
Of desert dignity to that dread shore,
That sees grim Coolin rise, and hears Coriskin roar.

II.

Through such wild scenes the champion pass'd,
When bold halloo and bugle-blast
Upon the breeze came loud and fast.
"There," said the Bruce, "rung
Edward's horn!
What can have caused such brief
return?
And see, brave Ronald,—see him
dart
O'er stock and stone like hunted hart,
Precipitate, as is the use,
In war or sport, of Edward Bruce.
—He marks us, and his eager cry
Will tell his news ere he be nigh."

III.

Loud Edward shouts, "What make
ye here,
Warring upon the mountain-deer,
When Scotland wants her King?
A bark from Lennox cross'd our
track,
With her in speed I hurried back,
These joyful news to bring—
The Stuart stirs in Teviotdale,
And Douglas wakes his native vale;
Thy storm-toss'd fleet hath won its
way
With little loss to Brodick Bay,
And Lennox, with a gallant band,
Waits but thy coming and command
To waft them o'er to Carrick strand.
There are blithe news!—but mark
the close!
Edward, the deadliest of our foes,
As with his host he northward
pass'd,
Hath on the Borders breathed his
last."

IV.

Still stood the Bruce—his steady
cheek
Was little wont his joy to speak,
But then his colour rose:
"Now, Scotland! shortly shalt thou
see,
With God's high will, thy children
free,
And vengeance on thy foes!
Yet to no sense of selfish wrongs,
Bear witness with me, Heaven, be-
longs
My joy o'er Edward's bier; 381
I took my knighthood at his hand,
And lordship held of him, and land,
And well may vouch it here,
That, blot the story from his page,
Of Scotland ruin'd in his rage,
You read a monarch brave and sage,
And to his people dear."—
"Let London's burghers mourn her
Lord,
And Croydon monks his praise
record,"
The eager Edward said;
"Eternal as his own, my hate
Surmounts the bounds of mortal
fate,
And dies not with the dead!
Such hate was his on Solway's strand,
When vengeance clench'd his palsied
hand,
That pointed yet to Scotland's land, 382
As his last accents pray'd
Disgrace and curse upon his heir,
If he one Scottish head should spare,
Till stretch'd upon the bloody fair
Each rebel corpse was laid!
Such hate was his, when his last
breath
Renounced the peaceful house of
death,
And bade his bones to Scotland's
coast
Be borne by his remorseless host,
As if his dead and stony eye
Could still enjoy her misery!
Such hate was his—dark, deadly,
long;
Mine,—as enduring, deep and
strong!"—

V.

"Let women, Edward, war with
words,
With curses monks, but men with
swords:
Nor doubt of living foes, to sate
Deepest revenge and deadliest hate,
Now, to the sea! behold the beach,
And see the galleys' pendants stretch
Their fluttering length down favour-
ing gale!
Aboard, aboard! and hoist the sail.
Hold we our way for Arran first,
Where meet in arms our friends dispersed;
Lennox the loyal, De la Haye,
And Boyd the bold in battle fray.
I long the hardy band to head,
And see once more my standard spread.—
Does noble Ronald share our course,
Or stay to raise his island force?”—
“Comie wCal, come woe, by Bruce’s side,”
Replied the Chief, “will Ronald bide.
And since two galleys yonder ride,
Be mine, so please my liege, dismiss’d,
To wake to arms the clans of Uist,
And all who hear the Minche’s roar,
On the Long Island’s lonely shore.
The nearer Isles, with slight delay,
Ourselves may summon in our way;
And soon on Arran’s shore shall meet,
With Torquil’s aid, a gallant fleet,
If aught avails their Chieftain’s hest
Among the islesmen of the west.”

VI.
Thus was their venturous council said.
But, ere their sails the galleys spread,
Coriskin dark and Coolin high
Echoed the dirge’s doleful cry.
Along that sable lake pass’d slow,—
Fit scene for such a sight of woe,—
The sorrowing islesmen, as they bore
The murder’d Allan to the shore.
At every pause, with dismal shout,
Their coronach of grief rung out,
And ever, when they moved again,
The pipes resumed their clamorous strain,
And, with the pibroch’s shrilling wail,
Mourn’d the young heir of Donagail.
Round and around, from cliff and cave,
His answer stern old Coolin gave,

Till high upon his misty side
Languish’d the mournful notes, and died
For never sounds, by mortal made,
Attain’d his high and haggard head,
That echoes but the tempest’s moan,
Or the deep thunder’s rending groan.

VII.
Merrily, merrily bounds the bark,
She bounds before the gale,
The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch
Is joyous in her sail!
With fluttering sound like laughter hoarse,
The cords and canvas strain,
The waves, divided by her force,
In rippling eddies chased her course,
As if they laugh’d again.
Not down the breeze more blithely flew,
Skimming the wave, the light seamen,
Than the gay galley bore
Her course upon that favouring wind,
And Coolin’s crest has sunk behind,
And Slapin’s cavern’d shore.
’Twas then that warlike signals wake
Dunsecaith’s dark towers and Eisord’s lake,
And soon, from Cavilgarrigh’s head,
Thick wreaths of eddying smoke were spread;
A summons these of war and wrath
To the brave clans of Sleat and Strath,
And, ready at the sight,
Each warrior to his weapons sprung,
And targe upon his shoulder flung,
Impatient for the fight.
Mac-Kinnon’s chief, in warfare gray,
Had charge to muster their array,
And guide their barks to Brodick Bay.

VIII.
Signal of Ronald’s high command,
A beacon gleam’d o’er sea and land,
From Canna’s tower, that, steep and gray,
Like falcon-nest o’erhangs the bay."
Seek not the giddy crag to climb,
To view the turret scathed by
time;
It is a task of doubt and fear
To aught but goat or mountain-deer.
But rest thee on the silver beach,
And let the aged herdsman teach
His tale of former day;
His cur's wild clamour he shall
chide,
And for thy seat by ocean's side,
His varied plaid display;
Then tell, how with their Chieftain
came,
In ancient times, a foreign dame
To yonder turret gray.
Stern was her Lord's suspicious
mind,
Who in so rude a jail confined
So soft and fair a thrall!
And oft, when moon on ocean slept,
That lovely lady sate and wept
Upon the castle-wall,
And turn'd her eye to southern
climes,
And thought perchance of happier
times,
And touch'd her lute by fits, and
sung
Wild ditties in her native tongue.
And still, when on the cliff and
bay
Placid and pale the moonbeams
play,
And every breeze is mute,
Upon the lone Hebridean's ear
Steals a strange pleasure mix'd with
fear,
While from that cliff he seems to
hear
The murmur of a lute,
And sounds, as of a captive lone,
That mourns her woes in tongue un-
known.—
Strange is the tale—but all too
long
Already hath it staid the song—
Yet who may pass them by,
That crag and tower in ruins gray,
Nor to their hapless tenant pay
The tribute of a sigh!

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark
O'er the broad ocean driven,
Her path by Ronin's mountains
dark
The steersman's hand hath
given.
And Ronin's mountains dark have
sent
Their hunters to the shore,
And each his ashen bow unbent,
And gave his pastime o'er,
And at the Island Lord's command,
For hunting spear took warrior's
brand.
On Scooreigg next a warning light
Summon'd her warriors to the fight;
A numerous race, ere stern MacLeod
O'er their bleak shores in vengeance
strode.
When all in vain the ocean-cave
Its refuge to his victims gave.
The Chief, relentless in his wrath,
With blazing heath blockades the
path;
In dense and stifling volumes roll'd,
The vapour till'd the cavern'd hold!
The warrior-threat, the infant's plain,
The mother's screams, were heard in
vain;
The vengeful Chief maintains his fires,
Till in the vault a tribe expires!
The bones which strew that cavern's
gloom,
Too well attest their dismal doom.

X.
Merrily, merrily goes the bark
On a breeze from the northward
free,
So shoots through the morning sky
the lark,
Or the swan through the summer
sea.
The shores of Mull on the eastward
lay,
And Ulva dark and Colonsay,
And all the group of islets gay
That guard famed Staffa round.
Then all unknown its columns rose,
Where dark and undisturb'd repose
The cormorant had found,
And the shy seal had quiet home,
And welter'd in that wondrous dome,
Where, as to shame the temples
deck'd
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
A Minster to her Maker's praise! 380
Not for a meaner use ascend
Her columns, or her arches bend;
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and
swells,
And still, between each awful pause,
From the high vault an answer
draws,
In varied tone prolong'd and high,
That mocks the organ's melody,
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To old Iona's holy fane,
That Nature's voice might seem to
say,
"Well hast thou done, frail Child of
clay!
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task'd high and hard—but witness
mine!"

XI.
Merrily, merrily goes the bark,
Before the gale she bounds;
So darts the dolphin from the
shark,
Or the deer before the hounds.
They left Loch-Tua on their lee,
And they waken'd men of the
wild Tiree,
And the Chief of the sandy Coll;
They paused not at Columba's isle,
Though peal'd the bells from the holy
pile
With long and measured toll;
No time for matin or for mass,
And the sounds of the holy summons
pass
Away in the billows' roll.
Lochbuie's fierce and warlike Lord
Their signal saw, and grasp'd his
sword,
And verdant Ilay call'd her host,
And the clans of Jura's rugged coast
Lord Ronald's call obey,
And Scarba's isle, whose tortured
shore
Still rings to Corrievreken's roar,
And lonely Colonsay;
—Scenes sung by him who sings no
more! 387
His bright and brief career is o'er,
And mute his tuneful strains;
Quench'd is his lamp of varied lore,
That loved the light of a deadly song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has LEYDEN'S cold remains!

XII.
Ever the breeze blows merrily,
But the galley ploughs no more the
sea.
Lest, rounding wild Cantyre, they
meet
The southern foemen's watchful fleet,
They held unwonted way;—
Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus
o'er, 388
As far as Kilmaconnel's shore,
Upon the eastern bay.
It was a wondrous sight to see
Topmast and pennon glitter free,
High raised above the greenwood tree,
As on dry land the galley moves,
By cliff and copse and a lader groves.
Deep import from that selcouth sign,
Did many a mountain Seer divine,
For ancient legends told the Gael,
That when a royal bark should sail
O'er Kilmaconnel moss,
Old Albyn should in fight prevail,
And every foe should faint and quail
Before her silver Cross.

XIII.
Now launch'd once more, the inland
sea
They furrow with fair augury,
And steer for Arran's isle;
The sun, ere yet he sunk behind
Ben-Ghoil, "the Mountain of the
Wind,"
Gave his grim peaks a greeting
kind,
And bade Loch Rauza smile. 339
Thither their destined course they
drew;
It seem'd the isle her monarch knew,
So brilliant was the landward view,
The ocean so serene;
Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd
O'er the calm deep, where hues of
gold
With azure strove and green.
The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
Glown'd with the tints of evening's
hour,
The beach was silver sheen,
The wind breathed soft as lover's sigh,
And, oft renew'd, seem'd oft to die,
With breathless pause between.
O who, with speech of war and woes,
Would wish to break the soft repose
Of such enchanting scene!

XIV.
Is it of war Lord Ronald speaks?
The blush that dies his manly cheeks,
The timid look and downcast eye,
And faltering voice the theme deny.
And good King Robert's brow express'd,
He ponder'd o'er some high request,
As doubtful to approve;
Yet in his eye and lip the while,
Dwelt the half-pitying glance and
smile,
Which manhood's graver mood beguile,
When lovers talk of love.
Anxious his suit Lord Ronald pled;
"And for my bride betrothed," he
said,
"My Liege has heard the rumour
spread
Of Edith from Artornish fled.
Too hard her fate—I claim no right
To blame her for her hasty flight;
De joy and happiness her lot!—
But she hath fled the bridal-knot,
And Lorn recall'd his promised plight,
In the assembled chieftains' plight.—
When, to fulfil our fathers' sight,
I proffer'd all I could—my hand—
I was repulsed with scorn;
Mine honour I should ill assert,
And worse the feelings of my heart,
If I should play a suitor's part
Again, to pleasure Lorn."—

XV.
"Young Lord," the Royal Bruce
replied,
"That question must the Church
decide;
Yet seems it hard, since rumours state
Edith takes Clifford for her mate,
The very tie, which she hath broke,
To thee should still be binding yoke.
But, for my sister Isabel—
The mood of woman who can tell?
I guess the Champion of the Rock,
Victorious in the tourney shock,
That knight unknown, to whom the
prize
She dealt,—had favour in her eyes;
But since our brother Nigel's fate,
Our ruin'd house and hapless state,
From worldly joy and hope estranged,
Much is the hapless mourner changed.
Perchance," here smiled the noble
King,
"This tale may other musings bring.
Soon shall we know—yon mountains
hide
The little convent of Saint Bride;
There, sent by Edward, she must
stay,
Till fate shall give more prosperous
day;
And thither will I hear thy suit,
Nor will thine advocate be mute."

XVI.
As thus they talk'd in earnest mood,
That speechless boy beside them stood.
He stoop'd his head against the
mast,
And bitter sobs came thick and fast,
A grief that would not be repress'd,
But seem'd to burst his youthful breast.
His hands, against his forehead held,
As if by force his tears repell'd,
But through his fingers, long and slight,
Fast trill'd the drops of crystal bright.
Edward, who walk'd the deck apart,
First spied this conflict of the heart.
Thoughtless as brave, with bluntness kind
He sought to cheer the sorrower's mind;
By force the slender hand he drew
From those poor eyes that stream'd with dew.
As in his hold the stripling strove,—
('Twas a rough grasp, though meant in love.)
Away his tears the warrior swept,
And bade shame on him that he wept.
"I would to heaven, thy helpless tongue
Could tell me who hath wrought thee wrong!"
For, were he of our crew the best,
The insult went not unredress'd.
Come, cheer thee; thou art now of age
To be a warrior's gallant page:
Thou shalt be mine!—a palfrey fair
O'er hill and holt my boy shall bear,
To hold my bow in hunting grove,
Or speed on errand to my love;
For well I wot thou wilt not tell
The temple where my wishes dwell."

XVII.

Bruce interposed,—"Gay Edward, no,
This is no youth to hold thy bow,
To fill thy goblet, or to bear
Thy message light to lighter fair.
Thou art a patron all too wild
And thoughtless, for this orphan child.

XVIII.

To land King Robert lightly sprung,
And thrice aloud his bugle rung
With note prolong'd and varied strain,
Till bold Ben-Ghoil replied again.
Good Douglas then, and De la Haye,
Had in a glen a hart at bay,
And Lennox cheer'd the laggard hounds,
When walked that horn the greenwood bounds.
"It is the foe!" cried Boyd, who came
In breathless haste with eye of flame.
"It is the foe!—each valiant lord
Fling by his bow, and grasp his sword!"
"Not so," replied the good Lord James,
"That blast no English bugle claims.
Oft have I heard it fire the fight,
Cheer the pursuit, or stop the flight.
Dead were my heart, and deaf mine ear,
If Bruce should call, nor Douglas hear!"
"Like wave with crest of sparkling foam, Right onward did Clan-Alpine come."
Each to Loch Ranza's margin spring;  
That blast was winded by the King!" 309

XIX.

Fast to their mates the tidings spread,  
And fast to shore the warriors sped.  
Bursting from glen and Greenwood tree,  
High waked their loyal jubilee!  
Around the royal Bruce they crowd,  
And clasp'd his hands, and wept aloud.  
Veterans of early fields were there,  
Whose helmets press'd their hoary hair,  
Whose swords and axes bore a stain  
From life-blood of the red-hair'd Dane;  
And boys, whose hands scarce brooke'd to wield  
The heavy sword or bossy shield.  
Men too were there that bore the scars  
Impress'd in Albyn's woful wars,  
At Falkirk's fierce and fatal light,  
Teyndrum's dread rout, and Methven's flight;  
The might of Douglas there was seen,  
There Lennox with his graceful mien;  
Kirkpatrick, Closeburn's dreaded Knight;  
The Lindsay, fiery, fierce, and light;  
The Heir of murder'd De la Haye,  
And Boyd the grave, and Seton gay,  
Around their King regain'd they press'd,  
Wept, shouted, clasp'd him to their breast,  
And young and old, and serf and lord,  
And he who ne'er unsheathed a sword,  
And he in many a peril tried,  
Alike resolved the brunt to bide,  
And live or die by Bruce's side!  

XX.

Oh, War! thou hast thy fierce delight,  
Thy gleams of joy, intensely bright!  
Such gleams, as from thy polish'd shield  
Fly dazzling o'er the battle-field!  
Such transports wake, severe and high,  
Amid the pealing conquest-cry;  
Scarce less, when, after battle lost,  
Muster the remnants of a host,  
And as each comrade's name they tell,  
Who in the well-fought conflict fell,  
Knitting stern brow o'er flashing eye,  
Vow to avenge them or to die!—  
Warriors!—and where are warriors found,  
If not on martial Britain's ground?  
And who, when waked with note of fire,  
Love more than they the British lyre?—  
Know ye not,—hearts to honour dear!  
That joy, deep-thrilling, stern, severe,  
At which the heartstrings vibrate high,  
And wake the fountains of the eye?  
And blame ye, then, the Bruce, if trace  
Of tear is on his manly face,  
When, scanty relics of the train  
That hail'd at Scone his early reign,  
This patriot band around him hung,  
And to his knees and bosom clung?—  
Blame ye the Bruce?—his brother blamed,  
But shared the weakness, while ashamed,  
With haughty laugh his head he turn'd,  
And dash'd away the tear he scorn'd. 301

XXI.

'Tis morning, and the Convent bell  
Long time had ceased its matin knell,  
Within thy walls, Saint Bride!
Assign'd to Lady Isabel,
And hurriedly she cried,
"Haste, gentle Lady, haste—there waits
A noble stranger at the gates;
Saint Bride's poor vot'ress ne'er has seen
A Knight of such a princely mien;
His errand, as he made me tell,
Is with the Lady Isabel."
The princess rose,—for on her knee
Low bent she told her rosary,—
"Let him by thee his purpose teach:
I may not give a stranger speech."—
"Saint Bride forefend, thou royal Maid!"
The portress cross'd herself, and said,—
"Not to be prioress might I
Debate his will, his suit deny."—
"Has earthly show then, simple fool,
Power o'er a sister of thy rule,
And art thou, like the worldly train,
Subdued by splendid light and vain?"—

XXII.

"No, Lady! in old eyes like mine,
Gauds have no glitter, gems no shine;
Nor grace his rank attendants vain,
One youthful page is all his train.
It is the form, the eye, the word,
The bearing of that stranger Lord;
His stature, manly, bold, and tall,
Built like a castle's battled wall,
Yet moulded in such just degrees,
His giant strength seems lightsome ease,
Close as the tendrils of the vine
His locks upon his forehead twine,
Jet-black, save where some touch of gray
Has ta'en the youthful hue away.
Weather and war their rougher trace
Have left on that majestic face;—
But 'tis his dignity of eye!
There, if a suppliant, would I fly,
Secure, 'mid danger, wrongs, and grief,
Of sympathy, redress, relief—
That glance, if guilty, would I dread
More than the doom that spoke me dead!"—
"Enough, enough," the princess cried,
"'Tis Scotland's hope, her joy, her pride!
To meaner front was ne'er assign'd,
Such mastery o'er the common mind—
Bestow'd thy high designs to aid,
How long, O Heaven! how long delay'd!—
Haste, Mona, haste, to introduce
My darling brother, royal Bruce!"

XXIII.

They met like friends who part in pain,
And meet in doubtful hope again.
But when subdued that fitful swell,
The Bruce survey'd the humble cell;—
"And this is thine, poor Isabel!—
That pallet-couch, and naked wall,
For room of state, and bed of pall;
For costly robes and jewels rare,
A string of beads and zone of hair;
And for the trumpet's sprightly call
To sport or banquet, grove or hall,
The bell's grim voice divides thy care,
'Twixt hours of penitence and prayer!—
O ill for thee, my royal claim
From the First David's sainted name!
O woe for thee, that while he sought
His right, thy brother feebly fought!"

XXIV.

"Now lay these vain regrets aside,
And be the unshaken Bruce!" she cried.
"For more I glory to have shared
The woes thy venturous spirit dared,
I've
Woodstock's
guess
"fix'd
But
Arm
But
The
For
Soon
Truly
Like
Victorious
Hath
Nay,
Victor
Then
Say
First
"Nay,
My
Nor
Tried
My
And
And
Than
For
No
When
In
rescue
not
well
reply
eye.
gone.
we
a
dye,
thrown
owe.
fight-
house's
vene-
voice
Knight,
Isabel,
Isabel,
for
I
from
heart
grieve
I
wilt
the
name
that
beam
a
beam
cloud
just
tame
I
do
with
this
and
cheek
made
composed

XXV.

"Nay, Isabel, for such stern choice,
First wilt thou wait thy brother's
voice;
Then ponder if in convent scene
No softer thoughts might intervene—
Say they were of that unknown
Knight,
Victor in Woodstock's tourney-fight—
Nay, if his name such blush you
owe,
Victorious o'er a fairer foe!"
Truly his penetrating eye
Hath caught that blush's passing
dye,—
Like the last beam of evening
thrown
On a white cloud—just seen and
gone.
Soon with calm cheek and steady
eye,
The princess made composed
reply:—
"I guess my brother's meaning
well;
For not so silent is the cell,
But we have heard the islesmen all
Arm in thy cause at Ronald's call,
And mine eye proves that Knight
unknown
And the Brave Island Lord are
one—
Had then his suit been earlier made,
In his own name, with thee to aid,
(But that his plighted faith for-bade,)
I know not . . . . . But thy page
so near?—
This is no tale for menial's ear."

XXVI.

Still stood that page, as far apart
As the small cell would space
afford;
With dizzy eye and bursting heart,
He leant his weight on Bruce's
sword,
The monarch's mantle too he bore,
And drew the fold his visage o'er.
"Fear not for him—in murderous
strife,"
Said Bruce, "his warning saved my
life;,
Full seldom parts he from my side,
And in his silence I confide,
Since he can tell no tale again.
He is a boy of gentle strain,
And I have purposed he shall dwell
In Augustin the chaplain's cell,
And wait on thee, my Isabel.—
Mind not his tears; I've seen them
flow,
As in the thaw dissolves the snow.
'Tis a kind youth, but fanciful,
Unfit against the tide to pull,
And those that with the Bruce
would sail,
Must learn to strive with stream
and gale.—
But forward, gentle Isabel—
My answer for Lord Ronald tell."

XXVII.

"This answer be to Ronald given—
The heart he asks is fix'd on
heaven.
My love was like a summer flower,
That wither'd in the wintry hour,
THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

Born but of vanity and pride,
And with these sunny visions died.
If further press his suit—then say,
He should his plighted troth obey,
Troth plighted both with ring and word,
And sworn on crucifix and sword.—
Oh, shame thee, Robert! I have seen
Thou hast a woman’s guardian been!
Even in extremity’s dread hour,
When press’d on thee the Southern power,
And safety, to all human sight,
Was only found in rapid flight,
Thou heard’st a wretched female plain
In agony of travail-pain,
And thou didst bid thy little band
Upon the instant turn and stand,
And dare the worst the foe might do,
Rather than, like a knight untrue,
Leave to pursuers merciless
A woman in her last distress.
And wilt thou now deny thine aid
To an oppress’d and injured maid,
Even plead for Ronald’s perfidy,
And press his fickle faith on me?—
So witness Heaven, as true I vow,
Had I those earthly feelings now,
Which could my former bosom move
Ere taught to set its hopes above,
I’d spurn each proffer he could bring,
Till at my feet he laid the ring,
The ring and spousal contract both,
And fair acquittal of his oath,
By her who brooks his perjured scorn,
The ill-requited Maid of Lorn!"

XXVIII.

With sudden impulse forward sprung
The page, and on her neck he hung;
Then, recollected instantly,
His head he stoop’d, and bent his knee,
Kiss’d twice the hand of Isabel,
Arose, and sudden left the cell.—
The princess, loosen’d from his hold,
Blush’d angry at his bearing bold;
But good King Robert cried,
"Chafe not—by signs he speaks his mind,
He heard the plan my care design’d,
Nor could his transports hide.—
But, sister, now bethink thee well;
No easy choice the convent cell;
Trust, I shall play no tyrant part,
Either to force thy hand or heart,
Or suffer that Lord Ronald scorn,
Or wrong for thee, the Maid of Lorn.
But think,—not long the time has been,
That thou wert wont to sigh unseen,
And wouldst the ditties best approve,
That told some lay of hapless love.
Now are thy wishes in thy power,
And thou art bent on cloister bower!
O! if our Edward knew the change,
How would his busy satire range,
With many a sarcasm varied still
On woman’s wish, and woman’s will!"—

XXIX.

"Brother, I well believe," she said,
"Even so would Edward’s part be play’d.
Kindly in heart, in word severe,
A foe to thought, and grief, and fear,
He holds his humour uncontrol’d;
But thou art of another mould.
Say then to Ronald, as I say,
Unless before my feet he lay
The ring which bound the faith he swore,
By Edith freely yielded o’er,
He moves his suit to me no more.
Nor do I promise, even if now
He stood absolved of spousal vow,
That I would change my purpose made
To shelter me in holy shade.—
Brother, for little space, farewell!
To other duties warns the bell."—
XXX.

"Lost to the world," King Robert said,
When he had left the royal maid,
"Lost to the world by lot severe,
O what a gem lies buried here,
Nipp'd by misfortune's cruel frost,
The buds of fair affection lost!—
But what have I with love to do?
Far sterner cares my lot pursue.
—Pent in this isle we may not lie,
Nor would it long our wants supply.
Right opposite, the mainland towers
Of my own Turnberry court our powers—
—Might not my father's beadsman hoar,
Cuthbert, who dwells upon the shore,
Kindle a signal-flame, to show
The time propitious for the blow?
It shall be so—some friend shall bear
Our mandate with despatch and care;
—Edward shall find the messenger.
That fortress ours, the island fleet
May on the coast of Carrick meet.—
O Scotland! shall it e'er be mine
To wreak thy wrongs in battle-line,
To raise my victor-head, and see
Thy hills, thy dales, thy people free,—
That glance of bliss is all I crave,
Betwixt my labours and my grave!"
Then down the hill he slowly went,
Oft pausing on the steep descent,
And reach'd the spot where his bold train
Held rustic camp upon the plain.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

On fair Loch-Ranza stream'd the early day,
Thin wreaths of cottage-smoke are upward curl'd
From the lone hamlet, which her inland bay
And circling mountains sever from the world.

And there the fisherman his sail unfurl'd,
The goat-herd drove his kids to steep Ben-Ghoil,
Before the hut the dame her spindle twirl'd,
Courting the sunbeam as she pld her toil,—
For, wake where'er he may, Man wakes to care and toil.

But other duties call'd each convent maid,
Roused by the summons of the moss-grown bell;
Sung were the matins, and the mass was said,
And e'ry sister sought her separate cell,
Such was the rule, her rosary to tell.
And Isabel has knelt in lonely prayer;
The sunbeam, through the narrow lattice, fell
Upon the snowy neck and long dark hair,
As stoop'd her gent'le head in meek devotion there.

II.

She raised her eyes, that duty done,
When glanced upon the pavement-stone,
Gemm'd and enchased, a golden ring,
Bound to a scroll with silken string;
With few brief words inscribed to tell,
"This for the Lady Isabel."
Within, the writing farther bore,—
"'Twas with this ring his plighted word, he swore,
With this his promise I restore;
To her who can the heart command,
Well may I yield the plighted hand.
And O! for better fortune born,
Grudge not a passing sigh to mourn.
Her who was Edith once of Lorn!"
One single flash of glad surprise
Just glanced from Isabel's dark eyes,
But vanish'd in the blush of shame,
That, as its penance, instant came.
"O thought unworthy of my race!
Selfish, ungenerous, mean, and base,
A moment's throb of joy to own,
That rose upon her hopes o'erthrown!—
Thou pledge of vows too well believed,
Of man ingrate and maid deceived,
Think not thy lustre here shall gain
Another heart to hope in vain!
For thou shalt rest, thou tempting gaud,
Where worldly thoughts are overawed,
And worldly splendours sink debased."
Then by the cross the ring she placed.

III.

Next rose the thought,—its owner far,
How came it here through bolt and bar?—
But the dim lattice is ajar.—
She looks abroad, the morning dew,
A light short step had brush'd anew,
And there were foot-prints seen
On the carved buttress rising still,
Till on the mossy window-sill
Their track effaced the green.
The ivy twigs were torn and fray'd,
As if some climber's steps to aid.—
But who the hardy messenger,
Whose venturous path these signs infer?—
"Strange doubts are mine!—Mona, draw nigh;—
Nought 'scapes old Mona's curious eye—

What strangers, gentle mother, say,
Have sought these holy walls to-day?"—
"None, Lady, none of note or name;
Only your brother's foot-page came,
At peep of dawn—I pray'd him pass
To chapel where they said the mass;
But like an arrow he shot by,
And tears seem'd bursting from his eye."

IV.

The truth at once on Isabel,
As darted by a sunbeam, fell.—
"'Tis Edith's self!—her speechless woe,
Her form, her looks, the secret show!
—Instant, good Mona, to the bay,
And to my royal brother say,
I do conjure him seek my cell,
With that mute page he loves so well."—
"What! know'st thou not his warlike host
At break of day has left our coast?
My old eyes saw them from the tower.
At eve they couch'd in Greenwood bower,
At dawn a bugle signal, made
By their bold Lord, their ranks array'd;
Up sprung the spears through bush and tree,
No time for benedicite!
Like deer, that, rousing from their lair
Just shake the dewdrops from their hair,
And toss their armed crests aloft,
Such matins theirs!"—"Good mother, soft—
Where does my brother bend his way?"—
"As I have heard, for Brodick Bay,
Across the isle—of barks a score
Lie there, 'tis said, to waft them o'er,
On sudden news, to Carrick-shore."—
"If such their purpose, deep the need."
Said anxious Isabel, "of speed!
Call Father Augustin, good dame."—
The nun obey'd, the Father came.

V.

"Kind Father, hie without delay,
Across the hills to Brodick Bay.
This message to the Bruce be given;
I pray him, by his hopes of Heaven,
That, till he speak with me, he stay!
Or, if his haste brook no delay,
That he deliver, on my suit,
Into thy charge that stripling mute.
Thus prays his sister Isabel,
For causes more than she may tell—
Away, good father! and take heed,
That life and death are on thy speed."
His cowl the good old priest did on,
Took his piked staff and sandall'd shoon,
And, like a Palmer bent by eld,
O'er moss and moor his journey held.

VI.

Heavy and dull the foot of age,
And rugged was the pilgrimage;
But none was there beside, whose care
Might such important message bear.
Through birchen copse he wander'd slow,
Stunted and sapless, thin and low;
By many a mountain stream he pass'd,
From the tall cliffs in tumult cast,
Dashing to foam their waters dun,
And sparkling in the summer sun,
Round his gray head the wild curlew
In many a fearless circle flew.
O'er chasms he pass'd, where fractures wide
Craved wary eye and ample stride;
He cross'd his brow beside the stone
Where Druids erst heard victims groan,
And at the cairns upon the wild,
O'er many a heathen hero piled,
He breathed a timid prayer for those
Who died ere Shiloh's sun arose.
Beside Macfarlane's Cross he staid,
There told his hours within the shade,
And at the stream his thirst allay'd.
Thence onward journeying slowly still,
As evening closed he reach'd the hill,
Where, rising through the wood-land green,
Old Brodick's gothic towers were seen,
From Hastings, late their English lord,
Douglas had won them by the sword.
The sun that sunk behind the isle.
Now tinged them with a parting smile.

VII.

But though the beams of light decay,
'Twas bustle all in Brodick Bay.
The Bruce's followers crowd the shore,
And boats and barges some unmoor,
Some raise the sail, some seize the oar;
Their eyes oft turn'd where glimmer'd far
What might have seem'd an early star
On heaven's blue arch, save that its light
Was all too flickering, fierce, and bright.
Far distant in the south, the ray
Shone pale amid retiring day,
But as, on Carrick shore,
Dim seen in outline faintly blue,
The shades of evening closer drew,
It kindled more and more.
The monk's slow steps now press the sands,
And now amid a scene he stands,
Full strange to churchman's eye;
Warriors, who, arming for the fight,
Rivet and clasp their harness light,
And twinkling spears, and axes bright,
And helmets flashing high.
Oft, too, with unaccustomed ears,
A language much unmeet he hears, 396
While, hastening all on board,
As stormy as the swelling surge
That mix'd its roar, the leaders urge
Their followers to the ocean verge,
With many a haughty word.

VIII.

Through that wild throng the Father pass'd.
And reach'd the Royal Bruce at last.
He leant against a stranded boat,
That the approaching tide must float,
And counted every rippling wave,
As higher yet her side they lave,
And o'er the distant fire he eyed,
And closer yet his hauberkr tied,
And loosen'd in its sheath his brand.
Edward and Lennox were at hand,
Douglas and Roland had the care
The soldiers to the barks to share.—
The Monk approach'd and homage paid;
"And art thou come," King Robert said,
"So far to bless us ere we part?"—
—"My Liege, and with a loyal heart!—
But other charge I have to tell,"—
And spoke the best of Isabel.
—"Now by Saint Giles," the monarch cried,
"This moves me much!—this morn-
ing tide,
I sent the stripling to Saint Bride,
With my commandment there to bide."—
—"Thither he came the portress show'd,
But there, my Liege, made brief abode."—

IX.

"Twas I," said Edward, "found employ
Of nobler import for the boy.
Deep pondering in my anxious mind,
A fitting messenger to find,
To bear thy written mandate o'er
To Cuthbert on the Carrick shore,
I chanced, at early dawn, to pass
The chapel gate to snatch a mass.
I found the stripling on a tomb
Low-seated, weeping for the doom
That gave his youth to convent gloom.
I told my purpose, and his eyes
Flash'd joyful at the glad surprise.
He bounded to the skiff, the sail
Was spread before a prosperous gale,
And well my charge he hath obey'd; For, see! the ruddy signal mad,
That Clifford, with his merry-men all,
Guards carelessly our father's hall."—395

X.

"O wild of thought, and hard of heart!"
Answer'd the Monarch, "on a part
Of such deep danger to employ
A mute, an orphan, and a boy!
Unfit for flight, unfit for strife,
Without a tongue to plead for life!
Now, were my right restored by Heaven,
Edward, my crown I would have given,
Ere, thrust on such adventure wild,
I peril’d thus the helpless child.”—
—Offended half, and half submit,
“Brother and Liege, of blame like this,”
Edward replied, “I little dream’d.
A stranger messenger, I deem’d,
Might safest seek the beadsman’s cell,
Where all thy squires are known so well.
Noteless his presence, sharp his sense,
His imperfection his defence.
If seen, none can his errand guess;
If ta’en, his words no tale express—
Methinks, too, yonder beacon’s shine
Might expiate greater fault than mine.”—

“Rash,” said King Robert, “was the deed—
But it is done.—Embark with speed!—
Good Father, say to Isabel
How this unhappy chance befell;
If well we thrive on yonder shore,
Soon shall my care her page restore.
Our greeting to our sister bear,
And think of us in mass and prayer.”—

XI.

“Aye!” said the Priest, “while this poor hand
Can chalice raise or cross command,
While my old voice has accents’ use,
Can Augustin forget the Bruce!”
Then to his side Lord Ronald press’d,
And whisper’d, “Bear thou this request,
That when by Bruce’s side I light,
For Scotland’s crown and freedom’s right,
The princess grace her knight to bear
Some token of her favouring care;

It shall be shown where England’s best
May shrink to see it on my crest.
And for the boy—since weightier care
For royal Bruce the times prepare,
The helpless youth is Ronald’s charge,
His couch my plaid, his fence my targe.”
He ceased; for many an eager hand
Had urged the barges from the strand.
Their number was a score and ten,
They bore thrice threescore chosen men.
With such small force did Bruce at last
The die for death or empire cast!

XII.

Now on the darkening main afloat,
Ready and mann’d rocks every boat;
Beneath their oars the ocean’s might
Was dash’d to sparks of glimmering light.

• Faint and more faint, as off they bore,
Their armour glanced against the shore,
And, mingled with the dashing tide,
Their murmuring voices distant died.—

“God speed them!” said the Priest,
as dark
On distant billows glides each bark;
“O Heaven! when swords for freedom shine,
And monarch’s right, the cause is thine!
Edge doubly every patriot blow!
Beat down the banners of the foe!
And be it to the nations known,
That Victory is from God alone!”
As up the hill his path he drew,
He turn’d his blessings to renew,
Oft turn’d, till on the darken’d coast
All traces of their course were lost;
Then slowly bent to Brodick tower,
To shelter for the evening hour.
XIII.

In night the fairy prospects sink,
Where Cumray's isles with verdant link
Close the fair entrance of the Clyde;
The woods of Bute, no more descried,
Are gone—and on the placid sea
The rowsers ply their task with glee,
While hands that knightly lances bore
Impatient aid the labouring oar.
The half-faced moon shone dim and pale,
And glanced against the whiten'd sail;
But on that ruddy beacon-light
Each steersman kept the helm aright,
And oft, for such the King's command,
That all at once might reach the strand,
From boat to boat loud shout and hail
Warn'd them to crowd or slacken sail.
South and by west the armada bore,
And near at length the Carrick shore.
As less and less the distance grows,
High and more high the beacon rose;
The light, that seem'd a twinkling star,
Now blazed portentous, fierce, and far.
Dark-red the heaven above it glow'd,
Dark-red the sea beneath it flow'd,
Red rose the rocks on ocean's brim,
In blood-red light her islets swim;
Wild scream the dazzled sea-fowl gave,
Dropp'd from their crags on plashing wave.
The deer to distant covert drew,
The black-cock deem'd it day, and crew.
Like some tall castle given to flame,
O'er half the land the lustre came.
"Now, good my Liege, and brother sage,
What think ye of mine elfin page?"—

"Row on!" the noble King replied,
"We'll learn the truth whate'er betide;
Yet sure the beadsman and the child
Could ne'er have waked that beacon wild."

XIV.

With that the boats approach'd the land,
But Edward's grounded on the sand;
The eager Knight leap'd in the sea
Waist-deep, and first on shore was he,
Though every barge's hearty band
Contended which should gain the land,
When that strange light, which, seen afar,
Seem'd steady as the polar star,
Now, like a prophet's fiery chair,
Seem'd travelling the realms of air.
Wide o'er the sky the splendour glows,
As that portentous meteor rose;
Helm, axe, and falchion glitter'd bright,
And in the red and dusky light
His comrade's face each warrior saw,
Nor marvell'd it was pale with awe.
Then high in air the beams were lost,
And darkness sunk upon the coast.—Ronald to Heaven a prayer address'd,
And Douglas cross'd his dauntless breast;
"Saint James protect us!" Lennox cried,
But reckless Edward spoke aside,
"Deem'st thou, Kirkpatrick, in that flame
Red Conyn's angry spirit came,
Or would thy dauntless heart endure
Once more to make assurance sure?"—
"Hush!" said the Bruce, "we soon shall know,
If this be sorcerer's empty show,
Or stratagem of southern foe.
The moon shines out—upon the sand
Let every leader rank his band."
XV.

Faintly the moon's pale beams supply
That ruddy light's unnatural dye;
The dubious cold reflection lay
On the wet sands and quiet bay.
Beneath the rocks King Robert drew
His scatter'd files to order due,
Till shield compact and serried spear
In the cool light shone blue and clear.
Then down a path that sought the tide,
That speechless page was seen to glide;
He knelt him lowly on the sand,
And gave a scroll to Robert's hand.
"A torch," the Monarch cried,
"What, ho!
Now shall we Cuthbert's tidings know."
But evil news the letters bare,
The Clifford's force was strong and ware,
Augmented, too, that very morn,
By mountaineers who came with Lorn.
Long harrow'd by oppressor's hand,
Courage and faith had fled the land,
And over Carrick, dark and deep,
Had sunk dejection's iron sleep.—
Cuthbert had seen that beacon-flame,
Unwitting from what source it came.
Doubtful of perilous event,
Edward's mute messenger he sent,
If Bruce deceived should venture o'er,
To warn him from the fatal shore.

XVI.

As round the torch the leaders crowd,
Bruce read these chilling news aloud.
"What council, nobles, have we now?—
To ambush us in greenwood bough,
And take the chance which fate may send
To bring our enterprise to end,
Or shall we turn us to the main
As exiles, and embark again?"—
Answer'd fierce Edward, "Hap what may,
In Carrick, Carrick's Lord must stay.
I would not minstrels told the tale,
Wildfire or meteor made us quail."—
Answer'd the Douglas, "If my Liege
May win yon walls by storm or siege,
Then were each brave and patriot heart
Kindled of new for loyal part."—
Answer'd Lord Ronald, "Not for shame
Would I that aged Torquil came,
And found, for all our empty boast,
Without a blow we fled the coast.
I will not credit that this land,
So famed for warlike heart and hand,
The nurse of Wallace and of Bruce,
Will long with tyrants hold a truce."—
"Prove we our fate—the brunt we'll bide!"
So Boyd and Haye and Lennox cried;
So said, so vow'd, the leaders all;
So Bruce resolved: "And in my hall
Since the Bold Southern make their home,
The hour of payment soon shall come,
When with a rough and rugged host
Clifford may reckon to his cost.
Meantime, through well-known bosk and dell,
I'll lead where we may shelter well."

XVII.

Now ask you whence that wondrous light,
Whose fairy glow beguiled their sight?—
It ne'er was known yet gray-hair'd old
A superstitious credence held,
That never did a mortal hand
Wake its broad glare on Carrick strand;
Nay, and that on the self-same night
When Bruce cross’d o’er, still gleams the light.
Yearly it gleams o’er mount and moor,
And glittering wave and crimson’d shore—
But whether beam celestial, lent
By Heaven to aid the King’s descent,
Or fire hell-kindled from beneath,
To lure him to defeat and death,
Or were it but some meteor strange,
Of such as oft through midnight range,
Startling the traveller late and lone,
I know not—and it ne’er was known.

XVIII.

Now up the rocky pass they drew,
And Ronald, to his promise true,
Still made his arm the stripling’s stay
To aid him on the rugged way.
“Now cheer thee, simple Amadine!
Why throbs that silly heart of thine?”—
—That name the pirates to their slave
(In Gaelic ’tis the Changeling) gave—
“Dost thou not rest thee on my arm?
Do not my plaid-folds hold thee warm?
Hath not the wild bull’s treble hide
This targe for thee and me supplied?
Is not Clan-Colla’s sword of steel?
And, trembler, canst thou terror feel?
Cheer thee, and still that throbbing heart;
From Ronald’s guard thou shalt not part.”
—O! many a shaft, at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant!
And many a word, at random spoken,
May soothe or wound a heart that’s broken!

Half soothed, half grieved, half terrified,
Close drew the page to Ronald’s side;
A wild delirious thrill of joy
Was in that hour of agony,
As up the steepy pass he strove,
Fear, toil, and sorrow, lost in love!

XIX.

The barrier of that iron shore,
The rock’s steep ledge, is now climb’d o’er;
And from the castle’s distant wall,
From tower to tower the warders call:
The sound swings over land and sea,
And marks a watchful enemy.—
They gain’d the Chase, a wide domain
Left for the Castle’s sylvan reign,
(Seek not the scene—the axe, the plough,
The boor’s dull fence, have marr’d it now),
But then, soft swept in velvet green
The plain with many a glade between,
Whose tangled alleys far invade
The depth of the brown forest shade.
Here the tall fern obscured the lawn,
Fair shelter for the sportive fawn;
There, tufted close with copsewood green,
Was many a swelling hillock seen;
And all around was verdure meet
For pressure of the fairies’ feet.
The glossy holly loved the park,
The yew-tree lent its shadow dark,
And many an old oak, worn and bare,
With all its shiver’d boughs, was there.
Lovely between, the moonbeams fell
On lawn and hillock, glade and dell.
The gallant Monarch sigh’d to see
These glades so loved in childhood free.
Bethinking that, as outlaw now,
He ranged beneath the forest bough.
XX.

Fast o'er the moonlight Chase they sped.
Well knew the band that measured tread,
When, in retreat or in advance,
The serried warriors move at once;
And evil were the luck, if dawn
Descried them on the open lawn.
Copses they traverse, brooks they cross,
Strain up the bank and o'er the moss.
From the exhausted page's brow
Cold drops of toil are streaming now;
With effort faint and lengthen'd pause,
His weary step the stripling draws.
"Nay, droop not yet!" the warrior said;
"Come, let me give thee ease and aid!
Strong are mine arms, and little care
A weight so slight as thine to bear.—
What! wilt thou not?—capricious boy!
Then thine own limbs and strength employ.
Pass but this night, and pass thy care,
I'll place thee with a lady fair,
Where thou shalt tune thy lute to tell
How Ronald loves fair Isabel!"
Worn out, dishearten'd, and dismay'd,
Here Amadine let go the plaid;
His trembling limbs their aid refuse,
He sunk among the midnight dews!

XXI.

What may be done?—the night is gone—
The Bruce's band moves swiftly on—
Eternal shame, if at the brunt
Lord Ronald grace not battle's front!—

"See yonder oak, within whose trunk
Decay a darken'd cell hath sunk;
Enter, and rest thee there a space,
Wrap in my plaid thy limbs, thy face.
I will not be, believe me, far;
But must not quit the ranks of war.
Well will I mark the bosky bourne,
And soon, to guard thee hence, return.—
Nay, weep not so, thou simple boy!
But sleep in peace, and wake in joy."
In sylvan lodging close bestow'd,
He placed the page, and onward strode
With strength put forth, o'er moss and brook,
And soon the marching band o'er-took.

XXII.

Thus strangely left, long sobb'd and wept
The page, till, wearied out, he slept—
A rough voice waked his dream—
"Nay, here, Here by this thicket, pass'd the deer—
Beneath that oak old Ryno staid—
What have we here?—a Scottish plaid,
And in its folds a stripling laid?—
Come forth! thy name and business tell!—
What, silent?—then I guess thee well,
The spy that sought old Cuthbert's cell,
Wafted from Arran yester morn—
Come, comrades, we will straight return.
Our Lord may choose the rack should teach
To this young lurcher use of speech.
Thy bow-string, till I bind him fast."—
"Nay, but he weeps and stands aghast;
Unbound we'll lead him, fear it not;
'Tis a fair stripling, though a Scot.
The hunters to the castle sped,
And there the hapless captive led.

XXIII.

Stout Clifford in the castle-court
Prepared him for the morning sport;
And now with Lorn held deep discourse,
Now gave command for hound and horse.
War-steeds and palfreys paw'd the ground,
And many a deer-dog howl'd around.
To Amadine, Lorn's well-known word
Replying to that Southern Lord,
Mix'd with this clanging din, might seem
The phantasm of a fever'd dream.
The tone upon his ringing ears
Came like the sounds which fancy hears,
When in rude waves or roaring winds
Some words of woe the muser finds,
Until more loudly and more near,
Their speech arrests the page's ear.

XXIV.

"And was she thus," said Clifford,
"lost?
The priest should rue it to his cost!
What says the monk?"—"The holy Sire
Owns, that in masquer's quaint attire
She sought his skiff, disguised, unknown
To all except to him alone.
But, says the priest, a bark from Lorn
Laid them aboard that very morn,
And pirates seized her for their prey.
He proffer'd ransom-gold to pay,
And they agreed—but ere told o'er,
The winds blow loud, the billows roar;
They sever'd, and they met no more.
He deems—such tempest vex'd the coast—
Ship, crew, and fugitive, were lost.
So let it be, with the disgrace
And scandal of her lofty race!
Thrice better she had ne'er been born,
Than brought her infamy on Lorn!"

XXV.

Lord Clifford now the captive spied;—
"Whom, Herbert, hast thou there?" he cried.
"A spy we seized within the Chase,
A hollow oak his lurking place."—
"What tidings can the youth afford?"—
"He plays the mute."—"Then noose a cord—
Unless brave Lorn reverse the doom
For his plaid's sake."—"Clan-Colla's loom,"
Said Lorn, whose careless glances trace
Rather the vesture than the face,
"Clan-Colla's dames such tartans twine;
Wearer nor plaid claims care of mine.
Give him, if my advice you crave,
His own scathed oak; and let him wave
In air, unless, by terror wrung,
A frank confession find his tongue.—
Nor shall he die without his rite;
—Thou, Angus Roy, attend the sight,
And give Clan-Colla's dirge thy breath,
As they convey him to his death."—
"O brother! cruel to the last!"
Through the poor captive's bosom pass'd
The thought, but, to his purpose true,
He said not, though he sigh'd,
"Adieu!"
XXVI.

And will he keep his purpose still,
In sight of that last closing ill,
When one poor breath, one single word,
May freedom, safety, life, afford?
Can he resist the instinctive call,
For life that bids us barter all?

Love, strong as death, his heart hath steel'd,
His nerves hath strung—he will not yield!

Since that poor breath, that little word,
May yield Lord Ronald to the sword.—
Clan-Colla's dirge is pealing wide,
The griesly headsman's by his side;
Along the greenwood Chase they bend,
And now their march has ghastly end!

That old and shatter'd oak beneath,
They destine for the place of death.
—What thoughts are his, while all in vain
His eye for aid explores the plain?
What thoughts, while, with a dizzy ear,
He hears the death-prayer mutter'd near?

And must he die such death accurst,
Or will that bosom-secret burst?
Cold on his brow breaks terror's dew,
His trembling lips are livid blue;
The agony of parting life
Has nought to match that moment's strife!

XXVII.

But other witnesses are nigh,
Who mock at fear, and death defy!
Soon as the dire lament was play'd,
It waked the lurking ambuscade.

The Island Lord look'd forth, and spied
The cause, and loud in fury cried,
"By Heaven, they lead the page to die,
And mock me in his agony!
They shall abyé it!"—On his arm

Bruce laid strong grasp, "They shall not harm
A ringlet of the stripling's hair;
But, till I give the word, forbear.
—Douglas, lead fifty of our force
Up yonder hollow water-course,
And couch thee midway on the wold,
Between the flyers and their hold:
A spear above the copse display'd,
Be signal of the ambush made.
—Edward, with forty spearmen, straight
Through yonder copse approach the gate
And, when thou hear'st the battle-din,
Rush forward, and the passage win,
Secure the drawbridge—storm the port,
And man and guard the castle-court.—
The rest move slowly forth with me,
In shelter of the forest-tree,
Till Douglas at his post I see."

XXVIII.

Like war-horse eager to rush on,
Compell'd to wait the signal blown,
Hid, and scarce hid, by greenwood bough,
Trembling with rage, stands Ronald now,
And in his grasp his sword gleams blue,
Soon to be dyed with deadlier hue.—
Meanwhile the Bruce, with steady eye,
Sees the dark death-train moving by,
And, heedful, measures oft the space
The Douglas and his band must trace,
Ere they can reach their destined ground.
Now sinks the dirge's wailing sound,
Now cluster round the direful tree
That slow and solemn company,
While hymn mistuned and mutter'd prayer
The victim for his fate prepare.—
What glances o'er the greenwood shade?
The spear that marks the ambuscade:
"Now, noble Chief! I leave thee loose;
Upon them, Ronald!" said the Bruce.

XXIX.

"The Bruce, the Bruce!" to well-known cry
His native rocks and woods reply.
"The Bruce, the Bruce!" in that dread word
The knell of hundred deaths was heard.
The astonish'd Southern gazed at first,
Where the wild tempest was to burst,
That waked in that presaging name.
Before, behind, around it came!
Half-arm'd, surprised, on every side
Hemm'd in, hew'd down, they bled and died.
Deep in the ring the Bruce engaged,
And fierce Clan-Colla's broadsword raged!
Full soon the few who fought were sped,
Nor better was their lot who fled,
And met, 'mid terror's wild career,
The Douglas's redoubted spear!
Two hundred yeomen on that morn
The castle left, and none return.

XXX.

Not on their flight press'd Ronald's brand,
A gentler duty claim'd his hand.
He raised the page, where on the plain
His fear had sunk him with the slain:
And twice, that morn, surprise well near
Betray'd the secret kept by fear;
Once, when, with life returning, came
To the boy's lip Lord Ronald's name,
And hardly recollection drown'd
The accents in a murmuring sound;

And once, when scarce he could resist
The Chieftain's care to loose the vest,
Drawn tightly o'er his labouring breast.
But then the Bruce's bugle blew,
For martial work was yet to do.

XXXI.

A harder task fierce Edward waits.
Ere signal given, the castle gates
His fury had assail'd;
Such was his wonted reckless mood,
Yet desperate valour oft made good,
Even by its daring, venture rude,
Where prudence might have fail'd.
Upon the bridge his strength he threw,
And struck the iron chain in two,
By which its planks arose;
The warden next his axe's edge
Struck down upon the thresholdledge,
'Twixt door and post a ghastly wedge!
The gate they may not close.
Well fought the Southern in the fray,
Clifford and Lorn fought well that day,
But stubborn Edward forced his way
Against a hundred foes.
Loud came the cry, "The Bruce, the Bruce!"
No hope or in defence or truce,
Fresh combatants pour in;
Mad with success, and drunk with gore,
They drive the struggling foe before,
And ward on ward they win.
Unsparing was the vengeful sword,
And limbs were lopp'd and life-blood pour'd,
The cry of death and conflict roar'd,
And fearful was the din!
The startling horses plunged and flung,
Clamour'd the dogs till turrets rung,
Nor sunk the fearful cry,
Till not a foeman was there found
Alive, save those who on the ground
Groan'd in their agony!
XXXII.

The valiant Clifford is no more;
On Ronald's broadsword stream'd his gore.
But better hap had he of Lorn,
Who, by the foemen backward borne,
Yet gain'd with slender train the port,
Where lay his bark beneath the fort,
And cut the cable loose.

Short were his shrift in that debate,
That hour of fury and of fate,
If Lorn encounter'd Bruce!
Then long and loud the victor shout
From turret and from tower rung out,
The rugged vaults replied;
And from the donjon tower on high,
The men of Carrick may descry
Saint Andrew's cross, in blazonry
Of silver, waving wide!

XXXIII.

The Bruce hath won his father's hall!—
"Welcome, brave friends and comrades all,
Welcome to mirth and joy!
The first, the last, is welcome here,
From lord and chieftain, prince and peer,
To this poor speechless boy.
Great God! once more my sire's abode
Is mine—behold the floor I trode
In tottering infancy!
And there the vaulted arch, whose sound
Echo'd my joyous shout and bound
In boyhood, and that rung around
To youth's unthinking glee!
O first, to thee, all-gracious Heaven,
Then to my friends, my thanks be given!"—

He paused a space, his brow he cross'd—
Then on the board his sword he toss'd,
Yet steaming hot; with Southern gore
From hilt to point 'twas crimson'd o'er.

XXXIV.

"Bring here," he said, "the mazers four,
My noble fathers loved of yore.
Thrice let them circle round the board,
The pledge, fair Scotland's rights restored!
And he whose lip shall touch the wine,
Without a vow as true as mine,
To hold both lands and life at nought.
Until her freedom shall be bought,—
Be brand of a disloyal Scot,
And lasting infamy his lot!
Sit, gentle friends! our hour of glee
Is brief, we'll spend it joyously!
Blithest of all the sun's bright beams,
When betwixt storm and storm he gleams.
Well is our country's work begun,
But more, far more, must yet be done.
Speed messengers the country through;
Arouse old friends, and gather new;
Warn Lanark's knights to gird their mail,
Rouse the brave sons of Teviotdale,
Let Ettrick's archers sharp their darts,
The fairest forms, the truest hearts!
Call all, call all! from Reedswair-Path,
To the wild confines of Cape-Wrath;
Wide let the news through Scotland ring.
The Northern Eagle claps his wing!"
CANTO SIXTH.

I.

O who, that shared them, ever shall forget
The emotions of the spirit-rousing time,
When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
Early and late, at evening and at prime;
When the loud cannon and the merry chime
Hail’d news on news, as field on field was won,
When Hope, long doubtful, soar’d at length sublime,
And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
Watch’d Joy’s broad banner rise, to meet the rising sun!

O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid
A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears!
The heart-sick faintness of the hope delay’d,
The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears
That track’d with terror twenty rolling years,
All was forgot in that blithe jubilee!
Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
To sigh a thankful prayer, amid the glee,
That hail’d the Despot’s fall, and peace and liberty!

Such news o’er Scotland’s hills triumphant rode,
When ’gainst the invaders turn’d the battle’s scale,
When Bruce’s banner had victorious flow’d
O’er Loudoun’s mountain, and in Ury’s vale; 403
When English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale, 401
And fiery Edward routed stout St. John, 405
When Randolph’s war-cry swell’d the southern gale 406
And many a fortress, town, and tower, was won,
And Fame still sounded forth fresh deeds of glory done.

II.

Blithe tidings flew from baron’s tower,
To peasant’s cot, to forest-bower,
And waked the solitary cell,
Where lone Saint Bride’s recluses dwell.
Princess no more, fair Isabel,
A vot’ress of the order now,
Say, did the rule that bid thee wear
Dim veil and woollen scapulaire,
And reft thy locks of dark-brown hair,
That stern and rigid vow,
Did it condemn the transport high,
Which glisten’d in thy watery eye,
When minstrel or when palmer told
Each fresh exploit of Bruce the bold?—
And whose the lovely form, that shares
Thy anxious hopes, thy fears, thy prayers?
No sister she of convent shade;
So say these locks in lengthen’d braid,
So say the blushes and the sighs,
The tremors that unbidden rise,
When, mingled with the Bruce’s fame,
The brave Lord Ronald’s praises came.

III.

Believe, his father’s castle won,
And his bold enterprise begun,
That Bruce’s earliest cares restore
The speechless page to Arran’s shore:
Nor think that long the quaint disguise
Conceal'd her from a sister's eyes;
And sister-like in love they dwell
In that lone convent's silent cell.
There Bruce's slow assent allows
Fair Isabel the veil and vows;
And there, her sex's dress regain'd,
The lovely Maid of Lorn remain'd,
Unnamed, unknown, while Scotland far
Resounded with the din of war;
And many a month, and many a day,
In calm seclusion wore away.

IV.
These days, these months, to years had worn,
When tidings of high weight were borne
To that lone island's shore;
Of all the Scottish conquests made
By the First Edward's ruthless blade,
His son retain'd no more,
Northward of Tweed, but Stirling's towers,
Beleaguer'd by King Robert's powers;
And they took term of truce,\(^407\)
If England's King should not relieve
The siege ere John the Baptist's eve,
To yield them to the Bruce.
England was roused — on every side
Courier and post and herald hied,
To summon prince and peer,
At Berwick-bounds to meet their Liege,\(^498\)
Prepared to raise fair Stirling's siege,
With buckler, brand, and spear.
The term was nigh — they muster'd fast,
By beacon and by bugle-blast
Forth marshall'd for the field;
There rode each knight of noble name,
There England's hardy archers came,
The land they trode seem'd all on flame,
With banner, blade, and shield!
And not famed England's powers alone,
Renown'd in arms, the summons own;
For Neustria's knights obey'd,
Gascogne hath lent her horsemen good,
And Cambria, but of late subdued,
Sent forth her mountain-multip\(^{itude},\)\(^499\)
And Connoght pour'd from waste and wood
Her hundred tribes, whose sceptre rude
Dark Ethan O'Connor sway'd.\(^490\)

V.
Right to devoted Caledon
The storm of war rolls slowly on,
With menace deep and dread;
So the dark clouds, with gathering power,
Suspend awhile the threaten'd shower,
Till every peak and summit lower
Round the pale pilgrim's head.
Not with such pilgrim's startled eye
King Robert mark'd the tempest nigh!
Resolved the brunt to hide,
His royal summons warn'd the land,
That all who own'd their King's command
Should instant take the spear and brand,
To combat at his side.
O who may tell the sons of fame,
That at King Robert's bidding came,
To battle for the right!
From Cheviot to the shores of Ross,
From Solway-Sands to Marshal's-Moss,
All boun'd them for the fight.
Such news the royal courier tells,  
Who came to rouse dark Arran's dells;  
But farther tidings must the ear  
Of Isabel in secret hear.  
These in her cloister walk, next morn,  
Thus shared she with the Maid of Lorn.

VI.

"My Edith, can I tell how dear  
Our intercourse of hearts sincere  
Hath been to Isabel?—  
Judge then the sorrow of my heart,  
When I must say the words, We part!  
The cheerless convent-cell  
Was not, sweet maiden, made for thee;  
Go thou where thy vocation free  
On happier fortunes fell.  
Nor, Edith, judge thyself betray'd  
Though Robert knows that Lorn's high Maid  
And his poor silent page were one.  
Versed in the fickle heart of man,  
Earnest and anxious hath he look'd  
How Ronald's heart the message brook'd  
That gave him, with her last farewell,  
The charge of Sister Isabel,  
To think upon thy better right,  
And keep the faith his promise plight.  
Forgive him for thy sister's sake,  
At first if vain repinings wake—  
Long since that mood is gone;  
Now dwells he on thy juster claims,  
And oft his breach of faith he blames—  
Forgive him for thine own!"—

VII.

"No! never to Lord Ronald's bower  
Will I again as paramour"—  
"Nay, hush thee, too impatient maid,  
Until my final tale be said!—  
The good King Robert would engage  
Edith once more his elfin page,  
By her own heart, and her own eye,  
Her lover's penitence to try—  
Safe in his royal charge and free,  
Should such thy final purpose be,

Again unknown to seek the cell,  
And live and die with Isabel."  
Thus spoke the maid—King Robert's eye  
Might have some glance of policy;  
Dunstaffinage had the monarch ta'en,  
And Lorn had own'd King Robert's reign;  
Her brother had to England fled,  
And there in banishment was dead;  
Ample, through exile, death, and flight,  
O'er tower and land was Edith's right:  
This ample right o'er tower and land  
Were safe in Ronald's faithful hand.

VIII.

Embarrass'd eye and blushing cheek  
Pleasure and shame, and fear bespeak!  
Yet much the reasoning Edith made:  
"Her sister's faith she must upbraid,  
Who gave such secret, dark and dear,  
In council to another's ear.  
Why should she leave the peaceful cell?—  
How should she part with Isabel?—  
How wear that strange attire a'gen?—  
How risk herself 'midst martial men?—  
And how be guarded on the way?—  
At least she might entreat delay."  
Kind Isabel, with secret smile,  
Saw and forgave the maiden's wife,  
Reluctant to be thought to move  
At the first call of truant love.

IX.

Oh, blame her not!—when zephyrs wake,  
The aspen's trembling leaves must shake;  
When beams the sun through April's shower,  
It needs must bloom, the violet flower;  
And Love, howe'er the maiden strive,  
Must with reviving hope revive!
A thousand soft excuses came,
To plead his cause 'gainst virgin shame.
Pledged by their sires in earliest youth,
He had her plighted faith and truth—
Then, 'twas her Liege's strict command,
And she, beneath his royal hand,
A ward in person and in land:—
And, last, she was resolved to stay
Only brief space—one little day—
Close hidden in her safe disguise
From all, but most from Ronald's eyes—
But once to see him more!—nor blame
Her wish—to hear him name her name!—
Then, to bear back to solitude
The thought he had his falsehood rued!
But Isabel, who long had seen
Her pallid cheek and pensive mien,
And well herself the cause might know,
Though innocent, of Edith's woe,
Joy'd, generous, that revolting time
Gave means to expiate the crime.
High glow'd her bosom as she said,
"Well shall her sufferings be repaid!"
Now came the parting hour—a band
From Arran's mountains left the land;
Their chief, Fitz-Louis, had the care
The speechless Amadine to bear
To Bruce, with honour, as behoved
To page the monarch dearly loved.

X.
The King had deem'd the maiden bright
Should reach him long before the fight,
But storms and fate her course delay:
It was on eve of battle-day,
When o'er the Gillie's-hill she rode.
The landscape like a furnace glow'd,
And far as e'er the eye was borne,
The lances waved like autumn-corn.

In battles four beneath their eye,
The forces of King Robert lie.
And one below the hill was laid,
Reserved for rescue and for aid;
And three, advanced, form'd vaward-line,
'Twixt Bannock's brook and Ninian's shrine.
Detach'd was each, yet each so nigh
As well might mutual aid supply.
Beyond, the Southern host appears,
A boundless wilderness of spears.
Whose verge or rear the anxious eye
Strove far, but strove in vain, to spy.
Thick flashing in the evening beam,
Glaives, lances, bills, and banners gleam;
And where the heaven join'd with the hill,
Was distant armour flashing still,
So wide, so far, the boundless host seem'd in the blue horizon lost.

XI.
Down from the hill the maiden pass'd,
At the wild show of war aghast;
And traversed first the rearward host,
Reserved for aid where needed most.
The men of Carrick and of Ayr,
Lennox and Lanark, too, were there,
And all the western land;
With these the valiant of the Isles beneath their chieftains rank'd their files,
In many a plaided band.
There, in the centre, proudly raised,
The Bruce's royal standard blazed,
And there Lord Ronald's banner bore
A galley driven by sail and oar.
A wild, yet pleasing contrast, made
Warriors in mail and plate array'd,
With the plumed bonnet and the plaid
By these Hebrideans worn;
But O! unseen for three long years,
Dear was the garb of mountaineers
to the fair Maid of Lorn!
For one she look'd—but he was far
Busied amid the ranks of war—
Yet with affection's troubled eye
She mark'd his banner boldly fly,
Gave on the countless foe a glance,
And thought on battle's desperate chance.

XII.

To centre of the vaward-line
Fitz-Louis guided Amadine.
Arm'd all on foot, that host appears
A serried mass of glimmering spears.
There stood the Marchers' warlike band,
The warriors there of Lodon's land;
Ettrick and Liddell bent the yew,
A band of archers fierce, though few;
The men of Nith and Annan's vale,
And the bold spears of Teviotdale;—
The dauntless Douglas these obey,
And the young Stuart's gentle sway.
North-eastward by Saint Ninian's shrine,
Beneath fierce Randolph's charge, combine
The warriors whom the hardy North,
From Tay to Sutherland sent forth.
The rest of Scotland's war-array
With Eward Bruce to westward lay,
Where Bannock, with his broken bank
And deep ravine, protects their flank,
Behind them, screen'd by sheltering wood,
The gallant Keith, Lord Marshal, stood:
His men-at-arms bear mace and lance,
And plumes that wave, and helmets that glance.
Thus fair divided by the King,
Centre, and right, and left-ward wing;
Composed his front; nor distant far
Was strong reserve to aid the war.
And 'twas to front of this array,
Her guide and Edith made their way.

XIII.

Here must they pause; for, in advance
As far as one might pitch a lance,
The Monarch rode along the van,\textsuperscript{145}
The foe's approaching force to scan,
His line to marshal and to range,
And ranks to square, and fronts to change.
Alone he rode—from head to heel
Sheathed in his ready arms of steel;
Nor mounted yet on war-horse wight,
But, till more near the shock of fight,
Reining a palfrey low and light.
A diadem of gold was set
Above his bright steel basinet,
And clasp'd within its glittering twine
Was seen the glove of Argentine;
Truncheon or leading staff he lacks,
Bearing, instead, a battle-axe.
He ranged his soldiers for the fight,
Accoutred thus, in open sight
Of either host. — Three bowshots far,
Paused the deep front of England's war,
And rested on their arms awhile,
To close and rank their warlike file,
And hold high council, if that night
Should view the strife, or dawning light.

XIV.

O gay, yet tearful to behold,
Flashing with steel and rough with gold,
And bristled o'er with bills and spears,
With plumes and pennons waving fair,
Was that bright battle-front! for there
Rode England's King and peers:
And who, that saw that monarch ride,
His kingdom battered by his side,
Could then his direful doom foretell!—
Fair was his seat in knightly selle,
And in his sprightly eye was set
Some spark of the Plantagenet.
Though light and wandering was his glance,
It flash'd at sight of shield and lance.
"Know'st thou," he said, "De Argentine,
Yon knight who marshals thus their line?"

\textsuperscript{145} Some
High in his stirrups stood the King,
And gave his battle-axe the swing.
Right on De Boune, the whiles he pass'd,
Fell that stern dint—the first—the last!—
Such strength upon the blow was put,
The helmet crash'd like hazel-nut;
The axe-shaft, with its brazen clasp,
Was shiver'd to the gauntlet grasp,
Springs from the blow the startled horse,
Drops to the plain the lifeless corse;
—First of that fatal field, how soon,
How sudden, fell the fierce De Boune!

XVI.

One pitying glance the Monarch sped,
Where on the field his foe lay dead;
Then gently turn'd his palfrey's head,
And, pacing back his sober way,
Slowly he gain'd his own array.
There round their King the leaders crowd,
And blame his recklessness aloud,
That risk'd 'gainst each adventurous spear,
A life so valued and so dear.
His broken weapon's shaft survey'd
The King; and careless answer made,—
"My loss may pay my folly's tax;
I've broke my trusty battle-axe."
'Twas then Fitz-Louis, bending low,
Did Isabel's commission show;
Edith, disguised at distance stands,
And hides her blushes with her hands.
The Monarch's brow has changed its hue,
Away the gory axe he threw,
While to the seeming page he drew,
Clearing war's terrors from his eye,
Her hand with gentle ease he took,
With such a kind protecting look,
As to a weak and timid boy
Might speak, that elder brother's care
And elder brother's love were there.
"Fear not," he said, "young Amadine!"

Then whisper'd, "Still that name be thine.

Fate plays her wonted fantasy,
Kind Amadine, with thee and me,
And sends thee here in doubtful hour.
But soon we are beyond her power;
For on this chosen battle-plain,
Victor or vanquish'd, I remain.
Do thou to yonder hill repair;
The followers of our host are there,
And all who may not weapons bear.—

Fitz-Louis, have him in thy care.—
Joyful we meet, if all go well;
If not, in Arran's holy cell
Thou must take part with Isabel;
For brave Lord Ronald, too, hath sworn,
Not to regain the Maid of Lorn,
(The bliss on earth he covets most,) Would he forsake his battle-post,
Or shun the fortune that may fall
To Bruce, to Scotland, and to all.—
But, hark! some news these trumpets tell;
Forgive my haste—farewell!—farewell!"—
And in a lower voice he said,
"Be of good cheer—Farewell, sweet maid!"—

"My Liege," said noble Douglas
then,
"Earl Randolph has but one to ten:
Let me go forth his band to aid!"
—"Stir not. The error he hath made,
Let him amend it as he may;
I will not weaken mine array."
Then loudly rose the conflict cry,
And Douglas's brave heart swell'd high,—
"My Liege," he said, "with patient ear
I must not Moray's death-knell hear!"—
"Then go—but speed thee back again."—
Forth sprung the Douglas with his train:
But, when they won a rising hill,
He bade his followers hold them still.—
"See, see! the routed Southern fly!
The Earl hath won the victory.
Lo! where yon steeds run masterless,
His banner towers above the press.
Rein up; our presence would impair
The fame we come too late to share."
Back to the host the Douglas rode,
And soon glad tidings are abroad,
That, Dayncourt by stout Randolph slain,
His followers fled with loosen'd rein,—
That skirmish closed the busy day,
And couch'd in battle's prompt array,
Each army on their weapons lay.

It was a night of lovely June,
High rode in cloudless blue the moon,
Demayet smiled beneath her ray;
Old Stirling's towers arose in light,
And, twined in links of silver bright,
Her winding river lay.
Ah, gentle planet! other sight
Shall greet thee next returning night,
Of broken arms and banners tore,
And marshes dark with human gore,
And piles of slaughter'd men and horse,
And Forth that floats their frequent corse,
And many a wounded wretch to plain
Beneath thy silver light in vain!
But now, from England's host, the cry
Thou hear'st of wassail revelry,
While from the Scottish legions pass
The murmur'd prayer, the early mass!—
Here, numbers had presumption given;
There, bands o'er-match'd sought aid from Heaven.

**XX.**

On Gillie's-hill, whose height commands
The battle-field, fair Edith stands,
With serf and page unfit for war,
To eye the conflict from afar.
O! with what doubtfull agony
She sees the dawning tint the sky!—
Now on the Ochils gleams the sun,
And glistens now Demayet dun;
Is it the lark that carols shrill,
Is it the bittern's early hum?
No!—distant, but increasing still,
The trumpet's sound swells up the hill,
With the deep murmur of the drum.
Responsive from the Scottish host,
Pipe-clang and bugle sound were toss'd,  
His breast and brow each soldier cross'd,
And started from the ground;
Arm'd and array'd for instant fight,
Rose archer, spearman, squire and knight,
And in the pomp of battle bright
The dread battalia frown'd.

**XXI.**

Now onward, and in open view,
The countless ranks of England drew,

Dark rolling like the ocean-tide,
When the rough west hath chafed his pride,
And his deep roar sends challenge wide
To all that bars his way!
In front the gallant archers trode,
The men-at-arms behind them rode,
And midmost of the phalanx broad
The Monarch held his sway.
Beside him many a war-horse fumes,
Around him waves a sea of plumes,
Where many a knight in battle known,
And some who spurs had first braced on,
And deem'd that fight should see them won,
King Edward's hests obey,
De Argentine attends his side,
With stout De Valence, Pembroke's pride,
Selected champions from the train,
To wait upon his bridle-rein.
Upon the Scottish foe he gazed—
—At once, before his sight amazed,
Sunk banner, spear, and shield;
Each weapon-point is downward sent,
Each warrior to the ground is bent.
"The rebels, Argentine, repent!
For pardon they have kneel'd."—
"Aye!—but they bend to other powers,
And other pardon sue than ours!
See where yon bare-foot Abbot stands,
And blesses them with lifted hands!  
Upheld from the spot where they have kneel'd,
These men will die, or win the field.”—
—"Then prove we if they die or win!
Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin."

**XXII.**

Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,
Just as the Northern ranks arose,
Signal for England's archery
To halt and bend their bows.
Then stepp'd each yeoman forth a pace,
Glanced at the intervening space,
   And raised his left hand high;
To the right ear the cords they bring—
—At once ten thousand bow-strings ring,
   Ten thousand arrows fly!
Nor paused on the devoted Scot
The ceaseless fury of their shot;
   As fiercely and as fast,
Forth whistling came the gray-goose wing
As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
   Adown December's blast.
Nor mountain targe of tough bull-hide,
Nor lowland mail, that storm may bide;
Woe, woe to Scotland's banner'd pride,
   If the fell shower may last!
Upon the right, behind the wood,
Each by his steed dismounted, stood
   The Scottish chivalry;—
With foot in stirrup, hand on mane,
Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
His own keen heart, his eager train,
   Until the archers gain'd the plain;
   Then, "Mount, ye gallants free!"
He cried; and, vaulting from the ground,
His saddle every horseman found.
   On high their glittering crests they toss,
As springs the wild-fire from the moss;
The shield hangs down on every breast,
Each ready lance is in the rest,
   And loud shouts Edward Bruce,—
"Forth, Marshal! on the peasant foe!
We'll tame the terrors of their bow,
   And cut the bow-string loose!" 420

XXIII.

Then spurs were dash'd in chargers' flanks,
They rush'd among the archer ranks.
No spears were there the shock to let,
No stakes to turn the charge were set,
And how shall yeoman's armour slight,
Stand the long lance and mace of might?
Or what may their short swords avail,
'Gainst barbed horse and shirt of mail?
Amid their ranks the chargers sprung,
High o'er their heads the weapons swung,
And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
Give note of triumph and of rout!
Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
Their English hearts the strife made good.
Borne down at length on every side,
Compell'd to flight, they scatter wide.—
Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
And bound the deer of Dallom-Lee!
The broken bows of Bannock's shore
Shall in the Greenwood ring no more!
Round Wakefield's merry May-pole now,
The maids may twine the summer bough,
May northward look with longing glance,
For those that wont to lead the dance,
For the blithe archers look in vain!
Brooked, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
Pierced through, trode down, by thousands slain,
They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.

XXIV.

The King with scorn beheld their flight.
"Are these," he said, "our yeomen wight?
Each braggart churl could boast before,
Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore! 421
Fitter to plunder chase or park,
Than make a manly foe their mark.—
Forward, each gentleman and knight!
Let gentle blood show generous might,
And chivalry redeem the fight!"
To rightward of the wild affray,
The field show'd fair and level way;
But, in mid-space, the Bruce's care
Had bored the ground with many a pit,
With turf and brushwood hidden yet,
That form'd a ghastly snare.
Rushing, ten thousand horsemen came,
With spears in rest, and hearts on flame,
That panted for the shock!
With blazing crests and banners spread,
And trumpet-clang and clamour dread,
The wide plain thunder'd to their tread,
As far as Stirling rock.
Down! down! in headlong overthrow,
Horseman and horse, the foremost go,
Wild floundering on the field!
The first are in destruction's gorge,
Their followers wildly o'er them urge;—
The knightly helm and shield,
The mail, the acton, and the spear,
Strong hand, high heart, are useless here!
Loud from the mass confused the cry
Of dying warriors swells on high,
And steeds that shriek in agony! They came like mountain-torrent red,
That thunders o'er its rocky bed;
They broke like that same torrent's wave,
When swallow'd by a darksome cave.
Billows on billows burst and boil,
Maintaining still the stern turmoil,
And to their wild and tortured groan
Each adds new terrors of his own!

XXV.

Too strong in courage and in might
Was England yet, to yield the fight.
Her noblest all are here;
Names that to fear were never known,
Bold Norfolk's Earl De Brotherton,
And Oxford's famed De Vere.
There Gloster plied the bloody sword
And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford,
Bottetourt and Sanzavere,
Ross, Montague, and Mauley, came,
And Courtenay's pride, and Perey's fame—
Names known too well in Scotland's war,
At Falkirk, Methven, and Dunbar,
Blazed broader yet in after years,
At Cressy red and fell Poitiers.
Pembroke with these, and Argentine,
Brought up the rearward battle-line.
With caution o'er the ground they tread,
Slippery with blood and piled with dead,
Till hand to hand in battle set,
The bills with spears and axes met,
And, closing dark on every side,
Raged the full contest far and wide.
Then was the strength of Douglas tried,
Then proved was Randolph's generous pride,
And well did Stewart's actions grace
The sire of Scotland's royal race!
Firmly they kept their ground;
As firmly England onward press'd,
And down went many a noble crest,
And rent was many a valiant breast,
And Slaughter revel'd round.

XXVI.

Unflinching foot 'gainst foot was set,
Unceasing blow by blow was met;
The groans of those who fell
Were drown'd amid the shriller clang
That from the blades and harness rang,
And in the battle-yell.
Yet fast they fell, unheard, forgot,
Both Southron fierce and hardy Scot;
And O! amid that waste of life,
What various motives fired the strife!
The aspiring Noble bled for fame,
The Patriot for his country’s claim;
This Knight his youthful strength to prove,
And that to win his lady’s love;
Some fought from Russian thirst of blood,
From habit some, or hardihood.
But Russian stern, and soldier good,
The noble and the slave,
From various cause the same wild road,
On the same bloody morning, trode,
To that dark inn, the grave!

XXVII.
The tug of strife to flag begins,
Though neither loses yet nor wins.
High rides the sun, thick rolls the dust,
And feeble spreads the blow and thrust.
Douglas leans on his war-sword now,
And Randolph wipes his bloody brow;
Nor less had toil’d each Southern knight,
From morn till mid-day in the fight.
Strong Egremont for air must gasp,
Beauchamp undoes his visor-clasp,
And Montague must quit his spear,
And sinks thy falchion, bold De Vere!
The blows of Berkley fall less fast,
And gallant Pembroke’s bugle-blast
Hath lost its lively tone;
Sinks, Argentine, thy battle-word,
And Percy’s shout was fainter heard,
“My merry-men, fight on!”

XXVIII.
Bruce, with the pilot’s wary eye,
The slackening of the storm could spy.

“One effort more, and Scotland’s free!
Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
Is firm as Ailsa Rock;
Rush on with Highland sword and targe,
I, with my Carrick spearmen, charge;
Now, forward to the shock!”

At once the spears were forward thrown,
Against the sun the broadswords shone;
The pibroch lent its maddening tone,
And loud King Robert’s voice was known—
“Carrick, press on—they fail, they fail!
Press on, brave sons of Innisgail,
The foe is fainting fast!
Each strike for parent, child, and wife,
For Scotland, liberty, and life,—
The battle cannot last!”

XXIX.
The fresh and desperate onset bore
The foes three furlongs back and more,
Leaving their noblest in their gore.
Alone, De Argentine
Yet bears on high his red-cross shield,
Gathers the relics of the field,
Renews the ranks where they have reeled,
And still makes good the line.
Brief strife, but fierce,—his efforts raise
A bright but momentary blaze.
Fair Edith heard the Southron shout,
Beheld them turning from the rout,
Heard the wild call their trumpets sent,
In notes ’twixt triumph and lament.
That rallying force, combined anew,
Appear’d in her distracted view,
To hem the Islesmen round;
“O God! the combat they renew,
And is no rescue found!
And ye that look thus tamely on,
And see your native land o’erthrown,
O! are your hearts of flesh or stone?”
XXX.

The multitude that watch’d afar,
Rejected from the ranks of war,
Had not unmoved beheld the fight,
When strove the Bruce for Scotland’s right;
Each heart had caught the patriot spark,
Old man and stripling, priest and clerk,
Bondsman and serf; even female hand
Stretch’d to the hatchet or the brand;
But, when mute Amadine they heard
Give to their zeal his signal-word,
A frenzy fired the throng;
“Portents and miracles impeach
Our sloth—the dumb our duties teach—
And he that gives the mute his speech,
Can bid the weak be strong.
To us, as to our lords, are given
A native earth, a promised heaven;
To us, as to our lords, belongs
The vengeance for our nation’s wrongs;
The choice, ‘twixt death or freedom,
warms;
Our breasts as theirs—To arms, to arms!”
To arms they flew,—axe, club, or spear,—
And mimic ensigns high they rear,
And, like a banner’d host afar,
Bear down on England’s wearied war.

XXXI.

Already scatter’d o’er the plain,
Reproof, command, and counsel vain,
The rearward squadrons fled amain,
Or made but doubtful stay;—
But when they mark’d the seeming show
Of fresh and fierce and marshall’d foe,
The boldest broke array.

O give their hapless prince his due!
In vain the royal Edward threw
His person ’mid the spears,
Cried, “Fight!” to terror and despair,
Menaced, and wept, and tore his hair,
And cursed their caitiff fears;
Till Pembroke turn’d his bridle rein,
And forced him from the fatal plain.
With them rode Argentine, until
They gain’d the summit of the hill,
But quitted there the train:—
“In yonder field a gage I left,—
I must not live of fame bereft;
I needs must turn again.
Speed hence, my Liege, for on your trace
The fiery Douglas takes the chase,
I know his banner well.
God send my Sovereign joy and bliss,
And many a happier field than this!—
Once more, my Liege, farewell.”

XXXII.

Again he faced the battle-field,—
Wildly they fly, are slain, or yield.
“Now then,” he said, and couch’d his spear,
“My course is run, the goal is near;
One effort more, one brave career,
Must close this race of mine.”
Then in his stirrups rising high,
He shout’d loud his battle-cry,
“Saint James for Argentine!”
And, of the bold pursuers, four
The gallant knight from saddle bore;
But not unharm’d—a lance’s point
Has found his breastplate’s loosen’d joint,
An axe has raze’d his crest;
Yet still on Colonsay’s fierce lord,
Who press’d the chase with gory sword,
He rode with spear in rest,
And through his bloody tartans bored,
And through his gallant breast.
Nail’d to the earth, the mountaineer
Yet writhed him up against the spear,
And swung his broadsword round!
—Stirrup, steel-boot, and cuish gave way,
Beneath that blow's tremendous sway,
The blood gush'd from the wound;
And the grim Lord of Colonsay
Hath turn'd him on the ground,
And laugh'd in death-pang, that his blade
The mortal thrust so well repaid.

XXXIII.
Now toil'd the Bruce, the battle done,
To use his conquest boldly won;
And gave command for horse and spear
To press the Southron's scatter'd rear,
Nor let his broken force combine,
—When the war-cry of Argentine
Fell faintly on his ear;
"Save, save his life," he cried, "O save
The kind, the noble, and the brave!"
The squadrons round free passage gave,
The wounded knight drew near;
He raised his red-cross shield no more,
Helm, cuish, and breastplate stream'd with gore,
Yet, as he saw the King advance,
He strove even then to couch his lance—
The effort was in vain!
The spur-stroke fail'd to rouse the horse;
Wounded and weary, in mid course
He stumbled on the plain.
Then foremost was the generous Bruce
To raise his head, his helm to loose;—
"Lord Earl, the day is thine!
My Sovereign's charge, and adverse fate,
Have made our meeting all too late:
Yet this may Argentine,
As boon from ancient comrade, crave—
A Christian's mass, a soldier's grave."

XXXIV.
Bruce press'd his dying hand—its grasp
Kindly replied; but, in his clasp,
It stiffen'd and grew cold—
"And, O farewell!" the victor cried,
"Of chivalry the flower and pride,
The arm in battle bold,
The courteous mien, the noble race,
The stainless faith, the manly face!—
Bid Ninian's convent light their shrine,
For late-wake of De Argentine.
O'er better knight on death-bier laid,
Torch never gleam'd nor mass was said!"

XXXV.
Nor for De Argentine alone,
Through Ninian's church these torches shone,
And rose the death-prayer's awful tone.427
That yellow lustre glimmer'd pale,
On broken plate and bloodied mail,
Rent crest and shatter'd coronet,
Of Baron; Earl, and Banneret;
And the best names that England knew,
Claim'd in the death-prayer dismal due.
Yet mourn not, Land of Fame!
Though ne'er the leopards on thy shield
Retreated from so sad a field,
Since Norman William came.
Oft may thine annals justly boast
Of battles stern by Scotland lost;
Grudge not her victory,
When for her freeborn rights she strove;
Rights dear to all who freedom love,
To none so dear as thee!

XXXVI.
Turn we to Bruce, whose curious ear
Must from Fitz-Louis tidings hear;
With him, a hundred voices tell
Of prodigy and miracle,
"For the mute page had spoke."—
"Page!" said Fitz-Louis, "rather say,
An angel sent from realms of day,
To burst the English yoke.
I saw his plume and bonnet drop,
When hurrying from the mountain top;
A lovely brow, dark locks that wave,
To his bright eyes new lustre gave,
As if his pinions waved unseen!"—
"Spoke he with none?"—"With none—
one word
Burst when he saw the Island Lord,
Returning from the battle-field."—
"What answer made the Chief?"—"He kneel'd,
Durst not look up, but mutter'd low,
Some mingled sounds that none might know,
And greet'd him 'twixt joy and fear,
As being of superior sphere."

XXXVII.

Even upon Bannock's bloody plain,
Heap'd then with thousands of the slain,
'Mid victor monarch's musings high,
Mirth laugh'd in good King Robert's eye.
"And bore he such angelic air,
Such noble front, such waving hair?
Hath Ronald kneel'd to him?" he said,
"Then must we call the church to aid—
Our will be to the Abbot known,
Ere these strange news are wider blown,
To Cambuskenneth straight ye pass,
And deck the church for solemn mass,
To pay for high deliverance given,
A nation's thanks to gracious Heaven,
Let him array, besides, such state,
As should on princes' nuptials wait.

Ourself the cause, through fortune's spite,
That once broke short that spousal rite,
Ourself will grace, with early morn,
The bridal of the Maid of Lorn."

CONCLUSION.

Go forth, my Song, upon thy venturous way;
Go boldly forth; nor yet thy master blame,
Who chose no patron for his humble lay,
And grace thy numbers with no friendly name,
Whose partial zeal might smooth thy path to fame.
There was—and O! how many sorrows crowd
Into these two brief words!—there was a claim
By generous friendship given—had fate allow'd,
It well had bid thee rank the proudest of the proud!

All angel now—yet little less than all,
While still a pilgrim in our world below!
What 'vails it us that patience to recall,
Which hid its own to soothe all other woe;
What 'vails to tell, how Virtue's purest glow
Shone yet more lovely in a form so fair:
And, least of all, what 'vails the world should know,
That one poor garland, twined to deck thy hair,
Is hung upon thy hearse, to droop
And wither there!
THE FIELD OF WATERLOO:
A POEM.

Though Valois braved young Edward’s gentle hand,
And Albert rush’d on Henry’s way-worn band,
With Europe’s chosen sons, in arms renown’d,
Yet not on Vere’s bold archers long they look’d.
Nor Audley’s squires nor Mowbray’s yeomen brook’d,—
They saw their standard fall, and left their monarch bound.

TO
HER GRACE
THE
DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON,
PRINCESS OF WATERLOO,
&c. &c. &c.
THE FOLLOWING VERSES
ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be some apology for the imperfections of this poem, that it was composed hastily, and during a short tour upon the Continent, when the Author’s labours were liable to frequent interruption; but its best apology is, that it was written for the purpose of assisting the Waterloo Subscription.

Abbotsford, 1815.

I.

Fair Brussels, thou art far behind,
Though, lingering on the morning wind,
We yet may hear the hour
Peal’d over orchard and canal,
With voice prolong’d and measured fall,
From proud St. Michael’s tower;
Thy wood, dark Soignies, holds us now;
Where the tall beeches’ glossy bough
For many a league around,
With birch and darksome oak between,
Spreads deep and far a pathless screen,
Of tangled forest ground.
Stems planted close by stems defy
The adventurous foot—the curious eye
For access seeks in vain;
And the brown tapestry of leaves,
Strew’d on the blighted ground, receives
Nor sun, nor air, nor rain.
“Onward they press with weapons high.”
No opening glade dawns on our way,
No streamlet, glancing to the ray,
Our woodland path has cross’d;
And the straight causeway which we tread,
Prolongs a line of dull arcade,
Unvarying through the unvaried shade
Until in distance lost.

II.

A brighter, livelier scene succeeds;
In groups the scattering wood recedes,
Hedge-rows, and huts, and sunny meads,
And corn-fields, glance between;
The peasant, at his labour blithe,
Plies the hook’d staff and shorten’d scythe:
But when these ears were green,
Placed close within destruction’s scope,
Full little was that rustic’s hope
Their ripening to have seen!
And, lo, a hamlet and its fane:
Let not the gazer with disdain
Their architecture view;
For yonder rude ungraceful shrine,
And disproportion’d spire, are thine,
Immortal Waterloo!

III.

Fear not the heat, though full and high
The sun has scorch’d the autumn sky,
And scarce a forest straggler now
To shade us spreads a Greenwood bough;
These fields have seen a hotter day
Than e’er was fired by sunny ray.
Yet one mile on—yon shatter’d hedge
Crests the soft hill whose long smooth ridge
Looks on the field below,
And sinks so gently on the dale,
That not the folds of Beauty’s veil
In easier curves can flow.

Brief space from thence, the ground again
Ascending slowly from the plain,
Forms an opposing screen,
Which, with its crest of upland ground,
Shuts the horizon all around.
The soften’d vale between
Slopes smooth and fair for courser’s tread;
Not the most timid maid need dread
To give her snow-white palfrey head
On that wide stubble-ground;
Nor wood, nor tree, nor bush, are there,
Her course to intercept or scare,
Nor fosse nor fence are found,
Save where, from out her shatter’d bowers,
Rise Hougomont’s dismantled towers.

IV.

Now, see’st thou aught in this lone scene
Can tell of that which late hath been?
A stranger might reply,
“The bare extent of stubble-plain
Seems lately lighten’d of its grain;
And yonder sable tracks remain
Marks of the peasant’s ponderous wain,
When harvest-home was nigh.
On these broad spots of trampled ground,
Perchance the rustics danced such round
As Teniers loved to draw;
And where the earth seems scorch’d by flame,
To dress the homely feast they came,
And toil’d the kerchief’d village dame
Around her fire of straw.”

V.

So deem’st thou—so each mortal deems,
Of that which is from that which seems:
But other harvest here,
The ghastly harvest of the fray,  
The corpses of the slain.

VI.

Ay, look again—that line, so black  
And trampled, marks the bivouac,  
Yon deep-graved ruts the artillery's track,  
So often lost and won;  
And close beside, the harden'd mud  
Still shows where, fetlock-deep in blood,  
The fierce dragoon, through battle's flood,  
Dash'd the hot war-horse on.  
These spots of excavation tell  
The ravage of the bursting shell—  
And feel'st thou not the tainted steam,  
That recks against the sultry beam,  
From yonder trenched mound?  
The pestilential fumes declare  
That Carnage has replenish'd there  
Her garner-house profound.

VII.

Far other harvest-home and feast,  
Than claims the boor from scythe released,  
On these scorch'd fields were known!  
Death hover'd o'er the maddening rout,  
And, in the thrilling battle-shout,  
Sent for the bloody banquet out  
A summons of his own.  
Through rolling smoke the Demon's eye  
Could well each destined guest espy,  
Well could his ear in ecstasy  
Distinguish every tone  
That fill'd the chorus of the fray—  
From cannon-roar and trumpet-bray,  
From charging squadrons' wild hurra,  
From the wild clang that mark'd their way,—  
Down to the dying groan,  
And the last sob of life's decay.  
When breath was all but flown.

VIII.

Feast on, stern foe of mortal life,  
Feast on!—but think not that a strife,  
With such promiscuous carnage ripe,  
Protracted space may last;  
The deadly tug of war at length  
Must limits find in human strength,  
And cease when these are past.  
Vain hope!—that morn's o'erclouded sun  
Heard the wild shout of fight begun  
Ere he attain'd his height,  
And through the war-smoke, volumed high,  
Still peals that unremitting cry,  
Though now he stoops to night.  
For ten long hours of doubt and dread,  
Fresh succours from the extended head  
Of either hill the contest fed;  
Still down the slope they drew,  
The charge of columns paused not,  
Nor ceased the storm of shell and shot;  
For all that war could do  
Of skill and force was proved that day,  
And turn'd not yet the doubtful fray  
On bloody Waterloo.

IX.

Pale Brussels! then what thoughts were thine.  
When ceaseless from the distant line  
Continued thunders came!
Each burgher held his breath, to hear
These forerunners of havoc near,
   Of rapine and of flame.
What ghastly sights were thine to meet,
When rolling through thy stately street,
The wounded show'd their mangled plight
In token of the unfinish'd fight,
And from each anguish-laden wain
The blood-drops laid thy dust like rain!
How often in the distant drum
Heard'st thou the fell Invader come,
While Ruin, shouting to his band,
Shook high her torch and gory brand!—
Cheer thee, fair City! From yon stand,
Impatient, still his outstretch'd hand
   Points to his prey in vain,
While maddening in his eager mood,
And all unwont to be withstood,
He fires the fight again.

X.

"On! On!" was still his stern exclaim; 430
"Confront the battery's jaws of flame!
Rush on the levell'd gun!
My steel-clad cuirassiers, advance!
Each Hulan forward with his lance,
My Guard—my Chosen—charge for France
   France and Napoleon!"
Loud answer'd their acclamation shout,
Greeting the mandate which sent out
Their bravest and their best to dare
The fate their leader shunn'd to share. 431

But He, his country's sword and shield,
Still in the battle-front reveal'd,
Where danger fiercest swept the field,
Came like a beam of light,

In action prompt, in sentence brief—
"Soldiers, stand firm," exclaim'd the Chief,
"England shall tell the fight!" 432

XI.

On came the whirlwind—like the last
But fiercest sweep of tempest-blast—
On came the whirlwind—steel- gleams broke
Like lightning through the rolling smoke;
   The war was waked anew,
Three hundred cannon-months roar'd loud,
And from their throats, with flash and cloud,
   Their showers of iron threw.
Beneath their fire, in full career,
Rush'd on the ponderous cuirassier,
The lancer couch'd his ruthless spear,
And hurrying as to havoc near,
   The cohorts' eagles flew.
In one dark torrent, broad and strong,
The advancing onset roll'd along,
Forth harbinger'd by fierce acclaim,
That, from the shroud of smoke and flame,
Peal'd wildly the imperial name.

XII.

But on the British heart were lost
The terrors of the charging host;
For not an eye the storm that view'd
Changed its proud glance of fortitude,
Nor was one forward footstep staid,
As dropp'd the dying and the dead.
Fast as their ranks the thunders tear,
Fast they renew'd each serried square;
And on the wounded and the slain
Closed their diminish'd files again,
Till from their line scarce spear's lengths three
Emerging from the smoke they see
Helmet, and plume, and panoply,—
   Then waked their fire at once!
Each musketeer’s revolving knell,
As fast, as regularly fell,
As when they practise to display
Their discipline on festal day.
Then down went helm and lance,
Down were the eagle banners sent,
Down reeling steeds and riders went,
Corslets were pierced, and pennons rent;
And, to augment the fray,
Wheel’d full against their staggering flanks,
The English horsemen’s foaming ranks
Forced their resistless way.
Then to the musket-knell succeeds
The clash of swords— the neigh of steeds—
As plies the smith his clanging trade,
Against the cuirass rang the blade;
And while amid their close array
The well-served cannon rent their way,
And while amid their scatter’d band
Raged the fierce rider’s bloody brand,
Recoil’d in common rout and fear,
Lancer and guard and cuirassier,
Horsemen and foot—a mingled host,
Their leaders fall’n, their standards lost.

XIII.

Then, Wellington! thy piercing eye
This crisis caught of destiny—
The British host had stood
That morn ’gainst charge of sword and lance
As their own ocean-rocks hold stance,
But when thy voice had said,
“Advance!”
They were their ocean’s flood.—
O Thou, whose inauspicious aim
Hath wrought thy host this hour of shame,
Think’st thou thy broken bands will bide
The terrors of yon rushing tide?
Or will thy chosen brook to feel
The British shock of level’d steel,
Or dost thou turn thine eye
Where coming squadrons gleam afar,
And fresher thunders wake the war,
And other standards fly?
Think not that in yon columns, file
Thy conquering troops from Distant Dyle—
Is Blucher yet unknown?
Or dwells not in thy memory still,
(Heard frequent in thine hour of ill,)
What notes of hate and vengeance
thrill
In Prussia’s trumpet tone?—
What yet remains?— shall it be thine
To head the relics of thy line
In one dread effort more?—
The Roman lore thy leisure loved,
And thou canst tell what fortune proved
That Chieftain, who, of yore,
Ambition’s dizzy paths essay’d,
And with the gladiators’ aid
For empire enterprised—
He stood the cast his rashness play’d,
Left not the victims he had made,
Dug his red grave with his own blade
And on the field he lost was laid,
Abhor’d—but not despised.

XIV.

But if revolves thy fainter thought
On safety— howsoever bought,—
Then turn thy fearful rein and ride,
Though twice ten thousand men have died
On this eventful day,
To gild the military fame
Which thou, for life, in traffic tame
Wilt barter thus away.
Shall future ages tell this tale
Of inconsistence faint and frail?
And art thou He of Lodi’s bridge,
Marengo’s field, and Wagram’s ridge!
Or is thy soul like mountain-tide,
That, swell’d by winter storm and shower,
Rolls down in turbulence of power,
A torrent fierce and wide;
Reft of these aids, a rill obscure,
Shrinking unnoticed, mean and poor,
   Whose channel shows display'd
The wrecks of its impetuous course,
But not one symptom of the force
   By which these wrecks were made!

XV.

Spur on thy way!—since now thine ear
Has brook'd thy veterans' wish to hear,
   Who, as thy flight they eyed,
Exclaim'd,—while tears of anguish came,
Wring forth by pride, and rage, and shame,—
   "O, that he had but died!"
But yet, to sum this hour of ill,
Look, ere thou leavest the fatal hill,
   Back on yon broken ranks—
Upon whose wild confusion gleams
The moon, as on the troubled streams
   When rivers break their banks,
And, to the ruin'd peasant's eye,
Objects half seen roll swiftly by,
   Down the dread current hurl'd—
So mingle banner, wain, and gun,
Where the tumultuous flight rolls on
Of warriors, who, when morn begun,
   Defied a banded world.

XVI.

List—frequent to the hurrying rout,
The stern pursuers' vengeful shout
Tells, that upon their broken rear
Rages the Prussian's bloody spear.
   So fell a shriek was none,
When Beresina's icy flood
Redden'd and thaw'd with flame and blood,
And, pressing on thy desperate way,
   Raised oft and long their wild hurra,
The children of the Don.
Thine ear no yell of horror e'ft
So ominous, when, all bereft
   Of aid, the valiant Poleack left—
Ay, left by thee—found soldier's grave.
In Leipsic's corpse-encumber'd wave.

Fate, in those various perils past,
Reserved thee still some future cast;
On the dread die thou now hast thrown,
Hangs not a single field alone,
Nor one campaign—thy martial fame,
Thy empire, dynasty, and name,
   Have felt the final stroke;
And now, o'er thy devoted head
The last stern vial's wrath is shed,
   The last dread seal is broke.

XVII.

Since live thou wilt—refuse not now
Before these demagogues to bow,
Late objects of thy scorn and hate,
Who shall thy once imperial fate
Make wordy theme of vain debate.—
   Or shall we say, thou stoop'd less low
In seeking refuge from the foe,
Against whose heart, in prosperous life,
Thine hand hath ever held the knife?
   Such homage hath been paid
By Roman and by Grecian voice,
And there were honour in the choice,
   If it were freely made.
Then safely come—in one so low,—
   So lost,—we cannot own a foe;
Though dear experience bid us end,
In thee we ne'er can hail a friend.—
   Come, howsoe'er—but do not hide
Close in thy heart that germ of pride,
Erewhile, by gifted bard espied,
   That "yet imperial hope;"
Think not that for a fresh rebound,
To raise ambition from the ground,
   We yield thee means or scope.
In safety come—but ne'er again
Hold type of independent reign;
   No islet calls thee lord,
We leave thee no confederate band,
   No symbol of thy lost command,
To be a dagger in the hand
   From which we wrench'd the sword.
XVIII.

Yet, even in yon sequester’d spot,
May worthier conquest be thy lot
Than yet thy life has known;
Conquest, unbought by blood or
harm,
That needs nor foreign aid nor arm,
A triumph all thine own.
Such waits thee when thou shalt
control
Those passions wild, that stubborn
soul,
That marr’d thy prosperous
scene:—
Hear this—from no unmoved heart,
Which sighs, comparing what thou
ART
With what thou MIGHT’ST HAVE
been!

XIX.

Thou, too, whose deeds of fame re-
new’d
Bankrupt a nation’s gratitude,
To thine own noble heart must owe
More than the meed she can bestow.
For not a people’s just acclaim,
Not the full hail of Europe’s fame,
Thy Prince’s smiles, thy State’s decree
The ducal rank, the garter’d knee,
Not these such pure delight afford
As that, when hanging up thy sword,
Well may’st thou think, “This
honest steel
Was ever drawn for public weal;
And, such was rightful Heaven’s
decree,
Ne’er sheathed unless with victory!”

XX.

Look forth, once more, with soften’d
heart,
Ere from the field of fame we part;
Triumph and Sorrow border near,
And joy oft melts into a tear.
Alas! what links of love that morn
Has War’s rude hand asunder torn!
For ne’er was field so sternly fought,
And ne’er was conquest dearer
bought.

Here piled in common slaughter
sleep
Those whom affection long shall
weep:
Here rests the sire, that ne’er shall
strain
His orphans to his heart again;
The son, whom, on his native shore,
The parent’s voice shall bless no
more;
The bridegroom, who has hardly
press’d
His blushing consort to his breast;
The husband, whom through many
a year
Long love and mutual faith endear.
Thou canst not name one tender tie,
But here dissolved its relics lie!
O! when thou see’st some mourner’s
veil
Shroud her thin form and visage
pale,
Or mark’st the Matron’s bursting
tears
Stream when the stricken drum she
hears;
Or see’st how manlier grief, sup-
press’d,
Is labouring in a father’s breast,—
With no enquiry vain pursue
The cause, but think on Waterloo!

XXI.

Period of honour as of woes,
What bright careers ’twas thine to
close!—
Mark’d on thy roll of blood what
names
To Briton’s memory, and to Fame’s,
Laid there their last immortal claims!
Thou saw’st in seas of gore expire
Redoubted Picton’s soul of fire—
Saw’st in the mingled carnage lie
All that of Ponsonby could die—
De LANCEY change Love’s bridal-
wreath,
For laurels from the hand of Death—
Saw’st gallant MILLER’s failing eye
Still bent where Albion’s banners fly,
And CAMERON, in the shock of steel,
Die like the offspring of Lochiel;
And generous Gordon, 'mid the strife,
Fall while he watch'd his leader's life,—
Ah! though her guardian angel's shield
Fenced Britain's hero through the field,
Fate not the less her power made known,
Through his friends' hearts to pierce his own!

XXII.

Forgive, brave Dead, the imperfect lay:
Who may your names, your numbers, say?
What high-strung harp, what lofty line,
To each the dear-earn'd praise assign,
From high-born chiefs of martial fame
To the poor soldier's lowlier name?
Lightly ye rose that dawning-day,
From your cold couch of swamp and clay,
To fill, before the sun was low,
The bed that morning cannot know.—
Oft may the tear the green sod steep,
And sacred be the heroes' sleep,
Till time shall cease to run;
And ne'er beside their noble grave,
May Briton pass and fail to crave
A blessing on the fallen brave
Who fought with Wellington!

XXIII.

Farewell, sad Field: whose blighted face
Wears desolation's withering trace;
Long shall my memory retain
Thy shatter'd huts and trampled grain,
With every mark of martial wrong,
That scathe thy towers, fair Hougomont!

Yet though thy garden's green arcade
The marksman's fatal post was made,
Though on thy shatter'd beeches fell
The blended rage of shot and shell,
Though from thy blacken'd portals torn,
Their fall thy blighted fruit-trees mourn,
Has not such havoc bought a name
Immortal in the rolls of fame?
Yes—Agincourt may be forgot,
And Cressy be an unknown spot,
And Blenheim's name be new;
But still in story and in song,
Shall live the towers of Hougomont
And Field of Waterloo.

CONCLUSION.

Stern tide of human Time! that know'st not rest,
But, sweeping from the cradle to the tomb,
Bear'st ever downward on thy dusky breast
Successive generations to their doom;
While thy capacious stream has equal room
For the gay bark where Pleasure's streamers sport,
And for the prison-ship of guilt and gloom,
The fisher-skiff, and barge that bears a court,
Still waiting onward all to one dark silent port;—

Stern tide of Time! through what mysterious change
Of hope and fear have our frail barks been driven!
For ne'er, before, vicissitude so strange
Was to one race of Adam's offspring given.
And sure such varied change of sea and heaven,
Such unexpected bursts of joy and woe,
Such fearful strife as that where we have striven,
Succeeding ages ne'er again shall know,
Until the awful term when Thou shalt cease to flow!

Well hast thou stood, my Country!
— the brave fight
Hast well maintain'd through good report and ill;
In thy just cause and in thy native might,
And in Heaven's grace and justice constant still;
Whether the banded prowess, strength, and skill
Of half the world against thee stood array'd,
Or when, with better views and freer will,
Beside thee Europe's noblest drew the blade,
Each emulous in arms the Ocean Queen to aid.

Well art thou now repaid—though slowly rose,
And struggled long with mists thy blaze of fame,
While like the dawn that in the orient glows
On the broad wave its earlier lustre came;
Then eastern Egypt saw the growing flame,
And Maida's myrtles gleam'd beneath its ray,
Where first the soldier, stung with generous shame

Rivall'd the heroes of the wat'ry way,
And wash'd in foemen's gore unjust reproach away.

Now, Island Empress, wave thy crest on high,
And bid the banner of thy Patron flow,
Gallant Saint George, the flower of Chivalry,
For thou hast faced, like him, a dragon foe,
And rescued innocence from overthrow,
And trampled down, like him, tyrannic might,
And to the gazing world mayst proudly show
The chosen emblem of thy sainted Knight,
Who quell'd devouring pride, and vindicated right.

Yet 'mid the confidence of just renown,
Renown dear-bought, but dearest thus acquired,
Write, Britain, write the moral lesson down:
'Tis not alone the heart with valour fired,
The discipline so dreaded and admired,
In many a field of bloody conquest known;
— Such may by fame be lured, by gold be hired—
'Tis constancy in the good cause alone,
Best justifies the meed thy valiant sons have won.
HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS:
A POEM IN SIX CANTOS.

INTRODUCTION.

There is a mood of mind, we all have known
On drowsy eve, or dark and low'ring day,
When the tired spirits lose their sprightly tone,
And nought can chase the lingering hours away.
Dull on our soul falls Fancy's dazzling ray,
And wisdom holds his steadier torch in vain,
Obscured the painting seems, mistuned the lay,
Nor dare we of our listless load complain,
For who for sympathy may seek that cannot tell of pain?

The jolly sportsman knows such dreariness,
When bursts in deluge the autumnal rain,
Clouding that morn which threats the heath-cock's brood;
Of such, in summer's drought, the anglers plain,
Who hope the soft mild southern shower in vain;
But, more than all, the discontented fair,
Whom father stern, and stermer aunt, restrain
From county-ball, or race occurring rare,
While all her friends around their vestments gay prepare.

Ennui!—or, as our mothers call'd thee, Spleen!
To thee we owe full many a rare device;

Thine is the sheaf of painted cards, I ween,
The rolling billiard-ball, the rattling dice,
The turning-lathe for framing gimcrack nice;
The amateur's blotch'd pallet thou mayst claim,
Retort, and air-pump, threatening frogs and mice,
(Murders disguised by philosophic name,)
And much of trifling grave, and much of buxom game.

Then of the books, to catch thy drowsy glance
Compiled, what bard the catalogue may quote!
Plays, poems, novels, never read but once;—
But not of such the tale fair Edgeworth wrote,
That bears thy name, and is thine antidote;
And not of such the strain my Thomson sung,
Dilicious dreams inspiring by his note,
What time to Indolence his harp he strung;—
Oh! might my lay be rank'd that happier list among!

Each hath his refuge whom thy cares assail.
For me, I love my study-fire to trim,
And con right vacantly some idle tale,
Displaying on the couch each listless limb,
CANTO FIRST.
I.
List to the valorous deeds that were done
By Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind’s son!

COUNT WITIKIND CAME OF A REGAL STRAIN,
And roved with his Norsemen the land and the main.
Woe to the realms which he coasted! for there
Was shedding of blood, and rending of hair,
Rape of maiden, and slaughter of priest,
Gathering of ravens and wolves to the feast:
When he hoisted his standard black,
Before him was battle, behind him wrack,
And he burn'd the churches, that heathen Dane,
To light his hand to their barks again.

II.
On Erin’s shores was his outrage known,
The winds of France had his banners blown;
Little was there to plunder, yet still
His pirates had foray’d on Scottish hill:
But upon merry England’s coast
More frequent he sail’d, for he won the most.
So wide and so far his ravage they knew,
If a sail but gleam’d white ‘gainst the welkin blue,
Trumpet and bugle to arms did call,
Burghers hasten’d to man the wall,
Peasants fled inland his fury to scape,
Beacons were lighted on headland and cape,
Bells were toll’d out, and aye as they rung
Fearful and faintly the gray brothers sung,
"Bless us, St. Mary, from flood and from fire,
From famine and pest, and Count Witikind’s ire!"
III.

He liked the wealth of fair England so well,
That he sought in her bosom as native to dwell.
He enter'd the Humber in fearful hour,
And disembark'd with his Danish power.
Three Earls came against him with all their train,—
Two hath he taken, and one hath he slain.
Count Witikind left the Humber's rich strand,
And he wasted and warr'd in Northumberland.
But the Saxon King was a sire in age,
Weak in battle, in council sage;
Peace of that heathen leader he sought,
Gifts he gave, and quiet he bought;
And the Count took upon him the peaceable style
Of a vassal and liegeman of Britain's broad isle.

IV.

Time will rust the sharpest sword,
Time will consume the strongest cord;
That which moulders hemp and steel,
Mortal arm and nerve must feel.
Of the Danish band, whom Count Witikind led,
Many wax'd aged, and many were dead:
Himself found his armour full weighty to bear,
Wrinkled his brows grew, and hoary his hair;
He lean'd on a staff, when his step went abroad,
And patient his palfrey, when steed he bestrode.
As he grew feebler, his wildness ceased,
He made himself peace with prelate and priest,—
Made his peace, and, stooping his head,
Patiently listed the counsel they said:
Saint Cuthbert's Bishop was holy and grave,
Wise and good was the counsel he gave.

V.

"Thou hast murder'd, robb'd, and spoil'd,
Time it is thy poor soul were assoil'd;
Priests didst thou slay, and churches burn,
Time it is now to repentance to turn;
Fiends hast thou worshipp'd, with fiendish rite,
Leave now the darkness, and wend into light:
O! while life and space are given,
Turn thee yet, and think of Heaven!"
That stern old heathen his head he raised,
And on the good prelate he stedfastly gazed;
"Give me broad lands on the Wear and the Tyne,
My faith I will leave, and I'll cleave unto thine."

VI.

Broad lands he gave him on Tyne and Wear,
To be held of the church by bridle and spear;
Part of Monkwearmouth, of Tyne-dale part,
To better his will, and to soften his heart:
Count Witikind was a joyful man,
Less for the faith than the lands that he wan.
The high church of Durham is dress'd for the day,
The clergy are rank'd in their solemn array:
There came the Count, in a bear-skin warm,
Leaning on Hilda his concubine's arm.
He kneel'd before Saint Cuthbert's shrine,
With patience unwonted at rites divine;
He abjured the gods of heathen race,
And he bent his head at the font of grace.
But such was the grisly old prose-lyte's look,
That the priest who baptized him grew pale and shook;
And the old monks mutter'd beneath their hood,
"Of a stem so stubborn can never spring good!"

VII.
Up then arose that grim convertite,
Homeward he lied him when ended the rite:
The Prelate in honour will with him ride,
And feast in his castle on Tyne's fair side.
Banners and bannerols danced in the wind,
Monks rode before them, and spear-men behind;
Onward they pass'd, till fairly did shine
Pennon and cross on the bosom of Tyne;
And full in front did that fortress lower,
In darksome strength with its buttress and tower:
At the castle gate was young Harold there,
Count Witikind's only offspring and heir.

VIII.
Young Harold was fear'd for his hardihood,
His strength of frame, and his fury of mood.
Rude he was and wild to behold,
Wore neither collar nor bracelet of gold,
Cap of vair nor rich array,
Such as should grace that festal day:
His doublet of bull's hide was all unbraced,
Uncover'd his head, and his sandal unlaced:
His shaggy black locks on his brow hung low,
And his eyes glanced through them a swarthy glow;
A Danish club in his hand he bore,
The spikes were clotted with recent gore;
At his back a she-wolf, and her wolf-cubs twain,
In the dangerous chase that morning slain.
Rude was the greeting his father he made,
None to the Bishop,—while thus he said:—

IX.
"What priest-led hypocrite art thou,
With thy humbled look and thy monkish brow,
Like a shaveling who studies to cheat his vow?
Can'st thou be Witikind the Waster known,
Royal Eric's fearless son,
Haughty Gunhilda's haughtier lord,
Who won his bride by the axe and sword;
From the shrine of St. Peter the chalice who tore,
And melted to bracelets for Freya and Thor;
With one blow of his gauntlet who burst the skull,
Before Odin's stone, of the Mountain Bull?
Then ye worshipp'd with rites that to war-gods belong,
With the deed of the brave, and the blow of the strong;
And now, in thine age to dotage sunk,
Wilt thou patter thy crimes to a shaven monk,—
Lay down thy mail-shirt for clothing of hair,—
Fasting and scourge, like a slave, wilt thou bear?"
Or, at best, be admitted in slothful bower
To batten with priest and with paramour?
Oh! out upon thine endless shame!
Each Scald's high harp shalt blast thy fame,
And thy son will refuse thee a father's name!"

X.
Ireful wax'd old Witikind's look,
His faltering voice with fury shook:
"Hear me, Harold of harden'd heart!
Stubborn and wilful ever thou wert.
Thine outrage insane I command thee to cease,
Fear my wrath and remain at peace:
Just is the debt of repentance I've paid,
Richly the church has a recompense made,
And the truth of her doctrines I prove with my blade,
But reckoning to none of my actions I owe,
And least to my son such accounting will show.
Why speak I to thee of repentance or truth,
Who ne'er from thy childhood knew reason or ruth?
Hence! to the wolf and the bear in her den;
These are thy mates, and not rational men."

XI.
Grimly smiled Harold, and coldly replied,
"We must honour our sires, if we fear when they chide.
For me, I am yet what thy lessons have made,
I was rock'd in a buckler and fed from a blade;
An infant, was taught to clasp hands and to shout
From the roofs of the tower when the flame had broke out;
In the blood of slain foemen my finger to dip,
And tinge with its purple my cheek and my lip.—
'Tis thou know'st not truth, that hast barter'd in eld,
For a price, the brave faith that thine ancestors held.
When this wolf,—and the carcass he flung on the plain,—
"Shall awake and give food to her nurslings again,
The face of his father will Harold review;
Till then, aged Heathen, young Christian, adieu!"

XII.
Priest, monk, and prelate, stood aghast,
As through the pageant the heathen pass'd.
A cross-bearer out of his saddle he flung,
Laid his hand on the pommel, and into it sprung.
Loud was the shriek, and deep the groan,
When the holy sign on the earth was thrown!
The fierce old Count unsheathed his brand,
But the calmer Prelate stay'd his hand.
"Let him pass free!—Heaven knows its hour,—
But he must own repentance's power,
Pray and weep, and penance bear,
Ere he hold land by the Tyne and the Wear."
Thus in scorn and in wrath from his father is gone
Young Harold the Dauntless, Count Witikind's son.

XIII.
High was the feasting in Witikind's hall,
Revell'd priests, soldiers, and pagans, and all;
HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

And e'en the good Bishop was fain to endure
The scandal, which time and instruction might cure:
It were dangerous, he deem'd, at the first to restrain,
In his wine and his wassail, a half-christen'd Dane.
The mead flow'd around, and the ale was drain'd dry,
Wild was the laughter, the song, and the cry;
With Kyrie Eleison, came clamorously in
The war-songs of Danesmen, Norweyan, and Finn,
Till man after man the contention gave o'er,
Outstretch'd on the rushes that strew'd the hall floor;
And the tempest within, having ceased its wild rout,
Gave place to the tempest that thunder'd without.

XIV.

Apart from the wassail, in turret alone,
Lay flaxen-hair'd Gunnar, old Ermengarde's son;
In the train of Lord Harold that Page was the first,
For Harold in childhood had Ermengarde nursed;
And grieved was young Gunnar his master should roam,
Unhoused and unfriended, an exile from home.
He heard the deep thunder, the plashing of rain,
He saw the red lightning through shot-hole and pane;
"And oh!" said the Page, "on the shelterless wold
Lord Harold is wandering in darkness and cold!
What though he was stubborn, and wayward, and wild,
He endured me because I was Ermengarde's child,—

And often from dawn till the set of the sun,
In the chase, by his stirrup, unbidden I run;
I would I were older, and knighthood could bear,
I would soon quit the banks of the Tyne and the Wear:
For my mother's command, with her last parting breath,
Bade me follow her nursling in life and to death.

XV.

"It pours and it thunders, it lightens amain,
As if Lok, the Destroyer, had burst from his chain!
Accursed by the Church, and expell'd by his sire,
Nor Christian nor Dane give him shelter or fire,
And this tempest what mortal may houseless endure?
Unaided, unmantled, he dies on the moor!
Whate'er comes of Gunnar, he tarries not here."
He leapt from his couch and he grasp'd to his spear;
Sought the hall of the feast. Undisturb'd by his tread,
The wassailers slept fast as the sleep of the dead:
"Ungrateful and bestial!" his anger broke forth,
"To forget 'mid your goblets the pride of the North!
And you, ye cowl'd priests, who have plenty in store,
Must give Gunnar for ransom a palfrey and ore."

XVI.

Then, heeding full little of ban or of curse,
He has seized on the Prior of Jorvaux's purse:
Saint Mencholt’s Abbot next morning has miss’d
His mantle, deep fur’d from the cape to the wrist;
The Seneschal’s keys from his belt he has ta’en,
(Well drench’d on that eve was old Hildebrand’s brain.)
To the stable-yard he made his way, And mounted the Bishop’s palfrey gay,
Castle and hamlet behind him has cast,
And right on his way to the moorland has pass’d.
Sore snorted the palfrey, unused to face
A weather so wild at so rash a pace;
So long he snorted, so loud he neigh’d.
There answer’d a steed that was bound beside,
And the red flash of lightning show’d there where lay
His master, Lord Harold, out-stretch’d on the clay.

XVII.

Up he started, and thunder’d out, “Stand!”
And raised the club in his deadly hand.
The flaxen-hair’d Gunnar his purpose told,
Show’d the palfrey and proffer’d the gold.
“Back, back, and home, thou simple boy!
Thou canst not share my grief or joy:
Have I not mark’d thee wail and cry?
When thou hast seen a sparrow die?
And canst thou, as my follower should,
Wade ankle-deep through foeman’s blood,
Dare mortal and immortal foe,
The gods above, the fiends below,
And man on earth, more hateful still,
The very fountain-head of ill?

Desperate of life, and careless of death,
Lover of bloodshed, and slaughter, and scathe,
Such must thou be with me to roam,
And such thou canst not be—back, and home!”

XVIII.

Young Gunnar shook like an aspen bough,
As he heard the harsh voice and beheld the dark brow,
And half he repented his purpose and vow.
But now to draw back were bootless shame,
And he loved his master, so urged his claim:
“Alas! if my arm and my courage be weak,
Bear with me a while for old Ermengarde’s sake;
Nor deem so lightly of Gunnar’s faith,
As to fear he would break it for peril of death.
Have I not risk’d it to fetch thee this gold,
This surcoat and mantle to fence thee from cold?
And, did I bear a baser mind,
What lot remains if I stay behind?
The priests’ revenge, thy father’s wrath,
A dungeon, and a shameful death.”

XIX.

With gentler look Lord Harold eyed The Page, then turned his head aside;
And either a tear did his eyelash stain,
Or it caught a drop of the passing rain.
“Art thou an outcast, then?” quoth he;
“The meeter page to follow me.”
"And hear ye not, brethren," the proud Bishop said,
"That our vassal, the Danish Count
Witikind's dead?
All his gold and his goods hath he
To holy Church for the love of
Heaven,
And hath founded a chantry with
stipend and dole,
That priests and that beadsmen may
pray for his soul:
Harold his son is wandering abroad,
Dreaded by man and abhorr'd by
God;
Meet it is not, that such should heir
The lands of the Church on the Tyne
and the Wear,
And at her pleasure, her hallow'd
hands
May now resume these wealthy
lands."

XXI.

Answer'd good Eustace, a canon old,—
"Harold is tameless, and furious,
and bold;
Ever Renown blows a note of fame,
And a note of fear, when she sounds
his name:
Much of bloodshed and much of
scathe
Have been their lot who have waked
his wrath.
Leave him these lands and lordships
still,
Heaven in its hour may change his
will;
But if reft of gold, and of living bare,
An evil counsellor is despair."
More had he said, but the Prelate
frown'd,
And murmur'd his brethren who sate
around,
And with one consent have they
given their doom,
That the Church should the lands
of Saint Cuthbert resume.
So will'd the Prelate; and canon and
dean
Gave to his judgment their loud
amen.
"Against the curass
rang the blade.
CANTO SECOND.

I.
'Tis merry in greenwood,—thus runs
the old lay,—
In the gladsome month of lively May,
When the wild birds’ song on stem
and spray
Invites to forest bower;
Then rears the ash his airy crest,
Then shines the birch in silver vest,
And the beechn in glistening leaves
is drest,
And dark between shows the oak’s
proud breast,
Like a chieftain’s frowning tower;
Though a thousand branches join
their screen,
Yet the broken sunbeams glance
between,
And tip the leaves with lighter green,
With brighter tints the flower:
Dull is the heart that loves not then
The deep recess of the wildwood glen,
Where roe and red-deer find shelter-
ing den,
When the sun is in his power.

II.
Less merry, perchance, is the fading
leaf
That follows so soon on the gather’d
sheaf,
When the greenwood loses the
name;
Silent is then the forest bound,
Save the redbreast’s note, and the
rustling sound
Of frost-nipt leaves that are dropping
round
Or the deep-mouth’d cry of the
distant hound
That opens on his game:
Yet then, too, I love the forest wide,
Whether the sun in splendour ride,
And gild its many-colour’d side;
Or whether the soft and silvery haze,
In vapoury folds, o’er the landscape
strays,
And half involves the woodland maze,
Like an early widow’s veil,
Where wimpling tissue from the
gaze
The form half hides, and half betrays,
Of beauty wan and pale.

III.
Fair Metelill was a woodland maid,
Her father a rover of greenwood
shade,
By forest statutes undismay’d,
Who lived by bow and quiver;
Well known was Wulfstane’s
archery,
By merry Tyne both on moor and lea,
Through wooded Weardale’s glens
so free,
Well beside Stanhope’s wildwood
tree,
And well on Ganlesse river.
Yet free though he trespass’d on
woodland game,
More known and more fear’d was
the wizard fame
Of Jutta of Rookhope, the Outlaw’s
dame,
Fear’d when she frown’d was her eye
of flame,
More fear’d when in wrath she
laugh’d;
For then, ’twas said, more fatal true
To its dread aim her spell-glance
flew,
Than when from Wulfstane’s bended
yew
Sprung forth the gray-goose shaft.

IV.
Yet had this fierce and dreaded pair,
So Heaven decreed, a daughter fair,
None brighter crown’d the bed,
In Britain’s bounds, of peer or prince,
Nor hath, perchance, a lovelier since
In this fair isle been bred.
And nought of fraud, or ire, or ill,
Was known to gentle Metelill,—
A simple maiden she;
The spells in dimpled smile that lie,
And a downcast blush, and the darts
that fly
With the sidelong glance of a hazel eye,
   Were her arms and witchery.
So young, so simple was she yet,
She scarce could childhood's joys forget,
And still she loved, in secret set
Beneath the greenwood tree,
To plait the rushy coronet,
And braid with flowers her locks ot jet,
As when in infancy ;-—
Yet could that heart, so simple, prove
The early dawn of stealing love:
   Ah! gentle maid, beware!
The power who, now so mild a guest,
Gives dangerous yet delicious zest
To the calm pleasures of thy breast,
Will soon, a tyrant o'er the rest,
Let none his empire share.

V.
One morn, in kirtle green array'd,
Deep in the wood the maiden stray'd,
   And, where a fountain sprung,
She sate her down, unseen, to thread
The scarlet berry's mimic braid
   And while the beads she strung,
Like the blithe lark, whose carol gay
Gives a good-morrow to the day,
   So lightsomely she sung.

VI.
Song.
"Lord William was born in gilded bower,
The heir of Wilton's lofty tower;
Yet better loves Lord William now
To roam beneath wild Rookhope's brow;
And William has lived where ladies fair
With gawds and jewels deck their hair,
Yet better loves the dewdrops still
That pearl the locks of Metelill.
"The pious Palmer loves, I wis,
Saint Cuthbert's hallow'd beads to kiss;
But I, though simple girl I be,
Might have such homage paid to me;
For did Lord William see me suit
This necklace of the bramble's fruit,
He fain—but must not have his will—
Would kiss the beads of Metelill.
"My nurse has told me many a tale,
How vows of love are weak and frail;
My mother says that courtly youth
By rustic maid means seldom sooth.
What should they mean? it cannot be,
That such a warning's meant for me,
For nought—oh! nought of fraud or ill
Can William mean to Metelill!"

VII.
Sudden she stops—and starts to feel
A weighty hand, a glove of steel,
Upon her shrinking shoulders laid;
Fearful she turn'd, and saw, dismay'd,
A Knight in plate and mail array'd,
His crest and bearing worn and fray'd,
His surcoat soil'd and riven,
Form'd like that giant race of yore,
Whose long-continued crimes out-wore
The sufferance of Heaven.
Stern accents made his pleasure known,
Though then he used his gentlest tone:
"Maiden," he said, "sing forth thy glee,
Start not—sing on—it pleases me."

VIII.
Secured within his powerful hold,
To bend her knee, her hands to fold,
Was all the maiden might;
And "Oh! forgive," she faintly said,
"The terrors of a simple maid,
If thou art mortal wight!
But if—of such strange tales are told—
Unearthly warrior of the wold,
Thou comest to chide mine accents bold,
My mother, Jutta, knows the spell,
At noon and midnight pleasing well
The disembodied ear,
Oh! let her powerful charms alone
For aught my rashness may have done,
And cease thy grasp of fear.”
Then laugh’d the Knight—his laughter’s sound
Half in the hollow helmet drown’d;
His barred visor then he raised,
And steady on the maiden gazed.
He smooth’d his brows, as best he might,
To the dread calm of autumn night,
When sinks the tempest roar;
Yet still the cautious fishers eye
The clouds, and fear the gloomy sky,
And haul their barks on shore.

IX.

“Damsel,” he said, “be wise, and learn
Matters of weight and deep concern:
From distant realms I come,
And, wanderer long, at length have plann’d
In this my native Northern land
To seek myself a home.
Not that alone—a mate I seek;
She must be gentle, soft, and meek,—
No lordly dame for me;
Myself am something rough of mood,
And feel the fire of royal blood,
And therefore do not hold it good
To match in my degree.
Then, since coy maidens say my race
Is harsh, my form devoid of grace,
For a fair lineage to provide,
’Tis meet that my selected bride
In lineaments be fair;
I love thine well—till now I ne’er
Look’d patient on a face of fear,
But now that tremulous sob and tear
Become thy beauty rare.
One kiss—nay, damsel, coy it not!—
And now go seek thy parents’ cot,
And say, a bridegroom soon I come,
To woo my love, and bear her home.”

X.

Home sprung the maid without a pause,
As leveret ’scaped from greyhound’s jaws;
But still she lock’d, howe’er distress’d,
The secret in her boding breast;
Dreading her sire, who oft forbade
Her steps should stray to distant glade.
Night came—to her accustom’d nook
Her distaff aged Jutta took,
And by the lamp’s imperfect glow,
Rough Wulfstane trimm’d his shafts and bow,
Sudden and clamorous, from the ground
Upstarted slumbering brach and hound;
Loud knocking next the lodgealarms,
And Wulfstane snatches at his arms,
When open flew the yielding door,
And that grim Warrior press’d the floor.

XI.

“All peace be here—What! none replies?
Dismiss your fears and your surprise.
’Tis I—that Maid hath told my tale,—
Or, trembler, did thy courage fail?
It recks not—it is I demand
Fair Metelill in marriage band;
Harold the Dauntless I; whose name
Is brave men’s boast and caitiffs’ shame.”

The parents sought each other’s eyes,
With awe, resentment, and surprise:
Wulfstane, to quarrel prompt, began
The stranger’s size and thewes to scan;
But as he scann’d, his courage sunk,
And from unequal strife he shrunk,
Then forth, to blight and blemish flies
The harmful curse from Jutta’s eyes;
Yet, fatal howsoe’er, the spell
On Harold innocently fell!
And disappointment and amaze
Were in the witch’s wilder’d gaze.
XII.

But soon the wit of woman woke,
And to the Warrior mild she spoke:
"Her child was all too young!"—
"A toy,
The refuge of a maiden coy."—
Again, "A powerful baron's heir
Claims in her heart an interest fair."—
"A trifle—whisper in his ear,
That Harold is a suitor here!"—
Baffled at length she sought delay:
"Would not the Knight till morning stay?
Late was the hour—he there might rest
Till morn, their lodge's honour'd guest."
Such were her words,—her craft might cast,
Her honour'd guest should sleep his last:
"No, not to-night—but soon," he swore,
"He would return, nor leave them more."
The threshold then his huge stride crost,
And soon he was in darkness lost.

XIII.

Appall'd a while the parents stood,
Then changed their fear to angry mood,
And foremost fell their words of ill
On unresisting Metelill:
Was she not caution'd and forbid,
Forewarn'd, implored, accused and chid,
And must she still to Greenwood roam,
To marshal such misfortune home?
"Hence, minion—to thy chamber hence—
There prudence learn, and penitence."
She went—her lonely couch to steep
In tears which absent lovers weep;
Or if she gain'd a troubled sleep,
Fierce Harold's suit was still the theme
And terror of her feverish dream.

XIV.

Scarce was she gone, her dame and sire
Upon each other bent their ire;
"A woodsman thou, and hast a spear,
And couldst thou such an insult bear?"
Sullen he said, "A man contends
With men, a witch with sprites and fiends,
Not to mere mortal wight belong
Yon gloomy brow and frame so strong.
But thou—is this thy promise fair,
That your Lord William, wealthy heir
To Ulrick, Baron of Witton-le-Wear,
Should Metelill to altar bear?
Do all the spells thou boast'st as thine
Serve but to slay some peasant's kine,
His grain in autumn's storms to steep,
Or thorough fog and fen to sweep,
And hag-ride some poor rustic's sleep?
Is such mean mischief worth the fame
Of sorceress and witch's name?
Fame, which with all men's wish conspires,
With thy deserts and my desires,
To damn thy corpse to penal fires?
Out on thee, witch! aroint! aroint!
What now shall put thy schemes in joint?
What save this trusty arrow's point,
From the dark dingle when it flies,
And he who meets it gasps and dies."

XV.

Stern she replied, "I will not wage
War with thy folly or thy rage;
But ere the morrow's sun be low,
Wulfstane of Rookhope, thou shalt know,
If I can venge me on a toe.
Believe the while, that whatsoe'er
I spoke, in ire, of bow and spear,
It is not Harold's destiny
The death of pilfer'd deer to die.
But he, and thou, and yon pale moon,
(That shall be yet more pallid soon,
Before she sink behind the dell,)  
Thou, she, and Harold too, shall tell  
What Jutta knows of charm or spell.”  
Thus muttering, to the door she bent  
Her wayward steps, and forth she went,  
And left alone the moody sire,  
To cherish or to shake his ire.  

**XVI.**

Far faster than belong’d to age  
Has Jutta made her pilgrimage.  
A priest has met her as she pass’d,  
And cross’d himself and stood aghast:  
She traced a hamlet—not a cur  
His throat would ope, his foot would stir;  
By crouch, by trembling, and by groan,  
They made her hated presence known!  
But when she trode the sable fell,  
Were wilder sounds her way to tell,—  
For far was heard the fox’s yell,  
The black-cock waked and faintly crew,  
Scream’d o’er the moss the scared curlew;  
Where o’er the cataract the oak  
Lay slant, was heard the raven’s croak;  
The mountain-cat, which sought his prey,  
Glared, scream’d, and started from her way.  
Such music cheer’d her journey lone  
To the deep dell and rocking stone:  
There, with unhallow’d hymn of praise,  
She called a God of heathen days.  

**XVII.**

**Invocation.**

“From thy Pomeranian throne,  
Hewn in rock of living stone,  
Where, to thy godhead faithful yet,  
Bend Esthonian, Finn, and Lett,  
And their swords in vengeance whet,  
That shall make thine altars wet,  
Wet and red for ages more  
With the Christian’s hated gore,—  
Hear me! Sovereign of the Rock,  
Hear me! mighty Zernebock!  

“Mightiest of the mighty known,  
Here thy wonders have been shown;  
Hundred tribes in various tongue  
Oft have here thy praises sung;  
Down that stone with Runic seam’d,  
Hundred victims’ blood hath stream’d!  
Now one woman comes alone,  
And but wets it with her own,  
The last, the feeblest of thy flock,—  
Hear—and be present, Zernebock!  

“Hark! he comes! the night-blast cold  
Wilder sweeps along the wold;  
The cloudless moon grows dark and dim,  
And bristling hair and quaking limb  
Proclaim the Master Demon nigh,—  
Those who view his form shall die!  
Lo! I stoop and veil my head;  
Thou who ridest the tempest dread,  
Shaking hill and rending oak—  
Spare me! spare me! Zernebock.  

“He comes not yet! Shall cold delay  
Thy votress at her need repay?  
Thou—shall I call thee god or fiend?—  
Let others on thy mood attend  
With prayer and ritual—Jutta’s arms  
Are necromantic words and charms;  
Mine is the spell, that, utter’d once,  
Shall awake Thy Master from his trance.  
Shake his red mansion-house of pain,  
And burst his seven-times-twisted chain!—  
So! com’st thou ere the spell is spoke?  
I own thy presence, Zernebock.”—
XVIII.

"Daughter of dust," the Deep Voice said,
—Shook while it spoke the vale for dread,
Rock'd on the base that massive stone,
The Evil Deity to own,—
"Daughter of dust! not mine the power
Thou seek'st on Harold's fatal hour.
'Twixt heaven and hell there is a strife
Waged for his soul and for his life,
And fain would we the combat win,
And snatch him in his hour of sin.
There is a star now rising red,
That threats him with an influence dread:
Woman, thine arts of malice whet,
To use the space before it set.
Involve him with the church in strife,
Push on adventurous chance his life;
Ourself will in the hour of need,
As best we may thy counsels speed."
So ceased the Voice; for seven leagues round
Each hamlet started at the sound;
But slept again, as slowly died
Its thunders on the hill's brown side.

XIX.

"And is this all," said Jutta stern,
"That thou can'st teach and I can learn?
Hence! to the land of fog and waste,
There fittest is thine influence placed,
Thou powerless, sluggish Deity!
But ne'er shall Briton bend the knee
Again before so poor a god."
She struck the altar with her rod;
Slight was the touch, as when at need
A dams'l stirs her tardy steed;
But to the blow the stone gave place,
And, starting from its balanced base,
Roll'd thundering down the moon-light dell,—
Re-echo'd moorland, rock, and fell;

Into the moonlight tarn it dash'd,
Their shores the sounding surges lash'd,
And there was ripple, rage, and foam;
But on that lake, so dark and lone,
Placid and pale the moonbeam shone
As Jutta hied her home.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

Grey towers of Durham! there was once a time
I view'd your battlements with such vague hope,
As brightens life in its first dawning prime;
Not that e'en then came within fancy's scope
A vision vain of mitre, throne, or cope;
Yet, gazing on the venerable hall,
Her flattering dreams would in perspective ope
Some reverend room, some prebendary's stall,—
And thus Hope me deceived as she deceiveth all.

Well yet I love thy mix'd and massive piles,
Half church of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot,
And long to roam these venerable aisles,
With records stored of deeds long since forgot;
There might I share my Surtees' happier lot,
Who leaves at will his patrimonial field
To ransack every crypt and hallow'd spot,
And from oblivion rend the spoils they yield,
Restoring priestly chant and clang of knightly shield.
Vain is the wish—since other cares demand
Each vacant hour, and in another clime;
But still that northern harp invites my hand,
Which tells the wonder of thine earlier time;
And fain its numbers would I now command
To paint the beauties of that dawn-fair,
When Harold, gazing from its lofty stand
Upon the western heights of Beau-repaire,
Saw Saxon Eadmer’s towers begirt by winding Wear.

II.

Fair on the half-seen streams the sunbeams danced
Betraying it beneath the woodland bank,
And fair between the Gothic turrets glanced
Broad lights, and shadows fell on front and flank,
Where tower and buttress rose in martial rank,
And girdled in the massive donjon Keep,
And from their circuit peal’d o’er bush and bank
The matin bell with summons long and deep,
And echo answer’d still with long-resounding sweep.

III.

The morning mists rose from the ground,
Each merry bird awaken’d round,
As if in revelry;
Afar the bugles' clanging sound
Call’d to the chase the lagging hound;
The gale breathed soft and free,

And seem’d to linger on its way
To catch fresh odours from the spray,
And wove it in its wanton play
So light and gamesomely.
The scenes which morning beams reveal,
Its sounds to hear, its gales to feel
In all their fragrance round him steal,
It melted Harold’s heart of steel,
And, hardly wotting why,
He doff’d his helmet’s gloomy pride,
And hung it on a tree beside,
Laid mace and falchion by,
And on the greensward sate him down,
And from his dark habitual frown
Relax’d his rugged brow—
Whoever hath the doubtful task
From that stern Dane a boon to ask,
Were wise to ask it now.

IV.

His place beside young Gunnar took,
And mark’d his master’s softening look,
And in his eye’s dark mirror spied
The gloom of stormy thoughts subside,
And cautious watch’d the fittest tide
To speak a warning word.
So when the torrent's billows shrink,
The timid pilgrim on the brink
Waits long to see them wave and sink,
Ere he dare brave the ford,
And often, after doubtful pause,
His step advances or withdraws: Fearful to move the slumbering ire
Of his stern lord, thus stood the squire,
Till Harold raised his eye,
That glanced as when athwart the shroud
Of the dispersing tempest-cloud
The bursting sunbeams fly.
V.

"Arouse thee, son of Ermengarde, Offspring of prophetess and hard! Take harp, and greet this lovely prime With some high strain of Runic rhyme,
Strong, deep, and powerful! Peal it round
Like that loud bell’s sonorous sound, Yet wild by fits, as when the lay Of bird and bugle hail the day. Such was my grandsire Eric’s sport, When dawn gleam’d on his martial court.

Heymar the Scald, with harp’s high sound, Summon’d the chiefs who slept around; Couch’d on the spoils of wolf and bear, They roused like lions from their lair,
Then rush’d in emulation forth To enhance the glories of the North.— Proud Eric, mightiest of thy race, Where is thy shadowy resting-place? In wild Valhalla hast thou quaff’d From seaman’s skull metheglin draught, Or wanderest where thy cairn was piled To frown o’er oceans wide and wild? Or have the milder Christians given Thy refuge in their peaceful heaven? Where’er thou art, to thee are known Our toils endured, our trophies won, Our wars, our wanderings, and our woes."
He ceased, and Gunnar’s song arose.

VI.

Song.

"Hawk and osprey scream’d for joy O’er the beetling cliffs of Hoy, Crimson foam the beach o’erspread, The heath was dyed with darker red, When o’er Eric, Inguar’s son, Dane and Northman piled the stone; Singing wild the war-song stern, ‘Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!’

"Where eddying currents foam and boil By Bersa’s burgh and Graemsay’s isle, The seaman sees a martial form Half-mingled with the mist and storm. In anxious awe he bears away To moor his bark in Stromna’s bay, And murmurs from the bounding stern, ‘Rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!’

"What cares disturb the mighty dead? Each honour’d rite was duly paid; No daring hand thy helm unlaced, Thy sword, thy shield, were near thee placed,— Thy flinty couch no tear profaned, Without, with hostile blood was stain’d; Within, ’twas lined with moss and fern,— Then rest thee, Dweller of the Cairn!—

"He may not rest: from realms afar Comes voice of battle and of war, Of conquest wrought with bloody hand On Carmel’s cliffs and Jordan’s strand, When Odin’s warlike son could daunt The turban’d race of Termagaunt."—

VII.

"Peace," said the Knight, "the noble Scald Our warlike fathers’ deeds recall’d, But never strove to soothe the son With tales of what himself had done. At Odin’s board the bard sits high Whose harp ne’er stoop’d to flattery; But highest he whose daring lay Hath dared unwelcome truths to say." With doubtful smile young Gunnar eyed His master’s looks, and nought replied—
But well that smile his master led
To construe what he left unsaid.
"Is it to me, thou timid youth,
Thou fear'st to speak unwelcome truth?
My soul no more thy censure grieves
Than frosts rob laurels of their leaves.
Say on—and yet—beware the rude
And wild distemper of my blood;
Loth were I that mine ire should wrong
The youth that bore my shield so long,
And who, in service constant still,
Though weak in frame, art strong in will."—
"Oh!" quoth the page, "even there depends
My counsel—there my warning tends—
Oft seems as of my master's breast
Some demon were the sudden guest;
Then at the first misconstrued word
His hand is on the mace and sword,
From her firm seat his wisdom driven,
His life to countless dangers given.—
O! would that Gunnar could suffice
To be the fiend's last sacrifice,
So that, when glutted with my gore,
He fled and tempted thee no more!"

VIII

Then waved his hand, and shook his head
The impatient Dane, while thus he said:
"Profane not, youth—it is not thine
To judge the spirit of our line—
The bold Berserkar's rage divine,
Through whose inspiring, deeds are wrought
Past human strength and human thought.
When full upon his gloomy soul
The champion feels the influence roll,
He swims the lake, he leaps the wall—
Heeds not the depth, nor plumbs the fall—
Unshielded, mail-less, on he goes
Singly against a host of foes;
Their spears he holds like wither'd reeds,
Their mail like maiden's silken weeds;
One 'gainst a hundred will he strive,
Take countless wounds, and yet survive.
Then rush the eagles to his cry
Of slaughter and of victory,—
And blood he quaffs like Odin's bowl,
Deep drinks his sword,—deep drinks his soul;
And all that meet him in his ire
He gives to ruin, rout, and fire;
Then, like gorged lion, seeks some den,
And couches till he's man agen.—
Thou know'st the signs of look and limb,
When 'gins that rage to overbrim—
Thou know'st when I am moved, and why;
And when thou see'st me roll mine eye,
Set my teeth thus, and stamp my foot,
Regard thy safety and be mute;
But else speak boldly out whate'er is fitting that a knight should hear.
I love thee, youth. Thy lay has power
Upon my dark and sullen hour;—
So Christian monks are wont to say
Demons of old were charm'd away;
Then fear not I will rashly deem
Ill of thy speech, whate'er the theme."

IX.

As down some strait in doubt and dread
The watchful pilot drops the lead,
And, cautious in the midst to steer,
The shoaling channel sounds with fear;
So, lest on dangerous ground he swerved,
The Page his master's brow observed,
Pausing at intervals to fling
His hand o'er the melodious string,
And to his moody breast apply
The soothing charm of harmony,
While hinted half, and half exprest,
This warning song convey’d the rest.—

Song.

1.

"Ill fares the bark with tackle riven,
And ill when on the breakers driven,—
Ill when the storm-sprite shricks in air,
And the scared mermaid tears her hair;
But worse when on her helm the hand
Of some false traitor holds command.

2.

"Ill fares the fainting Palmer, placed
Mid Hebron’s rocks or Rana’s waste,—
Ill when the scorching sun is high,
And the expected font is dry,—
Worse when his guide o’er sand and heath,
The barbarous Copt, has plann’d his death.

3.

"Ill fares the Knight with buckler cleft,
And ill when of his helm bereft,—
Ill when his steed to earth is flung,
Or from his grasp his falchion wrung;
But worse, if instant ruin token,
When he lists rede by woman spoken.”

X.

"How now, fond boy?—Canst thou think ill,"
Said Harold, "of fair Metelill?"—
"She may be fair," the Page replied,
As through the strings he ranged,—
"She may be fair; but yet," he cried,
And then the strain he changed,—

Song.

1.

"She may be fair," he sang, "but yet
Far fairer have I seen
Than she, for all her locks of jet,
And eyes so dark and sheen.
Were I a Danish knight in arms,
As one day I may be,
My heart should own no foreign charms,—
A Danish maid for me.

2.

"I love my fathers’ northern land,
Where the dark pine-trees grow,
And the bold Baltic’s echoing strand
Looks o’er each grassy oe.
I love to mark the lingering sun,
From Denmark loth to go,
And leaving on the billows bright,
To cheer the short-lived summer night,
A path of ruddy glow.

3.

"But most the northern maid I love,
With breast like Denmark’s snow,
And form as fair as Denmark’s pine,
Who loves with purple heath to twine
Her locks of sunny glow;
And sweetly blend that shade of gold
With the cheek’s rosy hue,
And Faith might for her mirror hold
That eye of matchless blue.

4.

" ’Tis hers the manly sports to love
That southern maidens fear,
To bend the bow by stream and grove,
And lift the hunter’s spear.
She can her chosen champion’s flight
With eye undazzled see,
Clasp him victorious from the strife,
Or on his corpse yield up her life,—
A Danish maid for me!"
XI.

Then smiled the Dane—"Thou canst so well
The virtues of our maidens tell,
Half could I wish my choice had been
Blue eyes, and hair of golden sheen,
And lofty soul;—yet what of ill
Hast thou to charge on Metelill?"—
"Nothing on her," young Gunnar said,
"But her base sire's ignoble trade.
Her mother, too—the general fame
Hath given to Jutta evil name,
And in her gray eye is a flame
Art cannot hide, nor fear can tame.—
That sordid woodman's peasant cot
Twice have thine honour'd footsteps sought,
And twice return'd with such ill rede
As sent thee on some desperate deed.—"

XII.

"Thou errest; Jutta wisely said,
He that comes suitor to a maid,
Ere link'd in marriage, should provide
Lands and a dwelling for his bride—
My father's, by the Tyne and Wear,
I have reclaim'd."—"O, all too dear,
And all too dangerous the prize,
E'en were it won," young Gunnar cries;
"And then this Jutta's fresh device,
That thou shouldst seek, a heathen Dane,
From Durham's priests a boon to gain,
When thou hast left their vassals slain
In their own halls!"—Flash'd Harold's eye,
Thunder'd his voice—"False Page, you lie!
The castle, hall and tower, is mine,
Built by old Witikind on Tyne.
The wild-cat will defend his den,
Fights for her nest the timid wren;
And think'st thou I'll forego my right
For dread of monk or monkish knight?—

Up and away, that deepening bell
Doth of the Bishop's conclave tell.
Thither will I, in manner due,
As Jutta bade, my claim to sue;
And, if to right me they are loth,
Then woe to church and chapter both!"
Now shift the scene, and let the curtain fall,
And our next entry be Saint Cuthbert's hall.

CANTO FOURTH.

I.

Full many a bard hath sung the solemn gloom
Of the long Gothic aisle and stone-ribb'd roof,
O'er-canopying shrine, and gorgeous tomb,
Carved screen, and altar glimmering far aloof,
And blending with the shade—a matchless proof
Of high devotion, which hath now wax'd cold;
Yet legends say, that Luxury's brute hoof
Intruded oft within such sacred fold,
Like step of Bel's false priest, track'd in his fane of old.

Well pleased am I, howe'er, that when the route
Of our rude neighbours whilome deign'd to come,
Uncall'd, and eke unwelcome, to sweep out
And cleanse our chancel from the rags of Rome,
They spoke not on our ancient fane the doom
To which their bigot zeal gave o'er their own,
But spared the martyr'd saint and storied tomb,
Though papal miracles had graced the stone,
And though the aisles still loved the organ's swelling tone.
And deem not, though 'tis now my part to paint
A Prelate sway'd by love of power and gold,
That all who wore the mitre of our Saint
Like to ambitious Aldingar I hold;
Since both in modern times and days of old
It sate on those whose virtues might alone
Their predecessors' frailties trebly told:
Matthew and Morton we as such may own—
And such (if fame speak truth) the honour'd Barrington.

II.

But now to earlier and to ruder times,
As subject meet, I tune my rugged rhymes,
Telling how fairly the chapter was met,
And rood and books in seemly order set;
Huge brass-clasp'd volumes, which the hand
Of studious priest but rarely scannd,
Now on fair carved desk display'd,
'Twas theirs the solemn scene to aid
O'erhead with many a scutcheon graced,
And quaint devices interlaced,
A labyrinth of crossing rows,
The roof in lessening arches shows;
Beneath its shade placed proud and high,
With footstool and with canopy,
Sate Aldingar,—and prelate ne'er
More haughty graced Saint Cuthbert's chair;
Canons and deacons were placed below,
In due degree and lengthen'd row.
Unmoved and silent each sat there,
Like image in his oaken chair;
Nor head, nor hand, nor foot they stirr'd,
Nor lock of hair, nor tress of beard;
And of their eyes severe alone
The twinkle show'd they were not stone.

III.

The Prelate wasto speech address'd,
Each head sunk reverent on each breast;
But ere his voice was heard—without
Arose a wild tumultuous shout,
Offspring of wonder mix'd with fear,
Such as in crowded streets we hear
Hailing the flames, that, bursting out,
Attract yet scare the rabble rout.
Ere it had ceased, a giant hand
Shook oaken door and iron band,
Till oak and iron both gave way,
Clash'd the long bolts, the hinges bray,
And, ere upon angel or saint they can call,
Stands Harold the Dauntless in midst of the hall.

IV.

"Now save ye, my masters, both rocket and rood,
From Bishop with mitre to Deacon with hood!
For here stands Count Harold, old Witikind's son,
Come to sue for the lands which his ancestors won."
The Prelate look'd round him with sore troubled eye,
Unwilling to grant, yet afraid to deny;
While each Canon and Deacon who heard the Dane speak,
To be safely at home would have fasted a week:
Then Aldingar roused him, and answer’d again,

"Thou suest for a boon which thou canst not obtain;"
The Church hath no fiefs for an unchristen’d Dane.
Thy father was wise, and his treasure hath given,
That the priests of a chantry might hymn him to heaven;
And the fiefs which whilome he possess’d as his due,
Have lapsed to the Church, and been granted anew
To Anthony Conyers and Alberic Vere.
For the service Saint Cuthbert’s bless’d banner to bear,
When the bands of the North come to foray the Wear;
Then disturb not our conclave with wrangling or blame,
But in peace and in patience pass hence as ye came."

V.

Loud laugh’d the stern Pagan,—
"They’re free from the care
Of fief and of service, both Conyers and Vere,—
Six feet of your chancel is all they will need,
A buckler of stone and a corslet of lead.—
Ho, Gunnar!—the tokens";—and, sever’d anew,
A head and a hand on the altar he threw.
Then shudder’d with terror both
Canon and Monk,
They knew the glazed eye and the countenance shrunk,
And of Anthony Conyers the half-grizzled hair,
And the scar on the hand of Sir Alberic Vere.
There was not a churchman or priest that was there,
But grew pale at the sight, and betook him to prayer.

VI.

Count Harold laugh’d at their looks of fear;
"Was this the hand should your banner bear
Was that the head should wear the casque
In battle at the Church’s task?
Was it to such you gave the place
Of Harold with the heavy mace?
Find me between the Wear and Tyne
A knight will wield this club of mine,—
Give me my fiefs, and I will say
There’s wit beneath the cowl of gray."
He raised it, rough with many a stain,
Caught from crush’d skull and spouting brain;
He wheel’d it that it shrilly sung,
And the aisles echo’d as it swung,
Then dash’d it down with sheer descent,
And split King Osric’s monument.—
"How like ye this music? How trow ye the hand
That can wield such a mace may be rest of its land?
No answer?—I spare ye a space to agree,
And Saint Cuthbert inspire you, a saint if he be.
Ten strides through your chancel, ten strokes on your bell,
And again I am with you—grave fathers, farewell."

VII.

He turn’d from their presence, he clash’d the oak door,
And the clang of his stride died away on the floor;
And his head from his bosom the Prelate uprears
With a ghost-seer’s look when the ghost disappears.
"Ye Priests of Saint Cuthbert, now give me your rede,
For never of counsel had Bishop more need!"
HAROLD THE DAUNTLESS.

Were the arch-fiend incarnate in flesh and in bone,  
The language, the look, and the laugh were his own.  
In the bounds of Saint Cuthbert there is not a knight  
Dare confront in our quarrel yon goblin in fight;  
Then rede me aright to his claim to reply,  
'Tis unlawful to grant, and 'tis death to deny."

VIII.

On ven'son and malmsie that morning had fed  
The Cellarer Vinsauf—'twas thus that he said:  
"Delay till to-morrow the Chapter's reply;  
Let the feast be spread fair, and the wine be pour'd high:  
If he's mortal he drinks,—if he drinks, he is ours—  
His bracelets of iron,—his bed in our towers."  
This man had a laughing eye,  
Trust not, friends, when such you spy;  
A beaker's depth he well could drain,  
Revel, sport, and jest amain—  
The haunch of the deer and the grape's bright dye  
Never bard loved them better than I;  
But sooner than Vinsauf filled me my wine,  
Pass'd me his jest, and laugh'd at mine,  
Though the buck were of Bearpark, of Bourdeaux the vine,  
With the dullest hermit I'd rather dine  
On an oaten cake and a draught of the Tyne.

IX.

Walwayn the leech spoke next—he knew  
Each plant that loves the sun and dew,  
But special those whose juice can gain  
Dominion o'er the blood and brain;  
The peasant who saw him by pale moonbeam  
Gathering such herbs by bank and stream,  
Deem'd his thin form and soundless tread  
Were those of wanderer from the dead.—  
"Vinsauf, thy wine," he said, "hath power,  
Our gyves are heavy, strong our tower;  
Yet three drops from this flask of mine,  
More strong than dungeons, gyves, or wine,  
Shall give him prison under ground  
More dark, more narrow, more profound.  
Short rede, good rede, let Harold have—  
A dog's death and a heathen's grave."  
I have lain on a sick man's bed,  
Watching for hours for the leech's tread,  
As if I deem'd that his presence alone  
Were of power to bid my pain be gone;  
I have listed his words of comfort given,  
As if to oracles from heaven;  
I have counted his steps from my chamber door,  
And bless'd them when they were heard no more;—  
But sooner than Walwayn my sick couch should nigh,  
My choice were, by leech-craft unaided, to die.

X.

"Such service done in fervent zeal  
The Church may pardon and conceal,"
The doubtful Prelate said, "but ne'er
The counsel ere the act should hear.—
Anselm of Jarrow, advise us now,
The stamp of wisdom is on thy brow;
Thy days, thy nights, in cloister pent,
Are still to mystic learning lent;—
Anselm of Jarrow, in thee is my hope,
Thou well mayst give counsel to Prelate or Pope."

XI.
Answer'd the Prior—"'Tis wisdom's use
Still to delay what we dare not refuse;
Ere granting the boon he comes hither to ask,
Shape for the giant gigantic task;
Let us see how a step so sounding can tread
In paths of darkness, danger, and dread;
He may not, he will not, impugn our decree,
That calls but for proof of his chivalry;
And were Guy to return, or Sir Bevis the Strong,
Our wilds have adventure might cumber them long—
The Castle of Seven Shields——""Kind Anselm, no more!
The step of the Pagan approaches the door."
The churchmen were hush'd.—In his mantle of skin,
With his mace on his shoulder, Count Harold strode in.
There was foam on his lips, there was fire in his eye,
For, chafed by attendance, his fury was nigh.
"Ho! Bishop," he said, "dost thou grant me my claim?
Or must I assert it by falchion and flame?"—

XII.
"On thy suit, gallant Harold," the Bishop replied,
In accents which trembled, "we may not decide,
Until proof of your strength and your valour we saw—
'Tis not that we doubt them, but such is the law."—
"And would you, Sir Prelate, have Harold make sport
For the cowl and the shavelings that herd in thy court?
Say what shall he do?—From the shrine shall he tear
The lead bier of thy patron, and heave it in air,
And through the long chancel make
Cuthbert take wing,
With the speed of a bullet dismiss'd from the sling?"—
"Nay, spare such probation," the Cellarer said,
"From the mouth of our minstrels thy task shall be read.
While the wine sparkles high in the goblet of gold,
And the revel is loudest, thy task shall be told;
And thyself, gallant Harold, shall, hearing it, tell
That the Bishop, his cowl, and his shavelings, meant well."

XIII.
Loud revell'd the guests, and the goblets loud rang;
But louder the minstrel, Hugh Meneville, sang;
And Harold, the hurry and the pride of whose soul,
E'en when verging to fury, own'd music's control,
Still bent on the harper his broad sable eye,
And often untasted the goblet pass'd by;
Than wine, or than wassail, to him was more dear
The minstrel's high tale or enchantment to hear:
And the Bishop that day might of Vinsauf complain
That his art had but wasted his wine-casks in vain.

XIV.

The Castle of the Seven Shields.

A BALLAD.

The Druid Urien had daughters seven,
Their skill could call the moon from heaven;
So fair their forms and so high their fame,
That seven proud kings for their suitors came.

King Mador and Rhys came from Powis and Wales,
Unshorn was their hair, and un-pruned were their nails;
From Strath-Clwyde was Ewain, and Ewain was lame,
And the red-bearded Donald from Galloway came.

Lot, King of Lodon, was hunch-back'd from youth;
Dunmail of Cumbria had never a tooth;
But Adolf of Bambrough, Northumberland's heir,
Was gay and was gallant, was young and was fair.

There was strife 'mongst the sisters, for each one would have
For husband King Adolf, the gallant and brave;
And envy bred hate, and hate urged them to blows,
When the firm earth was cleft, and the Arch-fiend arose!

He swore to the maidens their wish to fulfil—
They swore to the foe they would work by his will.

A spindle and distaff to each hath he given,
"Now hearken my spell," said the Outcast of heaven.

"Ye shall ply these spindles at midnight hour,
And for every spindle shall rise a tower,
Where the right shall be feeble, the wrong shall have power,
And there shall ye dwell with your paramour."

Beneath the pale moonlight they sate on the wold,
And the rhymes which they chanted must never be told;
And as the black wool from the distaff they sped,
With blood from their bosom they moisten'd the thread.

As light danced the spindles beneath the cold gleam,
The castle arose like the birth of a dream—
The seven towers ascended like mist from the ground,
Seven portals defend them, seven ditches surround.

Within that dread castle seven monarchs were wed,
But six of the seven ere the morning lay dead;
With their eyes all on fire, and their daggers all red.
Seven damsels surround the Northumbrian's bed.

"Six kingly bridegrooms to death we have done,
Six gallant kingdoms King Adolf hath won,
Six lovely brides all his pleasure to do,
Or the bed of the seventh shall be husbandless too."
There stood array'd in sable band
Four Maids whom Afric bore.
Well chanced it that Adolf the night when he wed
Had confess’d and had sain’d him ere bouned to his bed;
He sprung from the couch and his broadsword he drew,
And there the seven daughters of Urien he slew.
The gate of the castle he bolted and seal’d,
And hung o’er each arch-stone a crown and a shield;
To the cells of Saint Dunstan then wended his way,
And died in his cloister an anchorite gray.
Seven monarchs’ wealth in that castle lies stow’d,
The foul fiends brood o’er them like raven and toad,
Whoever shall guesten these chambers within,
From curfew till matins, that treasure shall win.
But manhood grows faint as the world waxes old!
There lives not in Britain a champion so bold,
So dauntless of heart, and so prudent of brain,
As to dare the adventure that treasure to gain.
The waste ridge of Cheviot shall wave with the rye,
Before the rude Scots shall Northumberland fly,
And the flint clifts of Bambro’ shall melt in the sun,
Before that adventure be peril’d and won.

XV.
“And is this my probation?” wild Harold he said,
“Well within a lone castle to press a lone bed?”—
Good even, my Lord Bishop,—Saint Cuthbert to borrow,
The Castle of Seven Shields receives me to-morrow.”

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

DENMARK’s sage courtier to her princely youth,
Granting his cloud an ouzel or a whale,
Spoke, though unwittingly, a partial truth;
For Fantasy embroiders Nature’s veil.
The tints of ruddy eve, or dawning pale,
Of the swart thunder-cloud, or silver haze,
Are but the ground-work of the rich detail,
Which Fantasy with pencil wild portrays,
Blending what seems and is, in the rapt muser’s gaze.

Nor are the stubborn forms of earth and stone
Less to the Sorceress’s empire given;
For not with unsubstantial hues alone,
Caught from the varying surge, or vacant heaven,
From bursting sunbeam, or from flashing levin,
She limns her pictures: on the earth, as air,
Arise her castles, and her car is driven;
And never gazed the eye on scene so fair,
But of its boasted charms gave Fancy half the share.

II.

Up a wild pass went Harold, bent to prove,
Hugh Meneville, the adventure of thy lay;
Gunnar pursued his steps in faith and love,
Ever companion of his master’s way.
Midward their path, a rock of granite gray
From the adjoining cliff had made descent,—
A barren mass—yet with her drooping spray
Had a young birch-tree crown'd its battlement,
Twisting her fibrous roots through cranny, flaw, and rent.

This rock and tree could Gunnar's thought engage
Till Fancy brought the tear-drop to his eye,
And at his master ask'd the timid Page,
"What is the emblem that a bard shou'd spy
In that rude rock and its green canopy?"

And Harold said, "Like to the helmet brave
Of warrior slain in fight it seems to lie,
And these same drooping boughs do o'er it wave
Not all unlike the plume his lady's favour gave."—

"Ah, no!" replied the Page; "the ill-starr'd love
Of some poor maid is in the emblem shown,
Whose fates are with some hero's interwove,
And rooted on a heart to love unknown:
And as the gentle dews of heaven alone
Nourish those drooping boughs, and as the scathe
Of the red lightning rends both tree and stone,
So fares it with her unrequited faith,—
Her sole relief is tears—her only refuge death."—

III.

"Thou art a fond fantastic boy,"
Harold replied, "to females coy
Yet prating still of love;

Even so amid the clash of war
I know thou lovest to keep afar,
Though destined by thy evil star
With one like me to rove,
Whose business and whose joys are found
Upon the bloody battle-ground.
Yet, foolish trembler as thou art
Thou hast a nook of my rude heart,
And thou and I will never part;—
Harold would wrap the world in flame
Ere injury on Gunnar came!"

IV.

The grateful Page made no reply,
But turn'd to Heaven his gentle eye,
And clasp'd his hands, as one who said,
"My toils—my wanderings are o'erpaid!"

Then in a gayer, lighter strain,
Compell'd himself to speech again;
And, as they flow'd along,
His words took cadence soft and slow,
And liquid, like dissolving snow.
They melted into song.

V.

"What though through fields of carnage wide
I may not follow Harold's stride,
Yet who with faithful Gunnar's pride

Lord Harold's feats can see?
And dearer than the couch of pride,
He loves the bed of gray wolf's hide,

When slumbering by Lord Harold's side
In forest, field, or lea."—

VI.

"Break off!" said Harold, in a tone
Where hurry and surprise were shown,
With some slight touch of fear,—
"Break off, we are not here alone;
A Palmer form comes slowly on!
By cowl, and staff, and mantle
known,
My monitor is near.
Now mark him, Gunnar, heedfully;
He pauses by the blighted tree—
Dost see him, youth? — Thou couldst not see
When in the vale of Galilee
I first beheld his form,
Nor when we met that other while
In Cephalonia's rocky isle,
Before the fearful storm,—
Dost see him now?" — The Page, distraught,
With terror, answer'd, "I see nought,
And there is nought to see,
Save that the oak's scathed boughs fling down
Upon the path a shadow brown,
That, like a pilgrim's dusky gown,
Waves with the waving tree."

VII.
Count Harold gazed upon the oak
As if his eyes would have broke,
And then resolvedly said,—
"Be what it will yon phantom gray—
Nor heaven, nor hell, shall ever say
That for their shadows from his way
Count Harold turn'd dismay'd:
I'll speak him, though his accents fill
My heart with that unwonted thrill
Which vulgar minds call fear.
I will subdue it!" — Forth he strode,
Paused where the blighted oak-tree show'd
Its sable shadow on the road,
And, folding on his bosom broad
His arms, said, "Speak — I hear."

VIII.
The Deep Voice said, "O wild of will,
Furious thy purpose to fulfil—
Heart-sear'd and unrepentant still,
How long, O Harold, shall thy tread
Disturb the slumbers of the dead?
Each step in thy wild way thou makest,
The ashes of the dead thou wakest;
And shout in triumph o'er thy path
The fiends of bloodshed and of wrath,
In this thine hour, yet turn and hear!
For life is brief and judgment near."

IX.
Then ceased The Voice. — The Dane replied
In tones where awe and inborn pride
For mastery strove,— "In vain ye chide
The wolf for ravaging the flock,
Or with its hardness taunt the rock,—
I am as they — my Danish strain
Sends streams of fire through every vein.
Amid thy realms of goule and ghost,
Say, is the fame of Eric lost,
Or Witikind's the Waster, known
Where fame or spoil was to be won;
Whose galleys ne'er bore off a shore
They left not black with flame?—
He was my sire, — and, sprung of him,
That rover merciless and grim,
Can I be soft and tame?
Part hence, and with my crimes no more upbraid me,
I am that Waster's son, and am but what he made me."

X.
The Phantom groan'd; — themountain shook around,
The fawn and wild-doe started at the sound,
The gorse and fern did wildly round them wave,
As if some sudden storm the impulse gave.
"All thou hast said is truth—Yet on the head
Of that bad sire let not the charge be laid,
That he, like thee, with unrelenting pace,
From grave to cradle ran the evil race:
Relentless in his avarice and ire,
Churches and towns he gave to sword and fire;
Shed blood like water, wasted every land,
Like the destroying angel's burning brand;
Fulfill'd whate'er of ill might be invented,
Yes—all these things he did—he did, but he repented!
Perchance it is part of his punishment still,
That his offspring pursues his example of ill.
But thou, when thy tempest of wrath shall next shake thee,
Gird thy loins for resistance, my son, and awake thee;
If thou yield'st to thy fury, how tempted soever,
The gate of repentance shall ope for thee never!"

XI.

"He is gone," said Lord Harold, and gazed as he spoke;
"There is nought on the path but the shade of the oak.
He is gone, whose strange presence my feeling oppress'd,
Like the night-hag that sits on the slumberer's breast.
My heart beats as thick as a fugitive's tread,
And cold dews drop from my brow and my head.—
Ho! Gunnar, the flasket yon almoner gave;
He said that three drops would recall from the grave.

For the first time Count Harold owns
leech-craft has power,
Or, his courage to aid, lacks the
juice of a flower!
The page gave the flasket, which
Walwayn had fill'd
With the juice of wild roots that his
art had distill'd—
So baneful their influence on all that
had breath,
One drop had been frenzy, and two
had been death.
Harold took it, but drank not; for
jubilee shrill,
And music and clamour were heard on the hill,
And down the steep pathway, o'er stock and o'er stone,
The train of a bridal came blithesomely on;
There was song, there was pipe, there was timbrel, and still
The burden was, "Joy to the fair Metelill!"

XII.

Harold might see from his high stance,
Himself unseen, that train advance
With mirth and melody;—
On horse and foot a mingled throng,
Measuring their steps to bridal song
And bridal minstrelsy;
And ever when the blithesome rout
Lent to the song their choral shout,
Redoubling echoes roll'd about,
While echoing cave and cliff sent out
The answering symphony
Of all those mimic notes which dwell
In hollow rock and sounding dell.

XIII.

Joy shook his torch above the band,
By many a various passion fann'd;—
As elemental sparks can feed
On essence pure and coarsest weed,
Gentle, or stormy, or refined,
Joy takes the colours of the mind.
Lightsome and pure, but unrepress'd,
He fired the bridegroom's gallant breast;
More feebly strove with maiden fear,
Yet still joy glimmer'd through the tear
On the bride's blushing cheek, that shows
Like dewdrop on the budding rose;
While Wulfstane's gloomy smile declared
The glee that selfish avarice shared,
And pleased revenge and malice high
Joy's semblance took in Jutta's eye.
On dangerous adventure sped,
The witch deem'd Harold with the dead,
For thus that morn her Demon said:
"If, ere the set of sun, be tied
The knot 'twixt bridegroom and his bride,
The Dane shall have no power of ill
O'er William and o'er Metelill."
And the pleased witch made answer, "Then
Must Harold have pass'd from the paths of men!
Evil repose may his spirit have,—
May hemlock and mandrake find root in his grave,—
May his death-sleep be dogged by dreams of dismay,
And his waking be worse at the answering day."

XIV.

Such was their various mood of glee
Blent in one shout of ecstasy.
But still when Joy is brimming highest,
Of Sorrow and Misfortune highest,
Of terror with her auge cheek,
And lurking Danger, sages speak:
These haunt each path, but chief they lay
Their snares beside the primrose way.—
Thus found that bridal band their path
Beset by Harold in his wrath.
Trembling beneath his maddening mood,
High on a rock the giant stood;
His shout was like the doom of death
Spoke o'er their heads that pass'd beneath.
His destined victims might not spy
The reddening terrors of his eye,—
The frown of rage that with'd his face,—
The lip that foam'd like boar's in chase;—
But all could see—and, seeing, all
Bore back to shun the threaten'd fall—
The fragment which their giant foe
Rent from the cliff and heaved to throw.

XV.

Backward they bore;—yet are there two
For battle who prepare:
No pause of dread Lord William knew
Ere his good blade was bare;
And Wulfstane bent his fatal yew,
But ere the silken cord he drew,
As hurl'd from Hecla's thunder, flew
That ruin through the air!
Full on the outlaw's front it came,
And all that late had human name,
And human face, and human frame,
That lived, and moved, and had free will
To choose the path of good or ill,
Is to its reckoning gone;
And nought of Wulfstane rests behind,  
Save that beneath that stone,  
Half-buried in the dinted clay,  
A red and shapeless mass there lay  
Of mingled flesh and bone!

XVI.

As from the bosom of the sky  
The eagle darts amain,  
Three bounds from yonder summit high  
Placed Harold on the plain.  
As the scared wild-fowl scream and fly,  
So fled the bridal train;  
As 'gainst the eagle's peerless might  
The noble falcon dares the fight,  
But dares the fight in vain,  
So fought the bridegroom; from his hand  
The Dane's rude mace has struck his brand,  
Its glittering fragments strew the sand,  
Its lord lies on the plain.  
Now, Heaven! take noble William's part,  
And melt that yet unmelted heart,  
Or, ere his bridal hour depart,  
The hapless bridegroom's slain!

XVII.

Count Harold's frenzied rage is high,  
There is a death-fire in his eye,  
Deep furrows on his brow are trench'd,  
His teeth are set, his hand is clenched,  
The foam upon his lip is white,  
His deadly arm is up to smite!  
But, as the mace aloft he swung,  
To stop the blow young Gunnar sprung,  
Around his master's knees he clung  
And cried, "In mercy spare!

O, think upon the words of fear  
Spoke by that visionary Seer,  
The crisis he foretold is here,—  
Grant mercy,—or despair!"

This word suspended Harold's mood,  
Yet still with arm upraised he stood,  
And visage like the headsman's rude  
That pauses for the sign.  
"O mark thee with the blessed rood,"  
The Page implored; "Speak word of good,  
Resist the fiend, or be subdued!"  
He sign'd the cross divine—  
Instant his eye hath human light,  
Less red, less keen, less fiercely bright;  
His brow relax'd the obdurate frown,  
The fatal mace sinks gently down,  
He turns and strides away;  
Yet oft, like revellers who leave  
Unfinish'd feast, looks back to grieve,  
As if repenting the reprieve  
He granted to his prey.  
Yet still of forbearance one sign hath he given,  
And fierce Witikind's son made one step towards heaven.

XVIII.

But though his dreaded footsteps part,  
Death is behind and shakes his dart;  
Lord William on the plain is lying,  
Beside him Metelill seems dying!—  
Bring odours—essences in haste—  
And lo! a flasket richly chased,—  
But Jutta the elixir proves  
Ere pouring it for those she loves—  
Then Walwayn's potion was not wasted,  
For when three drops the hag had tasted,  
So dismal was her yell,  
Each bird of evil omen woke,  
The raven gave his fatal croak,
And shriek'd the night-crow from the
  oak;
The screech-owl from the thicket
  broke,
  And flutter'd down the dell!
So fearful was the sound and stern,
The slumbers of the full-gorged ern
  were startled, and from furze and
  fern
  Of forest and of fell,
The fox and famish'd wolf replied
  (For wolves then prowld the Cheviot
  side).
From mountain head to mountain
  head
The unhallow'd sounds around were
  sped;
But when their latest echo fled,
The sorceress on the ground lay
  dead.

XIX.
Such was the scene of blood and
  woes,
With which the bridal morn arose
  Of William and of Metelill;
But oft, when dawning 'gins to
  spread,
The summer morn peeps dim and red
  Above the eastern hill,
Ere, bright and fair, upon his road
The King of Splendour walks abroad;
So, when this cloud had pass'd away,
Bright was the noontide of their day,
And all serene its setting ray.

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

WELL do I hope that this my
  minstrel tale
Will tempt no traveller from
  southern fields,
Whether in tilbury, barouche, or
  mail,
To view the Castle of these Seven
  Proud Shields,
Small confirmation its condition
  yields
To Meneville's high lay,—No
towers are seen
By theories, to prove the fortress
placed
By Roman bands, to curb the
invading Scot.
Hutchinson, Horsley, Camden,
I might quote,
But rather choose the theory less
civil
Of boors, who, origin of things
forgot,
Refer still to the origin of evil,
And for their master mason choose
that master-fiend the Devil.

II.

Therefore, I say, it was on fiend-
built towers
That stout Count Harold bent his
  wondering gaze,
When evening dew was on the
heather flowers,
And the last sunbeams made the
mountain blaze,
And tinged the battlements of other
days
With the bright level light ere
  sinking down.—
Illumined thus, the Dauntless
Dane surveys
The Seven Proud Shields that o'er
  the portal frown,
And on their blazons traced high
marks of old renown.
A wolf North Wales had on his
armour coat,
And Rhys of Powis-land a couchant
stag;
Strath-Clwyde's strange emblem
was a stranded boat,
Donald of Galloway's a trotting
nag;
A corn-sheaf gilt was fertile Lodon's
brag;
A dudgeon-dagger was by Dunmail
worn;
Northumbrian Adolf gave a sea-
beat crag;
Surmounted by a cross—such signs
were born'
Upon these antique shields, all
wasted now and worn.

III.

These scann'd, Count Harold
sought the castle-door
Whose ponderous bolts were rusted
to decay;
Yet till that hour adventurous
knight forbore
The unobstructed passage to essay.
More strong than armed warders
in array,
And obstacle more sure than bolt
or bar,
Sate in the portal Terror and
Dismay,
While Superstition, who forbade
to war
With foes of other mould than
mortal clay,
Cast spells across the gate, and
barr'd the onward way.

Vain now those spells; for soon
with heavy clank
The feebly-fasten'd gate was in-
ward push'd,
And, as it oped, through that em-
blazon'd rank
Of antique shields, the wind of
evening rush'd
With sound most like a groan, and
then was hush'd.
Is none who on such spot such
sounds could hear
But to his heart the blood had
faster rush'd;
Yet to bold Harold's breast that
throb was dear—
It spoke of danger nigh, but had no
touch of fear.

IV.

Yet Harold and his Page no signs
have traced
Within the castle, that of danger
show'd;
For still the halls and courts were
wild and waste,
As through their precincts the
adventurers trode.
The seven huge towers rose stately,
tall, and broad,
Each tower presenting to their
scrutiny
A hall in which a king might make
abode,
And fast beside, garnish'd both
proud and high,
Was placed a bower for rest in
which a king might lie.

As if a bridal there of late had
been,
Deck'd stood the table in each
gorgeous hall;
And yet it was two hundred years,
I ween,
Since date of that unhallow'd
festival.
Flagons, and ewers, and standing
cups, were all
Of tarnish'd gold, or silver nothing
clear,
With throne begilt, and canopy of
pall,
And tapestry clothed the walls
with fragments sear—
Frail as the spider's mesh did that
rich woof appear.

V.

In every bower, as round a hearse,
was hung
A dusky crimson curtain o'er the
bed,
And on each couch in ghastly wise were flung
The wasted relics of a monarch dead;
Barbaric ornaments around were spread,
Vests twined with gold, and chains of precious stone,
And golden circlets, meet for monarch's head;
While grin'd, as if in scorn amongst them thrown,
The wearer's fleshless skull, alike with dust bestrown.

For these were they who, drunken with delight,
On pleasure's opiate pillow laid their head,
For whom the bride's shy footstep, slow and light,
Was changed ere morning to the murderer's tread.
For human bliss and woe in the frail thread
Of human life are all so closely twined,
That till the shears of Fate the texture shred,
The close succession cannot be disjoin'd,
Nor dare we, from one hour, judge that which come behind.

VI.

But where the work of vengeance had been done,
In that seventh chamber, was a sterner sight;
There of the witch-brides lay each skeleton,
Still in the posture as to death when dight.
For this lay prone, by one blow slain outright;
And that, as one who struggled long in dying;
One bony hand held knife, as if to smite;

One bent on fleshless knees, as mercy crying;
One lay across the door, as kill'd in act of flying.

The stern Dane smiled this charnel-house to see,—
For his chafed thought return'd to Metelill;—
And "Well," he said, "hath woman's perfidy,
Empty as air, as water volatile,
Been here avenged—The origin of ill
Through woman rose, the Christian doctrine saith:
Nor deem I, Gunnar, that thy minstrel skill
Can show example where a woman's breath
Hath made a true-love vow, and, tempted, kept her faith."

VII.

The minstrel-boy half smiled, half sigh'd,
And his half-filling eyes he dried,
And said, "The theme I should but wrong,
Unless it were my dying song
(Our Scalds have said, in dying hour
The Northern harp has treble power),
Else could I tell of woman's faith,
Defying danger, scorn, and death.
Firm was that faith,—as diamond stone
Pure and unflaw'd,—her love unknown,
And unrequited,—firm and pure,
Her stainless faith could all endure;
From clime to clime,—from place to place,
Through want, and danger, and disgrace,
A wanderer's wayward steps could trace.—
All this she did, and guerdon none
Required, save that her burial-
stone
Should make at length the secret
known,
'Thus hath a faithful woman
done.'—
Not in each breast such truth is laid,
But Eivir was a Danish maid.'"—

VIII.
"Thou art a wild enthusiast," said
Count Harold, "for thy Danish
maid;
And yet, young Gunnar, I will own
Hers were a faith to rest upon.
But Eivir sleeps beneath her stone,
And all resembling her are gone.
What maid e'er show'd such con-
stancy
In plighted faith, like thine to me?
But couch thee, boy; the darksome
shade
Falls thickly round, nor be dismay'd
Because the dead are by.
They were as we; our little day
O'erspent, and we shall be as they.
Yet near me, Gunnar, be thou laid,
Thy couch upon my mantle made,
That thou mayst think, should fear
 invade,
Thy master slumbers nigh.'"
Thus couch'd they in that dread
abode,
Until the beams of dawning glow'd.

IX.
An alter'd man Lord Harold rose,
When he beheld that dawn unclose—
There's trouble in his eyes,
And traces on his brow and cheek
Of mingled awe and wonder speak:
"My page," he said, "arise;—
Leave we this place, my page."—No
more
He utter'd still the castle door
They cross'd—but there he paused
and said,
"My wildness hath awaked the
dead—
Disturb'd the sacred tomb!

Methought this night I stood on
high,
Where Hecla roars in middle sky,
And in her cavern'd gulls could spy
The central place of doom;
And there before my mortal eye
Souls of the dead came flitting by,
Whom fiends, with many a fiendish
cry,
Bore to that evil den!
My eyes grew dizzy, and my brain
Was wilder'd, as the elvish train,
With shriek and howl, dragg'd on
amain
Those who had late been men.

X.
"With haggard eyes and streaming
hair,
Jutta the Sorceress was there,
And there pass'd Wulfstane, lately
slain,
All crush'd and foul with bloody
stain.—
More had I seen, but that uprose
A whirlwind wild, and swept the
snows;
And with such sound as when at
need
A champion spurs his horse to speed,
Three arm'd knights rush on, who
lead
Caparison'd a sable steed.
Sable their harness, and there came
Through their closed visors sparks of
flame.
The first proclaim'd, in sounds of
fear,
'Harold the Dauntless, welcome
here!'
The next cried, 'Jubilee! we've won
Count Witikind the Waster's son!'
And the third rider sternly spoke,
'Mount, in the name of Zernebock!—
From us, O Harold, were thy
powers,—
Thy strength, thy dauntlessness, are
ours;
Nor think, a vassal thou of hell,
With hell can strive.' The fiend
spoke true!
My inmost soul the summons knew,  
As captives know the knell  
That says the headsman's sword is  
bare,  
And, with an accent of despair,  
Commands them quit their cell.  
I felt resistance was in vain,  
My foot had that fell stirrup ta'en,  
My hand was on the fatal mane,  
When to my rescue sped  
That Palmer's visionary form,  
And—like the passing of a storm—  
The demons yell'd and fled!

XI.

"His sable cowl, flung back, reveal'd  
The features it before conceal'd;  
And, Gunnar, I could find  
In him whose counsels strove to stay  
So oft my course on wilful way,  
My father Witikind!  
Doom'd for his sins, and doom'd for mine,  
A wanderer upon earth to pine  
Until his son shall turn to grace,  
And smooth for him a resting-place.—

Gunnar, he must not haunt in vain  
This world of wretchedness and pain:  
I'll tame my wilful heart to live  
In peace—to pity and forgive—  
And thou, for so the Vision said,  
Must in thy Lord's repentance aid.  
Thy mother was a prophetess,  
He said, who by her skill could guess  
How close the fatal textures join  
Which knit thy thread of life with mine;  
Then, dark, he hinted of disguise  
She framed to cheat too curious eyes,  
That not a moment might divide  
Thy fated footsteps from my side.  
Methought while thus my sire did teach,  
I caught the meaning of his speech,  
Yet seems its purport doubtful now."  
His hand then sought his thought- 
ful brow,  
Then first he mark'd, that in the tower  
His glove was left at waking hour.

XII.

Trembling at first, and deadly pale,  
Had Gunnar heard the vision'd tale;  
But when he learn'd the dubious close,  
He blush'd like any opening rose,  
And, glad to hide his tell-tale cheek,  
Hied back that glove of mail to seek;  
When soon a shriek of deadly dread  
Summon'd his master to his aid.

XIII.

What sees Count Harold in that bower,  
So late his resting-place?—  
The semblance of the Evil Power,  
Adored by all his race!  
Odin in living form stood there,  
His cloak the spoils of Polar bear;  
For plummy crest a meteor shed  
Its gloomy radiance o'er his head,  
Yet veil'd its haggard majesty  
To the wild lightnings of his eye.  
Such height was his, as when in stone  
O'er Upsal's giant altar shown:  
So flow'd his hoary beard;  
Such was his lance of mountain-pine,  
So did his sevenfold buckler shine;—  
But when his voice he rear'd,  
Deep, without harshness, slow and strong,  
The powerful accents roll'd along,  
And, while he spoke, his hand was laid  
On captive Gunnar's shrinking head.

XIV.

"Harold," he said, "what rage is thine,  
To quit the worship of thy line,  
To leave thy Warrior-God?—  
With me is glory or disgrace,  
Mine is the onset and the chase;  
Embattled hosts before my face  
Are wither'd by a nod.  
Wilt thou then forfeit that high seat  
Deserved by many a dauntless feat,  
Among the heroes of thy line,  
Eric and fiery Thorarine?—
Thou wilt not. Only I can give
The joys for which the valiant live,
Victory and vengeance—only I
Can give the joys for which they die,
The immortal tilt—the banquet full,
The brimming draught from foeman's skull.
Mine art thou, witness this thy glove,
The faithful pledge of vassal's love."

XV.
"Tempter," said Harold, firm of heart,
"I charge thee, hence! whate'er thou art,
I do defy thee—and resist
The kindling frenzy of my breast,
Waked by thy words; and of my mail,
Nor glove, nor buckler, splent, nor nail,
Shall rest with thee—that youth release,
And God, or Demon, part in peace."—
"Eivir," the Shape replied, "is mine,
Mark'd in the birth-hour with my sign.
Think'st thou that priest with drops
Could wash that blood-red mark away?
Or that a borrow'd sex and name
Can abrogate a Godhead's claim?"—
Thrill'd this strange speech through Harold's brain,
He clench'd his teeth in high disdain,
For not his new-born faith subdued
Some tokens of his ancient mood.—
"Now, by the hope so lately given
Of better trust and purer heaven,
I will assail thee, fiend!"—Then rose
His mace, and with a storm of blows
The mortal and the Demon close.

XVI.
Smoke roll'd above, fire flash'd around,
Darken'd the sky and shook the ground;
But not the artillery of hell,
The bickering lightning, nor the rock
Of turrets to the earthquake's shock,
Could Harold's courage quell.
Sternly the Dane his purpose kept,
And blows on blows resistless heap'd,
Till quail'd that Demon Form,
And—for his power to hurt or kill
Was bounded by a higher will—
Evanish'd in the storm.
Nor paused the Champion of the North,
But raised, and bore his Eivir forth,
From that wild scene of fiendish strife,
To light, to liberty, and life!

XVII.
He placed her on a bank of moss,
A silver runnel bubbled by,
And new-born thoughts his soul engross,
And tremors yet unknown across
His stubborn sinews fly,
The while with timid hand the dew
Upon her brow and neck he threw,
And mark'd how life with rosy hue
On her pale cheek revived anew,
And glimmer'd in her eye.
Ily he said, "That silken tress,—
What blindness mine that could not guess!
Or how could page's rugged dress
That bosom's pride belie?
O, dull of heart, through wild and wave
In search of blood and death to rave,
With such a partner nigh!"

XVIII.
Then in the mirror'd pool he peer'd,
Blamed his rough locks and shaggy beard,
The stains of recent conflict clear'd,—
And thus the Champion proved,
That he fears now who never fear'd,
And loves who never loved.
And Eivir—life is on her cheek,
And yet she will not move or speak,
Nor will her eyelid fully open;
Perchance it loves, that half-shut eye,
Through its long fringe, reserved and shy,
Affection's opening dawn to spy;  
And the deep blush, which bids its dye  
O'er cheek, and brow, and bosom fly,  
Speaks shame-facedness and hope.

XIX.

But vainly seems the Dane to seek  
For terms his new-born love to speak,—  
For words, save those of wrath and wrong,  
Till now were strangers to his tongue;  
So, when he raised the blushing maid,  
In blunt and honest terms he said,  
('Twere well that maids, when lovers woo,  
Heard none more soft, were all as true,)  
"Eivir! since thou for many a day  
Hast follow'd Harold's wayward way,  
It is but meet that in the line  
Of after-life I follow thine.  
To-morrow is Saint Cuthbert's tide,

And we will grace his altar's side,  
A Christian knight and Christian bride;  
And of Witikind's son shall the marvel be said,  
That on the same morn he was christen'd and wed."

CONCLUSION.

And now, Ennui, what ails thee, weary maid?  
And why these listless looks of yawning sorrow?  
No need to turn the page, as it 'twere lead,  
Or fling aside the volume till to-morrow,—  
Be cheer'd—'tis ended—and I will not borrow,  
To try thy patience more, one anecdote  
From Bartholine, or Perinskiold, or Snorro,  
Then pardon thou thy minstrel, who hath wrote  
A Tale six cantos long, yet scorn'd to add a note.
CONTRIBUTIONS
TO
MINSTRELSY OF THE SCOTTISH BORDER.
IMITATIONS OF THE ANCIENT BALLAD.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.
IN THREE PARTS.

PART FIRST.—ANCIENT.

Few personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Ercildoune, known by the appellation of The Rhymer. Uniting, or supposing to unite, in his person, the powers of poetical composition, and of vaticination, his memory, even after the lapse of five hundred years, is regarded with veneration by his countrymen. To give anything like a certain history of this remarkable man would be indeed difficult; but the curious may derive some satisfaction from the particulars here brought together.

It is agreed on all hands, that the residence, and probably the birthplace, of this ancient bard, was Ercildoune, a village situated upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymer's castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his surname was Lermont, or Learmont; and that the appellation of The Rhymer was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon the subject. In a charter, which is subjoined at length, the son of our poet designed himself "Thomas of Ercildoun, son and heir of Thomas Rymour of Ercildoun," which seems to imply that the father did not bear the hereditary name of Learmont; or, at least, was better known and distinguished by the epithet, which he had acquired by his personal accomplishments. I must, however, remark that, down to a very late period, the practice of distinguishing the parties, even in formal writings, by the epithets which had been bestowed on them from personal circumstances, instead of the proper surnames of their families, was common, and indeed necessary, among the Border clans. So early as the end of the thirteenth century, when surnames were hardly introduced in Scotland, this custom must have been universal. There is, therefore, nothing inconsistent in supposing our poet's name to have been actually Learmont, although, in this charter, he is distinguished by the popular appellation of The Rhymer.

We are better able to ascertain the period at which Thomas of Ercildoune lived, being the latter end of the thirteenth century. I am inclined to place his death a little farther back than Mr. Pinkerton, who supposes that he was alive in 1300 (List of Scottish Poets), which is hardly; I think, consistent with the charter already quoted, by which his son, in 1299, for himself and his heirs, conveys to the convent of the Trinity of Soltra, the tenement which he possessed by inheritance (hereditarie) in Ercildoune, with all claim which he or his predecessors could pretend thereto. From this we may infer, that the Rhymer was now dead, since we find the son disposing of the family property. Still, however, the argument of the learned historian will remain unimpeached as to the time of the poet's birth. For if, as we learn from Barbour, his prophecies were held in reputation as early as 1306, when Bruce slew the Red Cummin, the sanctity, and (let me add to Mr. Pinkerton's words) the uncertainty of antiquity, must have already involved his character and writings. In a charter of Peter de Haga de Bemersyde, which unfortunately wants a date, the Rhymer, a near neighbour, and, if we may trust tradition, a friend of the family, appears as a witness.—Chartulary of Melrose.

It cannot be doubted, that Thomas of Ercildoune was a remarkable and
important person in his own time, since, very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet and a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. If we may believe Mackenzie, Learmont only versified the prophecies delivered by Eliza, an inspired nun of a convent at Haddington. But of this there seems not to be the most distant proof. On the contrary, all ancient authors, who quote the Rhymer’s prophecies, uniformly suppose them to have been emitted by himself. Thus, in Winton’s Chronicle—

Of this fycht qulium spak Thomas
Of Ersydoune, that sayd in derne,
There suld meit staldwartly, starkie and sterne.
He sayd it in his prophecy;
But how he wist it was felry.

Book viii. chap. 32.

There could have been no felry (marvel) in Winton’s eyes at least, how Thomas came by his knowledge of future events, had he ever heard of the inspired nun of Haddington, which, it cannot be doubted, would have been a solution of the mystery, much to the taste of the Prior of Lochleven.

Whatever doubts, however, the learned might have, as to the source of the Rhymer’s prophetic skill, the vulgar had no hesitation to ascribe the whole to the intercourse between the bard and the Queen of Faëry. The popular tale bears, that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years’ residence, he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends in the Tower of Ercludoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were, composedly and slowly, parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. According to the popular belief, he still “drees his weird” in Fairy Land, and is one day expected to revisit earth. In the meanwhile, his memory is held in the most profound respect. The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists; but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone. A neighbouring rivulet takes the name of the Bogle Burn (Goblin Brook) from the Rhymer’s supernatural visitants. The veneration paid to his dwelling-place even attached itself in some degree to a person who, within the memory of man, chose to set up his residence in the ruins of Learmont’s tower. The name of this man was Murray, a kind of herbalist, who, by dint of some knowledge in simples, the possession of a musical clock, an electrical machine, and a stuffed alligator, added to a supposed communication with Thomas the Rhymer, lived for many years in very good credit as a wizard.

It seemed to the Editor unpardonable to dismiss a person so important in Border tradition as the Rhymer, without some farther notice than a simple commentary upon the following ballad. It is given from a copy, obtained from a lady residing not far from Ercludoune, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs. Brown’s MSS. The former copy, however, as might be expected, is far more minute as to local description. To this old tale the Editor has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind, to the Land of Faëry. To make his peace with the more severe antiquaries, the Editor has prefixed to the Second Part some remarks on Learmont’s prophecies.

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;  
A felrie he spied wi’ his ee;  
And there he saw a ladye bright,  
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.
Her shirt was o' the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o' the velvet lyne;
At ilka tett of her horse's mane,
Hung fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas he pull'd aff his cap,
And louted low down to his knee,
"All hail, thou mighty Queen of
Heaven!
For thy peer on earth I never did see."—

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
"That name does not belong to me;
I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
"Harp and carp along wi' me;
And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
Sure of your bode I will be."—

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird shall never daunton me."—
Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
"True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
And ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
She's ta'en true Thomas up behind;
And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
Until they reach'd a desert wide,
And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now,
true Thomas,
And lean your head upon my knee;
Abide and rest a little space,
And I will shew you ferlies three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset with thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Though after it but few enquires.

"And see ye not that braid braid road,
That lies across that lily leven?
That is the path of wickedness,
Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see not ye that bonny road,
That winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Where thou and I this night maun gae.

"But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever ye may hear or see;
For, if ye speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie."

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
And they saw neither sun nor moon,
But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
And they waded through red blude to the knee;
For a' the blude that's shed on earth
Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
"Take this for thy wages, true Thomas;
It will give thee the tongue that can never lie."—
"My tongue is mine ain," true Thomas said;
"A gudely gift ye wad gie to me!
I neither dought to buy nor sell,
At fair or tryst where I may be.

"I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
Nor ask of grace from fair ladye."—
"Now hold thy peace!" the lady said,
"For as I say, so must it be."—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green;
And till seven years were gane and past,
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

PART SECOND.—ALTERED FROM ANCIENT PROPHECIES.

The prophecies, ascribed to Thomas of Ercildoune, have been the principal means of securing to him remembrance "amongst the sons of his people." The author of Sir Tristrem would long ago have joined, in the vale of oblivion, "Clerk of Tranent, who wrote the adventure of Schir Gavain," if, by good hap, the same current of ideas respecting antiquity, which causes Virgil to be regarded as a magician by the Lazaroni of Naples, had not exalted the bard of Ercildoune to the prophetic character. Perhaps, indeed, he himself affected it during his life. We know, at least, for certain, that a belief in his supernatural knowledge was current soon after his death. His prophecies are alluded to by Barbour, by Winton, and by Henry the Minstrel, or Blind Harry, as he is usually termed. None of these authors, however, give the words of any of the Rhymer's vaticinations, but merely narrate, historically, his having predicted the events of which they speak. The earliest of the prophecies ascribed to him, which is now extant, is quoted by Mr. Pinkerton from a MS. It is supposed to be a response from Thomas of Ercildoune to a question from the heroic Countess of March, renowned for the defence of the Castle of Dunbar against the English, and termed, in the familiar dialect of her time, Black Agnes of Dunbar. This prophecy is remarkable, in so far as it bears very little resemblance to any verses published in the printed copy of the Rhymer's supposed prophecies. The verses are as follows:—

La Comtesse de Dunbar demande a Thomas de Ercidoune quant la guerre d'Esco pren dreit syn. Ey la reproudy et dyt.

When man is mad a kyng of a capped man;
When man is levere other mones thyng than his owen;
When londe thouns forest, ant forest is fele;
When hares kentlis of the her stane;
When Wyt and Wlle werres togedere;
When mon makes stables of kyrrks, and steels castels with sty;
When Rokesboroghchis nys no burgh ant market is at Forwylyce;
When Bamboone is donged with dede men;
When men ledes men in ropes to buyen and to sellen;
When a quarter of whaty wete is chaunged for a colt of ten markes;
When prude (pride) prikes and pees is leyd in prison;
When a Scot ne me hym hude ase hare in forme that the English ne shall hym fynte;
When rycht ant wronge astente the togedere;
When laddes wedeth lovedies;
When Scottes llen so faste, that, for faute of shep, by drowneth hemselfe;
When shal this be?
Nouther in thine tyne ne in mine;
Ah come ant gane;
Withme twenty winter ant one.
Pinkerton's Poems; from Maitland's MSS. quoting from Harl. Lib. 2253. F. 127.

When seven years were come and gane,
The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream;
And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
He saw the flash of armour flee,
And he beheld a gallant knight
Come riding down by the Eildon-tree.

He was a stalwart knight, and strong;
Of giant make he 'pear'd to be:
He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—"Well met, well met, true Thomas!
Some uncouth ferlies showtome."—
Says—"Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave!
Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me!

"Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave!
And I will show thee curses three,
Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
And change the green to the black livery.

"A storm shall roar this very hour,
From Ross's hills to Solway sea."—
"Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar!
For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lee."—

He put his hand on the Earlie's head;
He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,
And steel-dight nobles wiped their ee.

"The neist curse lights on Branxton hills:
By Floddden's high and heathery side,
Shall wave a banner red as blude,
And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.

"A Scottish King shall come full keen,
The ruddy lion beareth he;
A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
Shall make him wink and warre to see.

"When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
Thus to his men he still shall say—
'For God's sake, turn ye back again,
And give you southern folk a fray!'

Why should I lose, the right is mine?
My doom is not to die this day.'

"Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
And woe and wonder ye sall see;
How forty thousand spearmen stand,
Where you rank river meets the sea.

"There shall the lion lose the gylte,
And the libbards bear it clean away;
At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
Much gentil bluid that day.'—

"Enough, enough, of curse and ban;
Some blessings show thou now to me,
Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
"Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me!"—

"The first of blessings I shall thee show,
Is by a burn, that's call'd of bread;
Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

"Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and sheen,
Shall many a fallen courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

"Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree:
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,  
And drink the Saxon bluid sae free,  
The cross of stone they shall not know,  
So thick the corpses there shall be."—

“But tell me now,” said brave Dunbar,  
“True Thomas, tell now unto me,  
What man shall rule the isle Britain,  
Even from the north to the southern sea?”—

“A French Queen shall bear the son,  
Shall rule all Britain to the sea;  
He of the Bruce’s blood shall come,  
As near as in the ninth degree.

“The waters worship shall his race;  
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;  
For they shall ride over ocean wide,  
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree.”

PART THIRD.—MODERN.

BY WALTER SCOTT.

THOMAS THE RHYMER was renowned among his contemporaries, as the author of the celebrated romance of Sir Tristrem. Of this once-admired poem only one copy is now known to exist, which is in the Advocates’ Library. The Editor, in 1804, published a small edition of this curious work; which, if it does not revive the reputation of the bard of Ercildoune, is at least the earliest specimen of Scottish poetry hitherto published. Some account of this romance has already been given to the world in Mr. Ellis’s Specimens of Ancient Poetry, vol. i. p. 165, iii. p. 410; a work to which our predecessors and our posterity are alike obliged; the former, for the preservation of the best-selected examples of their poetical taste; and the latter, for a history of the English language, which will only cease to be interesting with the existence of our mother-tongue, and all that genius and learning have recorded in it. It is sufficient here to mention, that so great was the reputation of the romance of Sir Tristrem, that few were thought capable of reciting it after the manner of the author—a circumstance alluded to by Robert de Brunne, the annalist:—

I see in song, in sedgegyn tale,  
Of Erceldoun, and of Kendale,  
Now thame says as they thame wroght,  
And in thare saying it semes nocht.  
That thou may’ here in Sir Tristrem,  
Over gestes it has the steme,  
Over all that is or was;  
If men it said as made Thomas, &c.

It appears, from a very curious MS. of the thirteenth century, penes Mr. Douce of London, containing a French metrical romance of Sir Tristrem, that the work of our Thomas the Rhymer was known, and referred to, by the minstrels of Normandy and Bretagne. Having arrived at a part of the romance where reciters were wont to differ in the mode of telling the story, the French bard expressly cites the authority of the poet of Ercildoune:

Plusurs de nos granter ne volent,  
Co que del nain dire se solent,  
Ki femme Kaherdin dut aimer,  
Li nain vedut Tristram narrer,  
E entusche par grant engin,  
Quant il afole Kaherdin;  
Pur cest plaie pur cest mal,  
Eweiid Tristram Guvernal,  
En Engletre pur Ysolt;  
Thomas ico granter ne vol,  
Et si volt par raisun mostrer,  
Qu’ ico ne fut pas esteer, &c.

The tale of Sir Tristrem, as narrated in the Edinburgh MS., is totally different from the voluminous romance in prose, originally compiled on the same subject by Rusticien de Puise, and analysed by M. de Tressan; but agrees in every essential particular with the metrical performance just quoted, which is a work of much higher antiquity.

The following attempt to commemorate the Rhymer’s poetical fame, and the traditional account of his marvellous return to Fairy Land, being entirely modern, would have been placed with
greater propriety among the class of Modern Ballads, had it not been for its immediate connection with the first and second parts of the same story.

When seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie;
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall:
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lacked they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,
Nor goblets of the blood-red wine
Nor mantling quaigs of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done:
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round:
The Warrior of the Lake;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise,
The notes melodious swell;
Was none excell'd in Arthur's days,
The knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween;
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.
The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
High rear’d its glittering head;
And Avalon’s enchanted vale
In all its wonders spread.

Brangwain was there, and Segr amore,
And fiend-born Merlin’s gramarye;
Of that famed wizard’s mighty lore,
O who could sing but he?

Through many a maze the winning song
In changeful passion led,
Till bent at length the listening throng
O’er Tristrem’s dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
With agony his heart is wrung:
O where is Isolde’s lily hand,
And where her soothing tongue?

She comes! she comes!—like flash
of flame
Can lovers’ footsteps fly:
She comes! she comes!—she only came
To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die: her latest sigh
Join’d in a kiss his parting breath,
The gentlest pair, that Britain bare,
United are in death.

There paused the harp: its lingering sound
Died slowly on the ear;
The silent guests still bent around,
For still they seem’d to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak:
Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh;
But, half ashamed, the rugged cheek
Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Learmont’s stream, and Learmont’s tower,
The mists of evening close;

In camp, in castle, or in bower,
Each warrior sought repose,

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
Dream’d o’er the woeful tale;
When footsteps light, across the bent,
The warrior’s ears assail.

He starts, he wakes;—“What, Richard, ho!
Arise, my page, arise!
What venturous wight, at dead of night,
Dare step where Douglas lies!”—

Then forth they rush’d: by Leader’s tide,
A selcouth sight they see—
A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnamic.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move and slow;
Nor scare they at the gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont’s tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
Never a word he spake but three;—
“My sand is run; my thread is spun;
This sign regardeth me.”

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turn’d him oft
To view his ancient hall:
On the gray tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall;
And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

"Farewell, my fathers' ancient tower!
A long farewell," said he:
"The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

"To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

"Adieu! adieu!" again he cried,
All as he turn'd him roun'—
"Farewell to Leader's silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!"

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As lingering yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

Some said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

GLENFINLAS;
OR,
LORD RONALD'S CORONACH.

The simple tradition, upon which the following stanzas are founded, runs thus: While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary bothy (a hut, built for the purpose of hunting), and making merry over their venison and whisky, one of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced by the siren who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hut: the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trump, or Jew's harp, some strain, consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend, who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called the Glen of the Green Women.

Glenfinlas is a tract of forest-ground, lying in the Highlands of Perthshire, not far from Callender in Menteith. It was formerly a royal forest, and now belongs to the Earl of Moray. This country, as well as the adjacent district of Balquidder, was, in times of yore, chiefly inhabited by the Macgregors. To the west of the Forest of Glenfinlas lies Loch Katrine, and its romantic avenue, called the Troschachs. Benledi, Benmore, and Benvoirlich, are mountains in the same district, and at no great distance from Glenfinlas. The river Teith passes Callender and the Castle of Doune, and joins the Forth near Stirling. The Pass of Lenny is immediately above Callender, and is the principal access to the Highlands, from that town. Glenartney is a forest, near Benvoirlich. The whole forms a sublime tract of Alpine scenery.
For them the viewless forms of air obey,
  Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair;
They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
  And heartless oft, like moody madness stare,
To see the phantom-train their secret work prepare.

Collins.

"O hone a rie'! O hone a rie'!
The pride of Albin’s line is o'er,
And fall’n Glenartney’s stateliest tree;
  We ne’er shall see Lord Ronald more!"—

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
The chief that never fear’d a foe,
How matchless was thy broad claymore,
  How deadly thine unerring bow!

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
How, on the Teith’s resounding shore,
The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
  As down from Lenny’s pass you bore.

But o’er his hills, in festal day,
How blazed Lord Ronald’s beltane-tree, 435
While youths and maids the light strathspey
So nimbly danced with Highland glee!

Cheer’d by the strength of Ronald’s shell,
E’en age forgot his tresses hoar;
But now the loud lament we swell,
  O ne’er to see Lord Ronald more!

From distant isles a chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald’s halls to find,
And chase with him the dark-brown game,
  That bounds o’er Albin’s hills of wind.

'Twas Moy; whom in Columba’s isle,
The seer’s prophetic spirit found,
As, with a minstrel’s fire the while,
  He waked his harp’s harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear;
And many a lay of potent tone,
  Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, ’tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud,
  That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den,
The Chiefs have ta’en their distant way,
  And scour’d the deep Glenfinlas glen.

No vassals wait their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board;
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid,
  Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, through brake, and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
  The quarry to their hut they drew.

In gray Glenfinlas’ deepest nook
  The solitary cabin stood,
Fast by Moneira’s sullen brook,
  Which murmurs through that lonely wood.

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown;
And summer mist in dewy balm
  Steep’d heathy bank, and mossy stone.
The moon, half-hid in silvery flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quivering on Katrine’s distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi’s head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their sylvan fare the Chief’s enjoy;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald’s eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

“Since Enrick’s fight, since Morna’s death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.

“E’en then, when o’er the heath of woe,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp’s wild wailings flow,
On me the Seer’s sad spirit came.

“The last dread curse of angry heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
To dash each glimpse of joy was given—
The gift, the future ill to know.

“The bark thou saw’st, yon summer morn,
So gaily part from Oban’s bay,
My eye beheld her dash’d and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.

“Thy Fergus too—thy sister’s son,
Thou saw’st, with pride, the gallant’s power,
As marching ’gainst the Lord of Downe,
He left the skirts of huge Benmore.

“Thou only saw’st their tartans wave,
As down Benvoirlich’s side they wound,
Heard’st but the pibroch, answering brave
To many a target clanking round.

“I heard the groans, I mark’d the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears
He pour’d his clan’s resistless roar.

“And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
And bidst my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the wanton kiss—
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee!

"I see the death-damps chill thy brow;
I hear thy Warning Spirit cry;
The corpse-lights dance— they're gone, and now...
No more is given to gifted eye!"

"Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
Sad prophet of the evil hour!
Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
Because to-morrow's storm may lour?

"Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
Clangillian's Chieftain ne'er shall fear;
His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
Though doom'd to stain the Saxon spear.

"E'en now, to meet me in yon dell,
My Mary's buskins brush the dew."
He spoke, nor bade the Chief farewell,
But called his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour return'd each hound;
In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch'd beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet; though midnight came,
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
As, bending o'er the dying flame,
He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl;

Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs and stifled growl.

Untouch'd, the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door;
And shook responsive every string,
As light a footstep press'd the floor.

And by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
Close by the minstrel's side was seen
An huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem;
Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare,
As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

With maiden blush, she softly said,
"O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen,
In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
A lovely maid in vest of green:

"With her a chief in Highland pride;
His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
The mountain dirk adorns his side,
Far on the wind his tartans flow?"

"And who art thou? and who are they?"
All ghastly gazing, Moy replied:
"And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas' side?"

"Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
The castle of the bold Glengyle.
IMITATIONS when

And Wild

Then, When)

Alone, I dare not venture there,
Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost.”—

"Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there;
Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
Which still must rise when mortals sleep.”—

"O first, for pity’s gentle sake,
Guide a lone wanderer on her way!
For I must cross the haunted brake,
And reach my father’s towers ere

"First, three times tell each Ave-bead,
And thrice a Pater-noster say;
Then kiss with me the holy rede;
So shall we safely wend our way.”—

"O shame to knighthood, strange
And foul!
Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
Which best befits thy sullen vow.

"Not so, by high Dunlathmon’s fire,
Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
When gaily rung thy raptured lyre
To wanton Morna’s melting eye.”

Wild stared the minstrel’s eyes of flame,
And high his sable locks arose,
And quick his colour went and came,
As fear and rage alternate rose.

“And thou! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resign’d,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sail’d ye on the midnight wind;

“Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle’s pretended line;
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood—
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine.”

He muttered thrice St. Oran’s rhyme,
And thrice St. Fillan’s powerful prayer;
Then turn’d him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o’er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind;
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung,
As many a magic change they find.

Tall wax’d the Spirit’s altering form,
Till to the roof her stature grew;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear:
The slender hut in fragments flew;
But not a lock of Moy’s loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise;
High o’er the minstrel’s head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing firebrands fell.
Next dropp'd from high a mangled arm;
The fingers strain'd an half-drawn blade:
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
Stream'd the proud crest of high Benmore;
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

Woe to Moneira's sullen rills!
Woe to Glenfinlas' dreary glen!
There never son of Albin's hills
Shall draw the hunter's shaft again!

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
The wayward Ladies of the Glen.

And we—behind the Chieftain's shield,
No more shall we in safety dwell;
None leads the people to the field—
And we the loud lament must swell.

O hone a rie'! O hone a rie'!
The pride of Albin's line is o'er!
And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

Smaylho'rne, or Smallholm Tower, the scene of the following ballad, is situated on the northern boundary of Roxburghshire, among a cluster of wild rocks, called Sandiknow-Crags, the property of Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden. The tower is a high square building, surrounded by an outer wall, now ruinous. The circuit of the outer court, being defended on three sides, by a precipice and morass, is accessible only from the west, by a steep and rocky path. The apartments, as is usual in a Border keep, or fortress, are placed one above another, and communicate by a narrow stair; on the roof are two bartisans, or platforms, for defence or pleasure. The inner door of the tower is wood, the outer an iron gate; the distance between them being nine feet, the thickness, namely, of the wall. From the elevated situation of Smaylholme Tower, it is seen many miles in every direction. Among the crags by which it is surrounded, one, more eminent, is called the Watchfold, and is said to have been the station of a beacon, in the times of war with England. Without the tower-court is a ruined chapel. Brotherstone is a heath, in the neighbourhood of Smaylho'rne Tower.

This ballad was first printed in Mr. Lewis's Tales of Wonder. It is here published, with some additional illustrations, particularly an account of the battle of Ancram Moor; which seemed proper in a work upon Border antiquities. The catastrophe of the tale is founded upon a well-known Irish tradition. This ancient fortress and its vicinity formed the scene of the Editor's infancy, and seemed to claim from him this attempt to celebrate them in a Border tale.

The Baron of Smaylho'rne rose with day,
He spurr'd his courser on,
Without stop or stay, down the rocky way,
That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buc- cleuch,
His banner broad to rear;
He went not 'gainst the English yew,
To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack was braced, and his helmet was laced,
And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore;
At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron return'd in three days' space,
And his looks were sad and sour;
And weary was his courser's pace,
As he reach'd his rocky tower.

He came not from where Auncram Moor
Ran red with English blood;
Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
His acton pierced and tore,
His axe and his dagger with blood imbrued,—
But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
He held him close and still;
And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
His name was English Will.

"Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
Come hither to my knee;
Though thou art young, and tender of age,
I think thou art true to me.

"Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
And look thou tell me true!
Since I from Smaylho'me tower have been,
What did thy lady do!"—

"My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.

"The bittern clamour'd from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
To the eiry Beacon Hill.

"I watch'd her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone;—
No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
It burned all alone.

"The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary's might! an Armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.

"And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.

"The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still.
As again I watch'd the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.
And I heard her name the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve;
And say, 'Come this night to thy lady's bower;
Ask no bold Baron's leave.

"He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch;
His lady is all alone;
The door she'll undo, to her knight so true,
On the eve of good St. John.'—

"I cannot come; I must not come;
I dare not come to thee;
On the eve of St. John I must wander alone:
In thy bower I may not be.'—
"Now, out on thee, saint-hearted knight! Thou shouldst not say me nay; For the eve is sweet, and when lovers meet, Is worth the whole summer's day.

"And I'll chain the blood-hound, and the warden shall not sound, And rushes shall be strew'd on the stair; So, by the black rood-stone, and by holy St. John, I conjure thee, my love, to be there!"

"Though the blood-hound be mute, and the rush beneath my foot, And the warden his bugle should not blow, Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the east, And my footstep he would know."

"O fear not the priest, who sleepeth to the east! For to Dryburgh the way he has ta'en; And there to say mass, till three days do pass, For the soul of a knight that is slayne."

"He turn'd him around, and grimly he frown'd; Then he laugh'd right scornfully— He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight, May as well say mass for me:

"At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power, In thy chamber will I be. With that he was gone, and my lady left alone, And no more did I see."

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron's brow, From the dark to the blood-red high;

"Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen, For, by Mary, he shall die!"

"His arms shone full bright, in the beacon's red light: His plume it was scarlet and blue; On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound, And his crest was a branch of the yew."

"Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page, Loud dost thou lie to me! For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould, All under the Eildon-tree."

"Yet hear but my word, my noble lord! For I heard her name his name; And that lady bright, she called the knight Sir Richard of Coldinghame."

The bold Baron's brow then changed, I trow, From high blood-red to pale— "The grave is deep and dark—and the corpse is stiff and stark— So I may not trust thy tale.

"Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose, And Eildon slopes to the plain, Full three nights ago, by some secret foe, That gay gallant was slain.

"The varying light deceived thy sight, And the wild winds drown'd the name; For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing, For Sir Richard of Coldinghame!"

He pass'd the court-gate, and he oped the tower-gate, And he mounted the narrow stair,
To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood;
Look'd over hill and vale;
Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mortoun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!"—
"Now hail, thou Baron true!
What news, what news, from Ancram fight?
What news from the bold Buccleuch?"—

"The Ancram Moor is red with gore,
For many a southron fell;
And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,
To watch our beacons well."—

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said:
Nor added the Baron a word:
Then she stepp'd down the stair to her chamber fair,
And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron tossed and turn'd,
And oft to himself he said,—
"The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave is deep . . .
It cannot give up the dead!"—

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
The night was wellnigh done,
When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
On the eve of good St. John.

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,
By the light of a dying flame;
And she was aware of a knight stood there—
Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
"For the holy Virgin's sake!"—
"Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
But, lady, he will not awake.

"By Eildon-tree, for long nights three,
In bloody grave have I lain;
The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
But, lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
Most foully slain, I fell:
And my restless sprite on the beacon's height,
For a space is doom'd to dwell.

"At our trysting-place, for a certain space,
I must wander to and fro:
But I had not had power to come to thy bower
Had'st thou not conjured me so."—

Love master'd fear—her brow she cross'd;
"How, Richard, hast thou sped?
And art thou saved, or art thou lost?"—
The vision shook his head!

"Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life;
So bid thy lord believe:
That lawless love is guilt above,
This awful sign receive."

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam;
His right upon her hand;
The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
For it scorch'd like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
Remains on that board impress'd;
And for evermore that lady wore
A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,
Ne'er looks upon the sun;
There is a monk in Melrose tower,
He speaketh word to none.

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day, 440
That monk, who speaks to none—
That nun was Smaylho'ne's Lady gay
That monk the bold Baron.

Cadyow Castle.
Addressed to
The Right Honourable
Lady Anne Hamilton.

The ruins of Cadyow, or Cadzow Castle, the ancient baronial residence of the family of Hamilton, are situated upon the precipitous banks of the river Evan, about two miles above its junction with the Clyde. It was dismantled, in the conclusion of the Civil Wars, during the reign of the unfortunate Mary, to whose cause the house of Hamilton devoted themselves with a generous zeal which occasioned their temporary obscurity, and, very nearly, their total ruin. The situation of the ruins, embosomed in wood, darkened by ivy and creeping shrubs, and overhanging the brawling torrent, is romantic in the highest degree. In the immediate vicinity of Cadyow is a grove of immense oaks, the remains of the Caledonian Forest, which anciently extended through the south of Scotland, from the eastern to the Atlantic Ocean. Some of these trees measure twenty-five feet, and upwards, in circumference; and the state of decay in which they now appear, shows that they have witnessed the rites of the Druids. The whole scenery is included in the magnificent and extensive park of the Duke of Hamilton. There was long preserved in this forest the breed of the Scottish wild cattle, until their ferocity occasioned their being extirpated, about forty years ago. Their appearance was beautiful, being milk-white, with black muzzles, horns, and hoofs. The bulls are described by ancient authors as having white manes; but those of latter days had lost that peculiarity, perhaps by intermixture with the tame breed.

In detailing the death of the Regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, it would be injustice to my reader to use other words than those of Dr. Robertson, whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting. "Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the Regent's clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the Regent's favourites, who seized his house, and turned out his wife, naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad. This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the Regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enterprise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain vengeance. He followed the Regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved at last to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow, through which he was to pass in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand in a wooden gallery, which had a window towards the street; spread a feather-bed on the floor to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without; and, after all this preparation, calmly expected the Regent's approach, who had lodged, during the night, in a house not far distant. Some indistinct information of the danger which threatened him had been conveyed to the Regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the
street; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavoured to break into the house whence the blow had come; but they found the door strongly barricaded, and, before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse, which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The Regent died the same night of his wound."—*History of Scotland*, book v.

Bothwellhaughrode straight to Hamilton, where he was received in triumph; for the ashes of the houses in Clydesdale, which had been burned by Murray's army, were yet smoking; and party prejudice, the habits of the age, and the enormity of the provocation, seemed to his kinsmen to justify the deed. After a short abode at Hamilton, this fierce and determined man left Scotland, and served in France, under the patronage of the family of Guise, to whom he was doubtless recommended by having avenged the cause of their niece, Queen Mary, upon her ungrateful brother. De Thou has recorded, that an attempt was made to engage him to assassinate Gaspar de Coligni, the famous Admiral of France, and the buckler of the Huguenot cause. But the character of Bothwellhaugh was mistaken. He was no mercenary trader in blood, and rejected the offer with contempt and indignation. He had no authority, he said, from Scotland to commit murders in France; he had avenged his own just quarrel, but he would neither, for price nor prayer, avenge that of another man.—*Thuanus*, cap. 46.

The Regent's death happened 23rd January, 1569. It is applauded or stigmatised, by contemporary historians, according to their religious or party prejudices. The triumph of Blackwood is unbounded. He not only extols the pious feat of Bothwellhaugh, "who," he observes, "satisfied, with a single ounce of lead, him whose sacrilegious avarice had stripped the metropolitan church of St. Andrews of its covering;" but he ascribes it to immediate divine inspiration, and the escape of Hamilton to little less than the miraculous interference of the Deity.—*Jubb*, vol. ii. p. 263. With equal injustice, it was, by others, made the ground of a general national reflection; for, when Mather urged Berney to assassinate Burleigh, and quoted the examples of Poltrot and Bothwellhaugh, the other conspirator answered, "that neither Poltrot nor Hambleton did attempt their enterpryse, without some reason or consideration to lead them to it; as the one, by hyre, and promise of preferment or rewarde; the other, upon desperate mind of revenge, for a lyttle wrong done unto him, as the report goeth, according to the vyle trayterous dysposysyon of the hoole natyon of the Scottes."—*Murdin's State Papers*, vol. i. p. 197.

**WHEN princely Hamilton's abode**

Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
Thrill to the music of the shade,
Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
And tune my harp, of Border frame,
On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst turn,
To draw oblivion's pall aside,
And mark the long-forgotten urn.
The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
Now clothed the mountains' lofty range.
Then, noble maid! at thy command,
Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
The past returns—the present flies.

Where, with the rock's wood-cover'd side,
Were blended late the ruins green, 
Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
And feudal banners flaunt between:

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
Was shaggy'd with thorn and tangling sloe,
The ashler buttress braves its force,
And ramparts frown in battled row.

'Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
Obscurely dance on Evan's stream;
And on the wave the warder's fire
Is chequering the moonlight beam.

Fades slow their light; the east is gray;
The weary warder leaves his tower;
Steeds snort; uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
And merry hunters quit the bower.

The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
As, dashing o'er, the jovial rout
Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.

First of his troop, the Chief rode on;
His shouting merry-men throng behind;
The steed of princely Hamilton
Was fleeter than the mountain wind.

From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
The startled red-deer scuds the plain,
For the hoarse bugle's warrior-sound
Has roused their mountain haunts again.

Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
What sullen roar comes down the gale,
And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?

Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
That roam in woody Caledon,
Crashing the forest in his race,
The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.

Fierce, on the hunter's quiver'd band,
He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
Spurns, with black hoof and horn,
The sand,
And tosses high his mane of snow.

Aim'd well, the Chieftain's lance has flown;
Struggling in blood the savage lies;
His roar is sunk in hollow groan—
Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the pryse! 441

'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.

Proudly the Chieftain mark'd his clan,
On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
Yet miss'd his eye the boldest man
That bore the name of Hamilton.
"Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
Still wont our weal and woe to share?
Why comes he not our sport to grace?
Why shares he not our hunter's fare?"

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face,
(Gray Pasley's haughty lord was he,)
"At merry feast, or buxom chase,
No more the warrior wilt thou see.

Few suns have set since Woodhouselee Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam,
When to his hearths, in social glee, The war-worn soldier turn'd him home.

"There, wan from her maternal throes,
His Margaret, beautiful and mild, Sate in her bower, a pallid rose, And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

"O change accursed! past are those days;
False Murray's ruthless spoilers came, And, for the hearth's domestic blaze, Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

"What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
Where mountain Eske through woodland flows, Her arms enfold a shadowy child— Oh! is it she, the pallid rose?

"The wilder'd traveller sees her glide, And hears her feeble voice with awe—

'Revenge,' she cries, 'on Murray's pride! And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!'

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief Burst mingling from the kindred band, And half arose the kindling Chief, And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream and rock, Rides headlong, with resistless speed, Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke Drives to the leap his jaded steed; Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare, As one some vision'd sight that saw, Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?— 'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh.

From gory selle, and reeling steed, Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound, And, reeking from the recent deed, He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke—"'Tis sweet to hear In good greenwood the bugle blown, But sweeter to Revenge's ear, To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

"Your slaughter'd quarry proudly trode, At dawning morn, o'er dale and down, But prouder base-born Murray rode Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.
"From the wild Border's humbled side, In haughty triumph marched he, While Knox relax'd his bigot pride, And smiled, the traitorous pomp to see.

"But can stern Power, with all his vaunt, Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare, The settled heart of Vengeance daunt, Or change the purpose of Despair?

"With hackbut bent, my secret stand, Dark as the purposed deed, I chose, And mark'd, where, mingling in his band, Troop'd Scottish pikes and English bows.

"Dark Morton, girt with many a spear, Murder's soul minion, led the van; And clash'd their broadswords in the rear The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.

"Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh, Obsequious at their Regent's rein, And haggard Lindesay's iron eye, That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

"Mid pennon'd spears, a steely grove, Proud Murray's plumage floated high; Scarse could his trampling charger move, So close the minions crowded nigh.

"From the raised vizor's shade, his eye, Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along, And his steel truncheon, waved on high, Seem'd marshalling the iron throng.

"But yet his sadden'd brow confess'd A passing shade of doubt and awe; Some fiend was whispering in his breast; 'Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"The death-shot parts—the charger springs— Wild rises tumult's startling roar! And Murray's plumy helmet rings— —Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

"What joy the raptured youth can feel, To hear her love the loved one tell— Or he, who broaches on his steel The wolf, by whom his infant fell!

"But dearer to my injured eye To see in dust proud Murray roll; And mine was ten times trebled joy, To hear him groan his felon soul.

"My Margaret's spectre glided near; With pride her bleeding victim saw; And shriek'd in his death-deafen'd ear, 'Remember injured Bothwellhaugh!'

"Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault! Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree! Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow!— Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free!"
Vaults every warrior to his steed;
Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
"Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed!
Couch, Arran! couch thy spear of flame!"

But, see! the minstrel vision fails—
The glimmering spears are seen no more;
The shouts of war die on the gales,
Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
The blackbird whistles down the vale,
And sunk in ivied ruins lie
The banner'd towers of Evandale.

For Chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
And Vengeance shouting o'er the slain,
Lo! high-born Beauty rules the steed,
Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
The maids who list the minstrel's tale;
Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
On the fair banks of Evandale!

THE GRAY BROTHER.

A FRAGMENT.

The imperfect state of this ballad, which was written several years ago, is not a circumstance affected for the purpose of giving it that peculiar interest which is often found to arise from ungratified curiosity. On the contrary, it was the Editor's intention to have completed the tale, if he had found himself able to succeed to his own satisfaction. Yielding to the opinion of persons, whose judgment, if not biased by the partiality of friendship, is entitled to deference, he has preferred inserting these verses as a fragment, to his intention or entirely suppressing them.

The tradition, upon which the tale is founded, regards a house upon the barony of Gilmerton, near Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian. This building, now called Gilmerton Grange, was originally named Burnsdale, from the following tragic adventure. The barony of Gilmerton belonged, of yore, to a gentleman named Heron, who had one beautiful daughter. This young lady was seduced by the Abbot of Newbattle, a richly endowed abbey, upon the banks of the South Esk, now a seat of the Marquis of Lothian. Heron came to the knowledge of this circumstance, and learned also, that the lovers carried on their guilty intercourse by the connivance of the lady's nurse, who lived at this house of Gilmerton Grange, or Burndale. He formed a resolution of bloody vengeance, undeterred by the supposed sanctity of the clerical character, or by the stronger claims of natural affection. Choosing, therefore, a dark and windy night, when the objects of his vengeance were engaged in a stolen interview, he set fire to a stack of dried thorns, and other combustibles, which he had caused to be piled against the house, and reduced to a pile of glowing ashes the dwelling, with all its inmates.

The scene with which the ballad opens, was suggested by the following curious passage, extracted from the Life of Alexander Peden, one of the wandering and persecuted teachers of the sect of Cameronians, during the reign of Charles II. and his successor, James. This person was supposed by his followers, and, perhaps, really believed himself, to be possessed of supernatural gifts; for the wild scenes which they frequented, and the constant dangers which were incurred through their proscription, deepened upon their minds the gloom of superstition, so general in that age.

"About the same time he [Peden] came to Andrew Normand's house, in the parish of Alloway, in the shire of Ayr, being to preach at night in his barn. After he came in, he halted a little, leaning upon a chair-back, with his face covered; when he lifted up his
IMITATIONS OF THE ANCIENT BALLAD. 581

head, he said, "They are in this house that I have not one word of salvation unto"; he halted a little again, saying, "This is strange, that the devil will not go out, that we may begin our work!" Then there was a woman went out, ill-looked upon almost all her life, and to her dying hour, for a witch, with many presumptions of the same. It escaped me, in the former passages, what John Muirhead (whom I have often mentioned) told me, that when he came from Ireland to Galloway, he was at family-worship, and giving some notes upon the Scripture read, when a very ill-looking man came, and sat down within the door, at the back of the hallan: immediately he halted and said, "There is some unhappy body just now come into this house. I charge him to go out, and not stop my mouth!" This person went out, and he insisted, yet he saw him neither come in nor go out."—The Life and Prophecies of Mr. Alexander Peden, late Minister of the Gospel at New Glenluce, in Galloway, part ii. § 26.

A friendly correspondent remarks, "that the incapacity of proceeding in the performance of a religious duty, when a contaminated person is present, is of much higher antiquity than the era of the Reverend Mr. Alexander Peden."—Vide Hygini Fabulas, cap. 26.

"Medea Corintho exul, Athenas, ad Aegaeum Pandionis filium devent in hospitium, eique nupsit."

—"Postea sacerdos Diaene Medeaum exagitare capit, regique negabant sacra caste facere posse, eo quod in ea civitate esset mulier venefica et scelerata; tum exulat." 

The Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
All on Saint Peter's day,
With the power to him given, by the saints in heaven,
To wash men's sins away.

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
And the people kneel'd around,
And from each man's soul his sins did pass,
As he kiss'd the holy ground.

And all, among the crowded throng,
Was still, both limb and tongue,
While, through vaulted roof and aisles aloof,
The holy accents rung.

At the holiest word he quiver'd for fear,
And falter'd in the sound—
And, when he would the chalice rear
He dropp'd it to the ground.

"The breath of one ot evil deed Pollutes our sacred day;
He has no portion in our creed,
No part in what I say.

"A being, whom no blessed word
To ghostly peace can bring;
A wretch, at whose approach abhor'd.
Recoils each holy thing.

"Up, up, unhappy! haste, arise!
My adjuration hear!
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here!"—

Amid them all a pilgrim kneel'd,
In gown of sackcloth gray;
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

For forty days and nights so drear,
I ween he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear;
His fast he ne'er had broke.

Amid the penitential flock,
Seem'd none more bent to pray;
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose and went his way.

Again unto his native land
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

His unblest feet his native seat;
'Mid Eske's fair woods, regain;
Thro' woods more fair no stream
more sweet
Rolls to the eastern main.
And lords to meet the pilgrim came,  
And vassals bent the knee;  
For all 'mid Scotland's chiefs of  
fame,  
Was none more famed than he.

And boldly for his country, still,  
In battle he had stood,  
Ay, even when on the banks of Till  
Her noblest pour'd their blood.

Sweet are the paths, O passing  
sweet!  
By Eske's fair streams that run,  
O'er airy steep, through copsewood  
dee p,  
Impervious to the sun.

There the rapt poet's step may rove,  
And yield the muse the day;  
There Beauty, led by timid Love,  
May shun the tell-tale ray;

From that fair dome, where suit is  
paid,  
By blast of bugle free, to  
Auchendinny's hazel glade,  
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy  
grove,  
And Roslin's rocky glen,  
Dalketh, which all the virtues love,  
And classic Hawthornden?

Yet never a path, from day to day,  
The pilgrim's footsteps range,  
Save but the solitary way  
To Burndale's ruin'd grange.

A woful place was that, I ween,  
As sorrow could desire;  
For nodding to the fall was each  
crumbling wall,  
And the roof was scathed with fire.

It fell upon a summer's eve,  
While, on Carnethy's head,  
The last faint gleams of the sun's  
low beams  
Had streak'd the gray with red;

And the convent bell did vespers tell,  
Newbattle's oaks among,  
And mingled with the solemn knell  
Our Ladye's evening song:

The heavy knell, the choir's faint  
swell,  
Came slowly down the wind,  
And on the pilgrim's ear they fell,  
As his wonted path he did find.

Deep sunk in thought, I ween, he  
was,  
Nor ever raised his eye,  
Until he came to that dreary place,  
Which did all in ruins lie.

He gazed on the walls, so scathed  
with fire,  
With many a bitter groan—  
And there was aware of a Gray  
Friar,  
Resting him on a stone.

"Now, Christ thee save!" said the  
Gray Brother;  
"Some pilgrim thou seemest  
to be."  
But in sore amaze did Lord Albert  
gaze,  
Nor answer again made he.

"O come ye from east, or come ye  
from west,  
Or bring reliques from over the  
sea;  
Or come ye from the shrine of  
St. James the divine,  
Or St. John of Beverley?"—

"I come not from the shrine of  
St. James the divine,  
Nor bring reliques from over the  
sea;  
I bring but a curse from our father,  
the Pope,  
Which for ever will cling to  
me."—

"Now, woful pilgrim, say not so!  
But kneel thee down to me,
And shrive thee so clean of thy
deadly sin,
That absolved thou mayst be.”—

“And who art thou, thou Gray
Brother,
That I should shrive to thee,
When He, to whom are given the
keys of earth and heaven,
Has no power to pardon me?”—

“O I am sent from a distant clime,
Five thousand miles away,
And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
Done here 'twixt night and day.”

The pilgrim kneel’d him on the
sand,
And thus began his saye—
When on his neck an ice-cold
hand
Did that Gray Brother laye.

WAR-SONG OF THE ROYAL
EDINBURGH LIGHT
DRAGOONS.

Nennius. Is not peace the end of arms?
Caratach. Not where the cause implies a
general conquest.
Had we a difference with some petty isle,
Or with our neighbours, Britons, for our land-
marks,
The taking in of some rebellious lord,
Or making head against a slight commotion,
After a day of blood, peace might be argued;
But where we grapple for the land we live on,
The liberty we hold more dear than life,
The gods we worship, and, next these, our
honours,
And, with those, swords that know no end of
battle—
Those men, beside themselves, allow no neighbour,
Those minds, that, where the day is, claim inherit-
ance,
And, where the sun makes ripe the fruit, their
harvest,
And, where they march but measure out more
ground
To add to Rome—
It must not be—No! as they are our foes,
Let’s use the peace of honour—that’s fair dealing;
But in our hands our swords. The hardy Roman,
That thinks to graft himself into my stock,
Must first begin his kindred under ground,
And be allied in ashes.”—

Boudica.

The following War-Song was written
during the apprehension of an invasion.
The corps of volunteers to which it was
addressed, was raised in 1797, consist-
ing of gentlemen, mounted and armed
at their own expense. It still subsists,
as the Right Troop of the Royal Mid-
Lothian Light Cavalry, commanded by
the Honourable Lieutenant-Colonel
Dundas. The noble and constitutional
measure of arming freemen in defence
of their own rights, was nowhere more
successful than in Edinburgh, which
furnished a force of 3000 armed and
disciplined volunteers, including a regi-
ment of cavalry, from the city and
county, and two corps of artillery, each
able to serving twelve guns. To
such a force, above all others, might, in
similar circumstances, be applied the
exhortation of our ancient Galgacus:

“Proinde ituri in aciem, et majores
vestros et posteros cogitate.” 1812.

To horse! to horse! the standard
flies,
The bugles sound the call;
The Gallic navy stems the seas,
The voice of battle’s on the breeze,
Arouse ye, one and all!

From high Dunedin’s towers we
come,
A band of brothers true;
Our casques the leopard’s spoils
surround,
With Scotland’s hardy thistle
crown’d;
We boast the red and blue.

Though tamely crouch to Gallia’s
frown
Dull Holland’s tardy train;
Their ravish’d toys though Romans
mourn;
Though gallant Switzers vainly
spurn,
And, foaming, gnaw the chain;
Oh! had they mark’d the avenging
call
Their brethren’s murder gave,
IMITATIONS OF THE ANCIENT BALLAD.

Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,
Nor patriot valour, desperate grown,
Sought freedom in the grave!

Shall we, too, bend the stubborn head,
In Freedom's temple born,
Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,
To hail a master in our isle,
Or brook a victor's scorn?

No! though destruction o'er the land
Come pouring as a flood,
The sun, that sees our falling day,
Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,
And set that night in blood.

For gold let Gallia's legions fight,
Or plunder's bloody gain:
Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
To guard our king, to fence our law,
Nor shall their edge be vain.

If ever breath of British gale
Shall fan the tri-color,
Or footstep of invader rude,
With rapine foul, and red with blood,
Pollute our happy shore,—

Then farewell home! and farewell friends!
Adieu each tender tie!
Resolved, we mingle in the tide,
Where charging squadrons furious ride,
To conquer or to die.

To horse! to horse! the sabres gleam;
High sounds our bugle-call;
Combined by honour's sacred tie,
Our word is Laws and Liberty!
March forward one and all?
BALLADS,

TRANSLATED, OR IMITATED, FROM THE GERMAN, ETC.

WILLIAM AND HELEN.

[1796.]

IMITATED FROM THE "LENORE" OF BURGER.

I.

From heavy dreams fair Helen rose,
And eyed the dawning red:
"Alas, my love, thou tarriest long!
O art thou false or dead?"—

II.

With gallant Fred'rick's princely power
He sought the bold Crusade;
But not a word from Judah's wars
Told Helen how he sped.

III.

With Paynim and with Saracen
At length a truce was made,
And every knight return'd to dry
The tears his love had shed.

IV.

Our gallant host was homeward bound
With many a song of joy;
Green waved the laurel in each plume,
The badge of victory.

V.

And old and young, and sire and son,
To meet them crowd the way,
With shouts, and mirth, and melody,
The debt of love to pay.

VI.

Full many a maid her true-love met,
And sobb'd in his embrace,
And flutt'ring joy in tears and smiles
Array'd full many a face.

VII.

Nor joy nor smile for Helen sad;
She sought the host in vain;
For none could tell her William's fate,
If faithless, or if slain.

VIII.

The martial band is past and gone;
She rends her raven hair,
And in distraction's bitter mood
She weeps with wild despair.

IX.

"O rise, my child," her mother said,
"Nor sorrow thus in vain;
A perjured lover's fleeting heart
No tears recall again."—

X.

"O mother, what is gone, is gone,
What's lost for ever lorn:
Death, death alone can comfort me;
O had I ne'er been born!

XI.

"O break, my heart,—O break at once!
Drink my life-blood, Despair!
No joy remains on earth for me,
For me in heaven no share."—

XII.

"O enter not in judgment, Lord!"
The pious mother prays;
"Impute not guilt to thy frail child!
She knows not what she says.

XIII.
"O say thy pater noster, child!
O turn to God and grace!
His will, that turn'd thy bliss to bale,
Can change thy bale to bliss."

XIV.
"O mother, mother, what is bliss?
O mother, what is bale?
My William's love was heaven on earth,
Without it earth is hell.

XV.
"Why should I pray to ruthless Heaven,
Since my loved William's slain?
I only pray'd for William's sake,
And all my prayers were vain."

XVI.
"O take the sacrament, my child,
And check these tears that flow;
By resignation's humble prayer,
'O hallow'd be thy woe!"

XVII.
"No sacrament can quench this fire,
Or slake this scorching pain;
No sacrament can bid the dead Arise and live again.

XVIII.
"O break, my heart,—O break at once!
Be thou my god, Despair!
Heaven's heaviest blow has fallen on me,
And vain each fruitless prayer."

XIX.
"O enter not in judgment, Lord,
With thy frail child of clay!
She knows not what her tongue has spoke;
Impute it not, I pray!

XX.
"Forbear, my child, this desperate woe,
And turn to God and grace;
Well can devotion's heavenly glow
Convert thy bale to bliss. —

XXI.
"O mother, mother, what is bliss?
O mother, what is bale?
Without my William what were heaven,
Or with him what were hell?"—

XXII.
Wild she arraings the eternal doom,
Upbraids each sacred power,
Till, spent, she sought her silent room,
All in the lonely tower.

XXIII.
She beat her breast, she wrung her hands,
Till sun and day were o'er,
And through the glimmering lattice shone
The twinkling of the star.

XXIV.
Then, crash! the heavy drawbridge fell
That o'er the moat was hung;
And, clatter! clatter! on its boards
The hoof of courser rung.

XXV.
The clank of echoing steel was heard
As off the rider bounded;
And slowly on the winding stair
A heavy tootstep sounded.
XXVI.
And hark! and hark! a knock—
Tap! tap!
A rustling stifled noise;—
Door-latch and tinkling staples ring;—
At length a whispering voice.

XXVII.
Awake, awake, arise, my love!
How, Helen, dost thou fare?
Wak'st thou, or sleep'st? laugh'st thou, or weep'st?
Hast thought on me, my fair?

"My love! my love!—so late by night!—
I waked, I wept for thee:
Much have I borne since dawn of morn;
Where, William, couldst thou be?"

XXVIII.
"We saddle late—from Hungary
I rode since darkness fell;
And to its bourne we both return
Before the matin-bell."

XXX.
"O rest this night within my arms,
And warm thee in their fold!
Chill howls through hawthorn bush the wind:
My love is deadly cold."

XXXI.
"Let the wind howl through hawthorn bush!
This night we must away;
The steed is wight, the spur is bright;
I cannot stay till day.

XXXII.
"Busk, busk, and bounes! Thou mount'st behind
Upon my black barb steed:
O'er stock and stile, a hundred miles,
We haste to bridal bed."

XXXIII.
"To-night— to-night a hundred miles!—
O dearest William, stay!
The bell strikes twelve—dark, dismal hour!
O wait, my love, till day!"

XXXIV.
"Look here, look here—the moon shines clear—
Full fast I ween we ride;
Mount and away! for ere the day
We reach our bridal bed.

XXXV.
"The black barb snorts, the bridle rings;
Haste, busk, and bounes, and seat thee!
The feast is made, the chamber spread,
The bridal guests await thee."

XXXVI.
Strong love prevail'd: She busks she bounes,
She mounts the barb behind,
And round her darling William's waist
Her lily arms she twined.

XXXVII.
And, hurry! hurry! off they rode,
As fast as fast might be;
Spurn'd from the courser's thundering heels
The flashing peebles flee.

XXXVIII.
And on the right, and on the left,
Ere they could snatch a view,
Fast, fast each mountain, mead, and plain,
And cot, and castle, flew.
XXXIX.

"Sit fast—dost fear?—The moon shines clear—
Fleet goes my barb—keep hold!
Fear'st thou?"—"O no!" she faintly said;
"But why so stern and cold?"

XL.

"What yonder rings? what yonder sings?
Why shrieks the owlet gray?"—
"'Tis death-bells' clang, 'tis funeral song,
The body to the clay.

XLI.

"With song and clang, at morrow's dawn,
Ye may inter the dead:
To-night I ride, with my young bride,
To deck our bridal bed.

XLII.

"Come with thy choir, thou coffin'd guest,
To swell our nuptial song!
Come, priest, to bless our marriage feast!
Come all, come all along!"—

XLIII.

Ceased clang and song; down sunk the bier;
The shrouded corpse arose:
And, hurry! hurry! all the train
The thundering steed pursues.

XLIV.

And, forward! forward! on they go;
High snorts the straining steed;
Thick pants the rider's labouring breath,
As headlong on they speed.

XLV.

"O William, why this savage haste?
And where thy bridal bed?"—
"'Tis distant far, low, damp, and chill,
And narrow, trustless maid."—

XLVI.

"No room for me?"—"Enough for both;—
Speed, speed, my barb, thy course!"
O'er thundering bridge, through boiling surge
He drove the furious horse.

XLVII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is wight, the spur is bright,
The flashing pebbles flee.

XLVIII.

Fled past on right and left how fast
Each forest, grove, and bower!
On right and left fled past how fast
Each city, town, and tower!

XLIX.

"Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,
Dost fear to ride with me?—
Hurrah! hurrah! the dead can ride!"—
"O William, let them be!—

L.

"See there, see there! What yonder swings
And creaks 'mid whistling rain?"—
"Gibbet and steel, th' accursed wheel;
A murderer in his chain.—

LI.

"Hollo! thou felon, follow here:
To bridal bed we ride;
BALLADS.

And thou shalt prance a fetter dance
Before me and my bride.”—

LII.

And, hurry! hurry! clash, clash, clash!
The wasted form descends;
And fleet as wind through hazel bush
The wild career attends.

LIII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

LIV.

How fled what moonshine faintly show’d!
How fled what darkness hid!
How fled the earth beneath their feet,
The heaven above their head!

LV.

“Dost fear? dost fear? The moon shines clear,
And well the dead can ride;
Does faithful Helen fear for them?”—
“O leave in peace the dead!”—

LVI.

“Barb! Barb! methinks I hear the cock;
The sand will soon be run:
Barb! Barb! I smell the morning air;
The race is wellnigh done.”—

LVII.

Tramp! tramp! along the land they rode;
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

LVIII.

“Hurrah! hurrah! well ride the dead;
The bride, the bride is come;
And soon we reach the bridal bed,
For, Helen, here’s my home.”—

LIX.

Reluctant on its rusty hinge
Revolved an iron door,
And by the pale moon’s setting beam
Were seen a church and tower.

LX.

With many a shriek and cry whiz round
The birds of midnight, scared;
And rustling like autumnal leaves
Unhallow’d ghosts were heard.

LXI.

O’er many a tomb and tombstone pale
He spur’d the fiery horse,
Till sudden at an open grave
He check’d the wondrous course.

LXII.

The falling gauntlet quits the rein,
Down drops the casque of steel,
The cuirass leaves his shrinking side,
The spur his gory heel.

LXIII.

The eyes desert the naked skull,
The mould’ring flesh the bone,
Till Helen’s lily arms entwine
A ghastly skeleton.

LXIV.

The furious barb snorts fire and foam,
And, with a fearful bound,
Dissolves at once in empty air,
And leaves her on the ground.
LXV.

Half seen by fits, by fits half heard,
Pale spectres flit along,
Wheel round the maid in dismal dance,
And howl the funeral song;

LXVI.

"E'en when the heart's with anguish cleft,
Revere the doom of Heaven,
Her soul is from her body reft;
Her spirit be forgiven!"

THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

[1794.]

This is a translation, or rather an imitation, of the Wilde Jäger of the German poet Bürger. The tradition upon which it is founded bears, that formerly a Wildgrave, or keeper of a royal forest, named Faulkenburg, was so much addicted to the pleasures of the chase, and otherwise so extremely profligate and cruel, that he not only followed this unhallowed amusement on the Sabbath, and other days consecrated to religious duty, but accompanied it with the most unheard-of oppression upon the poor peasants, who were under his vassalage. When this second Nimrod died, the people adopted a superstition, founded probably on the many various uncouth sounds heard in the depth of a German forest, during the silence of the night. They conceived they still heard the cry of the Wildgrave's hounds; and the well-known cheer of the deceased hunter, the sounds of his horses' feet, and the rustling of the branches before the game, the pack, and the sportsmen, are also distinctly discriminated; but the phantoms are rarely, if ever, visible. Once, as a benighted Chasseur heard this infernal chase pass by him, at the sound of the halloo, with which the Spectre Huntsman cheered his hounds, he could not refrain from crying, "Glück zu Faulkenburg!" [Good sport to ye, Falkenburgh!] "Dost thou wish me good sport?" answered a hoarse voice; "thou shalt share the game"; and there was thrown at him what seemed to be a huge piece of foul carrion. The daring Chasseur lost two of his best horses soon after, and never perfectly recovered the personal effects of this ghostly greeting. This tale, though told with some variations, is universally believed all over Germany.

The French had a similar tradition concerning an aërial hunter, whoinfested the forest of Fountainbleau. He was sometimes visible; when he appeared as a huntsman, surrounded with dogs, a tall grisly figure. Some account of him may be found in "Sully's Memoirs," who says he was called Le Grand Veneur. At one time he chose to hunt so near the palace, that the attendants, and, if I mistake not, Sully himself, came out into the court, supposing it was the sound of the king returning from the chase. This phantom is elsewhere called Saint Hubert.

The Wildgrave winds his bugle-horn,
To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
His fiery courser sniffs the morn,
And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
Dash through the bush, the brier, the brake;
While answering hound, and horn, and steed,
The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallow'd day
Had painted yonder spire with gold,
And, calling sinful man to pray,
Loud, long, and deep the bell had toll'd:

But still the Wildgrave onward rides,
Halloo, halloo! and, hark again!
When, spurring from opposing sides,
Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
The right-hand steed was silver white,
The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand Horseman, young and fair,
His smile was like the morn of May;
The left, from eye of tawny glare,
Shot midnight lightning’s lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman’s cap on high,
Cried, “Welcome, welcome, noble lord!”
What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
To match the princely chase, afford!—

“Cease thy loud bugle’s changing knell,”
Cried the fair youth, with silver voice;
“And for devotion’s choral swell,
Exchange the rude unhallow’d noise.

“To-day the ill-omen’d chase forbear,
Yon bell yet summons to the fane;
To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
To-morrow thou mayst mourn in vain.”—

“Away, and sweep the glades along!”
The Sable Hunter hoarse replies;
“‘To muttering monks leave matinsong,
And bells, and books, and mysteries.”

The Wildgrave spurr’d his ardent steed,
And, launching forward with a bound,

“Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
Would leave the jovial horn and hound?

“Hence, if our manly sport offend!
With pious fools go chant and pray:—
Well hast thou spoke, my dark-brow’d friend;
Hailoo, hallow! and, hark away!”

The Wildgrave spurr’d his courser light,
O’er moss and moor, o’er holt and hill;
And on the left and on the right,
Each Stranger Horseman follow’d still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
A stag more white than mountain snow;
And louder rung the Wildgrave’s horn,
“Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!”

A heedless wretch has cross’d the way;
He gasps the thundering hoofs below;—
But, live who can, or die who may,
Still, “Forward, forward!” on they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
A field with Autumn’s blessings crown’d;
See, prostrate at the Wildgrave’s feet,
A husbandman with toil embrown’d:

“O mercy, mercy, noble lord!
Spare the poor’s pittance,” was his cry,
“Earn’d by the sweat these brows have pour’d,
In scorching hour of fierce July.”—
Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
But furious holds the onward way.

"Away, thou hound! so basely born,
Or dread the scourge's echoing blow!"
Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"

So said, so done:—A single bound
Clears the poor labourer's humble pale;
Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man and horse, and hound and horn,
Destructive sweep the field along;
While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
Fell Famine marks the maddening throng.

Again uproused, the timorous prey
Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill;
Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appear'd;
He seeks the shelter of the crowd;
Amid the flock's domestic herd
His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
His track the steady blood-hounds trace;
O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall;—
"O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
These herds, a widow's little all;
These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care!"—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
The left still cheering to the prey;
The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
But furious keeps the onward way.

"Unmanner'd dog! To stop my sport
Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
Though human spirits, of thy sort,
Were tenants of these carrion kine!"—

Again he winds his bugle-horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"
And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;
Down sinks their mangled herdsmen near;
The murderous cries the stag appal,—
Again he starts, new-nerved by fear.

With blood besmear'd, and white with foam,
While big the tears of anguish pour,
He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
The humble hermit's hallow'd bower.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
Fast rattling on his traces go;
The sacred chapel rung around
With, "Hark away! and, holla, ho!"

All mild, amid the rout profane,
The holy hermit pour'd his prayer;
"Forbear with blood God's house to stain;
Revere his altar, and forbear!"
"The meanest brute has rights to plead,
Which, wrong'd by cruelty, or pride,
Draw vengeance on the ruthless head:—
Be warn'd at length, and turn aside."

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
The Black, wild whooping, points the prey:—
Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
But frantic keeps the forward way.

"Holy or not, or right or wrong,
Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
Not God himself, shall make me turn!"

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
"Hark forward, forward, holla, ho!"—
But off, on whirlwind's pinions borne,
The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,
And clamour of the chase, was gone;
For hoofs, and howls, and bugle-sound,
A deadly silence reign'd alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around;
He strove in vain to wake his horn,
In vain to call: for not a sound
Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds;
No distant baying reach'd his ears:
His courser, rooted to the ground,
The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker brown the shades,
Dark as the darkness of the grave;
And not a sound the still invades,
Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinner's humbled head
At length the solemn silence broke;
And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
The awful voice of thunder spoke.

"Oppressor of creation fair!
Apostate Spirits' harden'd tool!
Scorner of God! Scourge of the poor!
The measure of thy cup is full.

"Be chased for ever through the wood;
For ever roam the affrighted wild;
And let thy fate instruct the proud,
God's meanest creature is his child."

'Twas hush'd:—One flash, of sombre glare,
With yellow tinged the forests brown;
Uprose the Wildgrave's bristling hair,
And horror chill'd each nerve and bone.

Cold pour'd the sweat in freezing rill;
A rising wind began to sing;
And louder, louder, louder still,
Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call;—her entrails rend;
From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
Mix'd with sulphureous flames, ascend
The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell;
His eye like midnight lightning glows,
His steed the swarthy hue of hell.
The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And, "Hark away, and holla, ho!"

With wild despair's reverted eye,
Close, close behind, he marks the throng,
With bloody fangs and eager cry;
In frantic fear he scours along.—

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
Till time itself shall have an end;
By day, they scour earth's cavern'd space,
At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the lated peasant hears;
Appall'd, he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
For human pride, for human woe,
When, at his midnight mass, he hears
The infernal cry of, "Holla, ho!"

THE FIRE-KING.

"The blessings of the evil Genii, which are curses, were upon him." Eastern Tale.

[1801.]

This ballad was written at the request of Mr. Lewis, to be inserted in his Tales of Wonder. It is the third in a series of four ballads, on the subject of Elementary Spirits. The story is, however, partly historical; for it is recorded that, during the struggles of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, a Knight-Templar, called Saint-Alban, deserted to the Saracens, and defeated the Christians in many combats, till he was finally routed and slain, in a conflict with King Baldwin, under the walls of Jerusalem.

Bold knights and fair dames, to my harp give an ear,
Of love, and of war, and of wonder to hear;
And you haply may sigh, in the midst of your glee,
At the tale of Count Albert, and fair Rosalie.

O see you that castle, so strong and so high?
And see you that lady, the tear in her eye?
And see you that palmer, from Palestine's land,
The shell on his hat, and the staff in his hand?—

"Now palmer, gray palmer, O tell unto me,
What news bring you home from the Holy Countrie?
And how goes the warfare by Galilee's strand?
And how fare our nobles, the flower of the land?"—

"O well goes the warfare by Galilee's wave,
For Gilead, and Nablous, and Ramah we have;
And well fare our nobles by Mount Lebanon,
For the Heathen have lost, and the Christians have won."

A fair chain of gold 'mid her ringlets there hung;
O'er the palmer's gray locks the fair chain she flung:
"O palmer, gray palmer, this chain be thy fee,
For the news thou hast brought from the Holy Countrie.

"And, palmer, good palmer, by Galilee's wave,
O saw ye Count Albert, the gentle and brave?
When the Crescent went back, and
the Red-cross rush'd on,
O saw ye him foremost on Mount Lebanon?

"O lady, fair lady, the tree green
it grows;
O lady, fair lady, the stream pure
it flows;
Your castle stands strong, and your
hopes soar on high;
But, lady, fair lady, all blossoms
to die.

"The green boughs they wither,
the thunderbolt falls,
It leaves of your castle but levin-
sorch'd walls;
The pure stream runs muddy; the
gay hope is gone;
Count Albert is prisoner on Mount Lebanon."

O she's ta'en a horse, should be
fleet at her speed;
And she's ta'en a sword, should be
sharp at her need;
And she has ta'en shipping for
Palestine's land,
To ransom Count Albert from
Soldanrie's hand.

Small thought had Count Albert on
fair Rosalie,
Small thought on his faith, or his
knighthood, had he:
A heathenish damsel his light heart
had won,
The Soldan's fair daughter of
Mount Lebanon.

"O Christian, brave Christian, my
love wouldst thou be,
Three things must thou do ere I
hearken to thee:
Our laws and our worship on thee
shall thou take;
And this thou shalt first do for
Zulema's sake.

"And, next, in the cavern, where
burns evermore
The mystical flame which the
Curdmans adore,

Alone, and in silence, three nights
shall thou wake;
And this thou shalt next do for
Zulema's sake.

"And, last, thou shalt aid us with
counsel and hand,
To drive the Frank robber from
Palestine's land;
For my lord and my love then
Count Albert I'll take,
When all this is accomplish'd for
Zulema's sake."

He has thrown by his helmet, and
cross-handled sword,
Renouncing his knighthood, denying
his Lord;
He has ta'en the green caftan, and
turban put on,
For the love of the maiden of fair
Lebanon.

And in the dread cavern, deep deep
under ground,
Which fifty steel gates and steel
portals surround,
He has watch'd until daybreak, but
sight saw he none,
Save the flame burning bright on its
altar of stone.

Amazed was the Princess, the Soldan
amazed,
Sore murmur'd the priests as on
Albert they gazed;
They search'd all his garments, and,
under his weeds,
They found, and took from him, his
rosary beads.

Again in the cavern, deep deep
under ground,
He watch'd the lone night, while the
winds whistled round;
Far off was their murmur, it came
not more nigh,
The flame burn'd unmoved, and
nought else did he spy.
Loud murmur'd the priests, and amazed was the King,
While many dark spells of their witchcraft they sing;
They search'd Albert's body, and, lo! on his breast
Was the sign of the Cross, by his father impress'd.
The priests they erase it with care
And with pain;
And the recreant return'd to the cavern again;
But, as he descended, a whisper there fell:
It was his good angel, who bade him farewell!

High bristled his hair, his heart flutter'd and beat,
And he turn'd him five steps, half resolved to retreat;
But his heart it was harden'd, his purpose was gone,
When he thought of the Maiden of fair Lebanon.

Scarce pass'd he the archway, the threshold scarce trod,
When the winds from the four points of heaven were abroad,
They made each steel portal to rattle and ring,
And, borne on the blast, came the dread Fire-King.

Full sore rock'd the cavern whene'er he drew nigh,
The fire on the altar blazed bickering and high;
In volcanic explosions the mountains proclaim;
The dreadul approach of the Monarch of Flame.

Unmeasured in height, undistinguish'd in form,
His breath it was lightning, his voice it was storm;
I ween the stout heart of Count Albert was tame,
When he saw in his terrors the Monarch of Flame.

In his hand a broad falchion blue-glimmer'd through smoke,
And Mount Lebanon shook as the monarch he spoke:
"With this brand shalt thou conquer, thus long, and no more,
Till thou bend to the Cross, and the Virgin adore."
The cloud-shrouded Arm gives the weapon; and see!
The recreant receives the charm'd gift on his knee;
The thunders growl distant, and faint gleam the fires,
As, borne on the whirlwind, the phantom retires.

Count Albert has arm'd him the Paynim among,
Though his heart it was false, yet his arm it was strong;
And the Red-cross wax'd faint, and the Crescent came on,
From the day he commanded on Mount Lebanon.

From Lebanon's forests to Galilee's wave,
The sands of Samaar drank the blood of the brave;
Till the Knights of the Temple, and Knights of Saint John,
With Salem's King Baldwin, against him came on.

The war-cymbals chatter'd, the trumpets reply'd,
The lances were couch'd, and they closed on each side;
And horsemen and horses Count Albert o'erthrew,
Till he pierced the thick tumuit King Baldwin unto.

Against the charm'd blade which Count Albert did wield,
The lance had been vain of the King's Red-cross shield;
But a Page thrust him forward the monarch before,
And cleft the proud turban the renegade wore.
So fell was the dint, that Count Albert stoop'd low
Before the cross'd shield, to his steel saddlebow;
And scarce had he bent to the Red-cross his head,—
"Bonne Grace, Notre Dame!" he unwittingly said.

Sore sigh'd the charm'd sword, for its virtue was o'er,
It sprung from his grasp, and was never seen more;
But true men have said, that the lightning's red wing
Did waft back the brand to the dread Fire-King.

He clench'd his set teeth, and his gauntleted hand;
He stretch'd, with one buffet, that Page on the strand.
As back from the stripling the broken casque roll'd,
You might see the blue eyes, and the ringlets of gold.

Short time had Count Albert in horror to stare
On those death-swimming eyeballs, and blood-clotted hair;
For down came the Templars, like Cedron in flood,
And dyed their long lances in Saracen blood.

The Saracens, Curdimans, and Ishmaelites yield
To the scallop, the saltier, and crosleted shield;
And the eagles were gorged with the infidel dead,
From Bethsaida's fountains to Naphthali's head.

The battle is over on Bethsaida's plain,—
Oh, who is yon Paynim lies stretch'd 'mid the slain?
And who is yon Page lying cold at his knee?—
Oh, who but Count Albert and fair Rosalie!

The Lady was buried in Salem's bless'd bound,
The Count he was left to the vulture and hound:
Her soul to high mercy Our Lady did bring;
His went on the blast to the dread Fire-King.

Yet many a minstrel, in harping, can tell,
How the Red-cross it conquer'd, the Crescent it fell:
And lords and gay ladies have sigh'd, 'mid their glee
At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

FREDERICK AND ALICE.

[1801.]

This tale is imitated, rather than translated, from a fragment introduced in Goethe's Claudina von Villa Bella, where it is sung by a member of a gang of banditti, to engage the attention of the family, while his companions break into the castle. It owes any little merit it may possess to my friend Mr. Lewis, to whom it was sent in an extremely rude state; and who, after some material improvements, published it in his Tales of Wonder.

FREDERICK leaves the land of France,
Homeward hastes his steps to measure,
Careless casts the parting glance
On the scene of former pleasure.

Joying in his prancing steed,
Keen to prove his untried blade,
Hope's gay dreams the soldier lead
Over mountain, moor, and glade.

Helpless, ruin'd, left forlorn,
Lovely Alice wept alone;
Mourn'd o'er love's fond contract
torn,
Hope, and peace, and honour flown.
Mark her breast's convulsive throbs!  
See, the tear of anguish flows!—  
Mingling soon with bursting sobs,  
Loud the laugh of frenzy rose.

Wild she cursed, and wild she pray'd;  
Seven long days and nights are o'er;  
Death in pity brought his aid,  
As the village bell struck four.

Far from her, and far from France,  
Faithless Frederick onward rides;  
Marking, blithe, the morning's glance  
Mantling o'er the mountain's sides.

Heard ye not the boding sound,  
As the tongue of yonder tower,  
Slowly, to the hills around,  
Told the fourth, the fated hour?

Starts the steed, and sniffs the air,  
Yet no cause of dread appears;  
Bristles high the rider's hair,  
Struck with strange mysterious fears.

Desperate, as his terrors rise,  
In the steed the spur he hides;  
From himself in vain he flies;  
Anxious, restless, on he rides.

Seven long days, and seven long nights,  
Wild he wander'd, woe the while!  
Ceaseless care, and causeless fright,  
Urge his footsteps many a mile.

Dark the seventh sad night descends;  
Rivers swell, and rain-streams pour;  
While the deafening thunder lends  
All the terrors of its roar.

Weary, wet, and spent with toil,  
Where his head shall Frederick hide?  
Where, but in yon ruin'd aisle,  
By the lightning's flash descried.

To the portal, dank and low,  
Fast his steed the wanderer bound:  
Down a ruin'd staircase slow,  
Next his darkling way he wound.

Long drear vaults before him lie!  
Glimmering lights are seen to glide!—  
"Blessed Mary, hear my cry!  
Deign a sinner's steps to guide!"

Often lost their quivering beam,  
Still the lights move slow before,  
Till they rest their ghastly gleam  
Right against an iron door.

Thundering voices from within,  
Mix'd with peals of laughter, rose;  
As they fell, a solemn strain  
Lent its wild and wondrous close!

Midst the din, he seem'd to hear  
Voice of friends, by death removed;—  
Well he knew that solemn air,  'Twas the lay that Alice loved.—

Hark! for now a solemn knell  
Four times on the still night broke;  
Four times, at its deaden'd swell,  
Echoes from the ruins spoke.

As the lengthen'd clangours die,  
Slowly opes the iron door!  
Straight a banquet met his eye,  
But a funeral's form it wore!

Coffins for the seats extend;  
All with black the board was spread;  
Girt by parent, brother, friend,  
Long since number'd with the dead!

Alice, in her grave-clothes bound,  
Ghastly smiling, points a seat;  
All arose, with thundering sound;  
All the expected stranger greet.
High their meagre arms they wave,
Wild their notes of welcome swell;—
"Welcome, traitor, to the grave!
Perjured, bid the light farewell!"

THE BATTLE OF SEMPACH.

[1818.]

These verses are a literal translation of an ancient Swiss ballad upon the battle of Sempach, fought 9th July, 1386, being the victory by which the Swiss cantons established their independence; the author, Albert Tchudi, denominated the Souter, from his profession of a shoemaker. He was a citizen of Lucerne, esteemed highly among his countrymen, both for his powers as a Meister-Singer, or minstrel, and his courage as a soldier; so that he might share the praise conferred by Collins on Æschylus, that—

---Not alone he nursed the poet's flame,
But reach'd from Virtue's hand the patriot steel.

The circumstance of their being written by a poet returning from the well-fought field he describes, and in which his country's fortune was secured, may confer on Tchudi's verses an interest which they are not entitled to claim from their poetical merit. But ballad poetry, the more literally it is translated, the more it loses its simplicity, without acquiring either grace or strength; and, therefore, some of the faults of the verses must be imputed to the translator's feeling it a duty to keep as closely as possible to his original. The various puns, rude attempts at pleasantry, and disproportioned episodes, must be set down to Tchudi's account, or to the taste of his age.

The military antiquary will derive some amusement from the minute particulars which the martial poet has recorded. The mode in which the Austrian men-at-arms received the charge of the Swiss, was by forming a phalanx, which they defended with their long lances. The gallant Winkel-

© 2023 GoodReads
"I rede ye, shrive ye of your sins,
Before ye farther go;
A skirmish in Helvetic hills
May send your souls to woe." —

"But where now shall we find a priest
Our shrift that he may hear?"—
"The Switzer priest has ta'en the field,
He deals a penance drear.

"Right heavily upon your head
He'll lay his hand of steel;
And with his trusty partisan
Your absolution deal." —

'Twas on a Monday morning then,
The corn was steep'd in dew,
And merry maids had sickles ta'en,
When the host to Sempach drew.

The stalwart men of fair Lucerne
Togeth'er have they join'd;
The pith and core of manhood stern,
Was none cast looks behind.

It was the Lord of Hare-castle,
And to the Duke he said,
"Yon little band of brethren true
Will meet us undismay'd." —

"O Hare-castle, thou heart of hare!"
Fierce Oxenstern replied. —
"Shalt see then how the game will fare,"
The taunted knight replied.

There was lacing then of helmets bright,
And closing ranks amain;
The peaks they hew'd from their boot-points
Might wellnigh load a wain.

And thus they to each other said,
"Yon handful down to hew
Will be no boastful tale to tell,
The peasants are so few." —

The gallant Swiss Confederates there
They pray'd to God aloud,
And he display'd his rainbow fair
Against a swarthy cloud.

Then heart and pulse throb'd more and more
With courage firm and high,
And down the good Confederates bore
On the Austrian chivalry.

The Austrian Lion 'gan to growl,
And toss his main and tail;
And ball, and shaft, and crossbow bolt,
Went whistling forth like hail.

Lance, pike, and halbert, mingled there,
The game was nothing sweet;
The boughs of many a stately tree
Lay shiver'd at their feet.

The Austrian men-at-arms stood fast,
So close their spears they laid;
It chafed the gallant Winkelreid,
Who to his comrades said—

"I have a virtuous wife at home,
A wife and infant son;
I leave them to my country's care,—
This field shall soon be won.

"These nobles lay their spears right thick,
And keep full firm array,
Yet shall my charge their order break,
And make my brethren way.

He rush'd against the Austrian band,
In desperate career,
And with his body, breast, and hand,
Bore down each hostile spear.

Four lances splinter'd on his crest,
Six shiver'd in his side;
Still on the serried files he press'd—
He broke their ranks, and died.
This patriot's self-devoted deed
First tamed the Lion's mood,
And the four forest cantons freed
From thraldom by his blood.

Right where his charge had made a lane,
His valiant comrades burst,
With sword, and axe, and partisan,
And hack, and stab, and thrust.

The daunted Lion 'gan to whine,
And granted ground amain,
The Mountain Bull he bent his brows,
And gored his sides again.

Then lost was banner, spear, and shield,
At Sempach in the flight,
The cloister vaults at Konig's-field
Hold many an Austrian knight.

It was the Archduke Leopold,
So lordly would he ride,
But he came against the Switzer churls,
And they slew him in his pride.

The heifer said unto the bull,
"And shall I not complain?"
There came a foreign nobleman
To milk me on the plain.

"One thrust of thine outrageous horn
Has gall'd the knight so sore,
That to the churchyard he is borne
To range our glens no more."

An Austrian noble left the stour,
And fast the flight 'gan take;
And he arrived in luckless hour
At Sempach on the lake.

He and his squire a fisher call'd
(His name was Hans Von Rot),
"For love, or meed, or charity,
Receive us in thy boat!"

Their anxious call the fisher heard,
And, glad the need to win,
His shallop to the shore he steer'd,
And took the flyers in.

And while against the tide and wind
Hans stoutly row'd his way,
The noble to his follower sign'd
He should the boatman slay.

The fisher's back was to them turn'd,
The squire his dagger drew,
Hans saw his shadow in the lake,
The boat he overthrew.

He 'whelm'd the boat, and as they strove,
He stunned them with his oar,
"Now, drink ye deep, my gentle sirs,
You'll ne'er stab boatman more."

"Two gilded fishes in the lake
This morning have I caught,
Their silver scales may much avail,
Their carrion flesh is nought."

It was a messenger of woe
Has sought the Austrian land:
"Ah! gracious lady, evil news!
My lord lies on the strand.

"At Sempach, on the battle-field,
His bloody corpse lies there."—
"Ah, gracious God!" the lady cried,
"What tidings of despair!"

Now would you know the minstrel wight
Who sings of strife so stern,
Albert the Souter is he hight,
A burgher of Lucerne.

A merry man was he, I wot,
The night he made the lay,
Returning from the bloody spot,
Where God had judged the day.
THE NOBLE MORINGER.

AN ANCIENT BALLAD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

[1819.]

The original of these verses occurs in a collection of German popular songs, entitled, Sammlung Deutschen Volkslieder, Berlin, 1807, published by Messrs. Busching and Von der Hagen, both, and more especially the last, distinguished for their acquaintance with the ancient popular poetry and legendary history of Germany.

In the German Editor’s notice of the ballad, it is stated to have been extracted from a manuscript Chronicle of Nicolaus Thomann, chaplain to Saint Leonard in Weisenhorn, which bears the date 1533; and the song is stated by the author to have been generally sung in the neighbourhood at that early period. Thomann, as quoted by the German Editor, seems faithfully to have believed the event he narrates. He quotes tombstones and obituaries to prove the existence of the personages of the ballad, and discovers that there actually died, on the 11th May, 1349, a Lady Von Neuffen, Countess of Marstetten, who was, by birth, of the house of Moringen. This lady he supposes to have been Moringen’s daughter, mentioned in the ballad. He quotes the same authority for the death of Berckhold Von Neuffen, in the same year. The editors, on the whole, seem to embrace the opinion of Professor Smith of Ulm, who, from the language of the ballad, ascribes its date to the 15th century.

The legend itself turns on an incident not peculiar to Germany, and which, perhaps, was not unlikely to happen in more instances than one, when crusaders abode long in the Holy Land, and their disconsolate dames received no tidings of their fate. A story, very similar in circumstances, but without the miraculous machinery of Saint Thomas, is told of one of the ancient Lords of Haigh-hall in Lancashire, the patriarchal inheritance of the late Countess of Balcarras; and the particulars are represented on stained glass upon a window in that ancient manor-house.

I.

O, will you hear a knightly tale of old Bohemian day;
It was the noble Moringen in wedlock bed he lay;
He halsed and kiss’d his dearest dame, that was as sweet as May,
And said, “Now, lady of my heart, attend the words I say.

II.

’Tis I have vow’d a pilgrimage unto a distant shrine,
And I must seek Saint Thomas-land,
and leave the land that’s mine;
Here shalt thou dwell the while in state, so thou wilt pledge thy fay,
That thou for my return wilt wait seven twelvemonths and a day.”

III.

Then out and spoke that Lady bright, sore troubled in her cheer,
“Now tell me true, thou noble knight, what order takest thou here;
And who shall lead thy vassal band, and hold thy lordly sway,
And be thy lady’s guardian true when thou art far away?”

IV.

Out spoke the noble Moringen, “Of that have thou no care,
There’s many a valiant gentleman of me holds living fair;
The trustiest shall rule my land, my vassals and my state,
And be a guardian tried and true to thee, my lovely mate.

V.

“As Christian-man, I needs must keep the vow which I have plight,
When I am far in foreign land, remember thy true knight;
And cease, my dearest dame, to grieve, for vain were sorrow now, But grant thy Moringer his leave, since God hath heard his vow."

VI.
It was the noble Moringer from bed he made him bounce, And met him there his Chamberlain, with ever and with gown: He flung the mantle on his back, 'twas furr'd with miniver, He dipp'd his hand in water cold, and bathed his forehead fair.

VII.
"Now hear," he said, "Sir Chamberlain, true vassal art thou mine, And such the trust that I repose in that proved worth of thine, For seven years shalt thou rule my towers, and lead my vassal train, And pledge thee for my Lady's faith till I return again."

VIII.
The Chamberlain was blunt and true, and sturdily said he, "Abide, my lord, and rule your own, and take this rede from me; That woman's faith's a brittle trust—Seven twelvemonths didst thou say? I'll pledge me for no lady's truth beyond the seventh fair day."

IX.
The noble Baron turn'd him round, his heart was full of care, His gallant Esquire stood him nigh, he was Marstetten's heir, To whom he spoke right anxiously, "Thou trusty squire to me, Wilt thou receive this weighty trust when I am o'er the sea?"

X.
"To watch and ward my castle strong, and to protect my land, And to the hunting or the host to lead my vassal band;

And pledge thee for my Lady's faith till seven long years are gone, And guard her as Our Lady dear was guarded by Saint John."

XI.
Marstetten's heir was kind and true, but fiery, hot, and young, And readily he answer made with too presumptuous tongue; "My noble lord, cast care away, and on your journey wend, And trust this charge to me until your pilgrimage have end.

XII.
"Rely upon my plighted faith, which shall be truly tried, To guard your lands, and ward your towers, and with your vassals ride; And for your lovely Lady's faith, so virtuous and so dear, I'll gage my head it knows no change, be absent thirty year."

XIII.
The noble Moringer took cheer when thus he heard him speak, And doubt forsook his troubled brow, and sorrow left his cheek; A long adieu he bids to all—hoists topsails, and away, And wanders in Saint Thomas-land seven twelvemonths and a day.

XIV.
It was the noble Moringer within an orchard slept, When on the Baron's slumbering sense a boding vision crept; And whisper'd in his ear a voice, "'Tis time, Sir Knight, to wake, Thy lady and thy heritage another master take.

XV. "Thy tower another banner knows, thy steeds another rein, And stoop them to another's will thy gallant vassal train;
And she, the Lady of thy love, so
faithful once and fair,
This night within thy fathers' hall
she weds Marstetten's heir."

**XVI.**

It is the noble Moringer starts up
and tears his beard,
"Oh would that I had ne'er been
born! what tidings have I heard!
To lose my lordship and my lands
the less would be my care,
But, God! that e'er a squire untrue
should wed my Lady fair.

**XVII.**

"O good Saint Thomas, hear," he
pray'd, "my patron Saint art thou,
A traitor robs me of my land even
while I pay my vow!
My wife he brings to infamy that
was so pure of name,
And I am far in foreign land, and
must endure the shame."

**XVIII.**

It was the good Saint Thomas, then,
who heard his pilgrim's prayer,
And sent a sleep so deep and dead
that it o'erpower'd his care;
He waked in fair Bohemian land
outstretched beside a rill,
High on the right a castle stood, low
on the left a mill.

**XIX.**

The Moringer he started up as one
from spell unbound,
And dizzy with surprise and joy
gazed wildly all around;
"I know my fathers' ancient towers,
the mill, the stream I know,
Now blessed be my patron Saint who
cheer'd his pilgrim's woe!"

**XX.**

He leant upon his pilgrim staff, and
to the mill he drew,
So alter'd was his goodly form that
none their master knew;
The Baron to the miller said, "Good
friend, for charity,
Tell a poor palmer in your land what
tidings may there be?"

**XXI.**

The miller answered him again,
"He knew of little news,
Save that the Lady of the land did a
new bridegroom choose;
Her husband died in distant land,
such is the constant word,
His death sits heavy on our souls, he
was a worthy Lord.

**XXII.**

"Of him I held the little mill which
wins me living free,
God rest the Baron in his grave, he
still was kind to me!
And when Saint Martin's tide comes round, and millers take their toll,
The priest that prays for Moringer
shall have both cope and stole."

**XXIII.**

It was the noble Moringer to climb
the hill began,
And stood before the bolted gate a
woe and weary man;
"Now help me, every saint in heaven
that can compassion take,
To gain the entrance of my hall this
woful match to break."

**XXIV.**

His very knock it sounded sad, his
call was sad and slow,
For heart and head, and voice and
hand, were heavy all with woe;
And to the w solder thus he spoke;
"Friend, to thy Lady say,
A pilgrim from Saint Thomas—land
craves harbour for a day.

**XXV.**

"I've wander'd many a weary step,
my strength is w e nigh done,
And if she turn me from her gate I'll
see no morrow's sun;
I pray, for sweet Saint Thomas' sake, 
a pilgrim's bed and dole, 
And for the sake of Moringer's, her 
once-loved husband's soul."

XXVI.
It was the stalwart warder then he 
came his dame before, 
"A pilgrim, worn and travel-toil'd, 
stands at the castle-door; 
And prays, for sweet Saint Thomas' 
sake, for harbour and for dole, 
And for the sake of Moringer, thy 
noble husband's soul."

XXVII.
The Lady's gentle heart was moved, 
"Do up the gate," she said, 
"And bid the wanderer welcome be 
to banquet and to bed; 
And since he names my husband's 
name, so that he lists to stay, 
These towers shall be his harbourage 
a twelvemonth and a day."

XXVIII.
It was the stalwart warder then 
undid the portal broad, 
It was the noble Moringer that o'er 
the threshold strode; 
"And have thou thanks, kind 
heaven," he said, "though from 
a man of sin, 
That the true lord stands here once 
more his castle-gate within."

XXIX.
Then up the halls paced Moringer, 
his step was sad and slow; 
It sat full heavy on his heart, none 
seem'd their Lord to know; 
He sat him on a lowly bench, 
oppres'sd with woe and wrong, 
Short space he sat, but ne'er to him 
seem'd little space so long.

XXX.
Now spent was day, and feasting o'er, 
and come was evening hour, 
The time was nigh when new-made 
brides retire to nuptial bower;

"Our castle's wont," a brides-man 
said, "hath been both firm and long, 
No guest to harbour in our halls till 
he shall chant a song."

XXXI.
Then spoke the youthful bridegroom 
there as he sat by the bride, 
"My merry minstrel folk," quoth he, 
"lay shalm and harp aside; 
Our pilgrim guest must sing a lay, 
the castle's rule to hold, 
And well his guerdon will I pay with 
garment and with gold."—

XXXII.
"Chill flows the lay of frozen age," 
twas thus the pilgrim sung, 
"Nor golden meed nor garment gay, 
unlocks his heavy tongue; 
Once did I sit, thou bridegroom gay, 
at board as rich as thine, 
And by my side as fair a bride with 
all her charms was mine.

XXXIII.
"But time traced furrows on my 
face, and I grew silver-hair'd, 
For locks of brown, and checks of 
youth, she left this brow and beard; 
Once rich, but now a palmer poor, 
I tread life's latest stage, 
And mingle with your bridal mirth 
the lay of frozen age."

XXXIV.
It was the noble Lady there this 
woful lay that hears, 
And for the aged pilgrim's grief her 
eye was dimm'd with tears; 
She bade her gallant cupbearer a 
golden beaker take, 
And bear it to the palmer poor to 
quaff it for her sake.

XXXV.
It was the noble Moringer that 
dropp'd amid the wine 
A bridal ring of burning gold so 
costly and so fine:
Now listen, gentle, to my song, it
 tells you but the sooth,
'Twas with that very ring of gold
 he pledged his bridal truth.

XXXVI.

Then to the cupbearer he said, "Do
 me one kindly deed,
And should my better days return,
 full rich shall be thy meed;
Bear back the golden cup again to
 yonder bride so gay,
And crave her of her courtesy to
 pledge the palmer gray."

XXXVII.

The cupbearer was courtly bred, nor
 was the boon denied,
The golden cup he took again, and
 bore it to the bride;
"Lady," he said, "your reverend
 guest sends this, and bids me pray,
That, in thy noble courtesy, thou
 pledge the palmer gray."

XXXVIII.

The ring hath caught the Lady's
 eye, she views it close and near,
Then might you hear her shriek
 aloud, "The Moringer is here!"
Then might you see her start from
 seat, while tears in torrents fell.
But whether 'twas for joy or woe,
 the ladies best can tell.

XXXIX.

But loud she utter'd thanks to
 Heaven, and every saintly power,
That had return'd the Moringer
 before the midnight hour;
And loud she utter'd vow on vow,
 that never was there bride,
That had like her preserved her
 troth, or been so sorely tried.

XL.

"Yes, here I claim the praise," she
 said, "to constant matrons due,
Who keep the troth that they have
 plight, so stedfastly and true;
For count the term howe'er you will,
 so that you count aright,
Seven twelve-months and a day are
 out when bells toll twelve to-night."

XLI.

It was Marstetten then rose up, his
 falchion there he drew,
He kneel'd b'fore the Moringer, and
 down his weapon threw;
"My oath and knightly faith are
 broke," these were the words he said,
"Then take, my liege, thy vassal's
 sword, and take thy vassal's head."

XLII.

The noble Moringer he smiled, and
 then aloud did say,
"He gathers wisdom that hath
 roam'd seven twelve-months and
 a day;
My daughter now hath fifteen years,
fame speaks her sweet and fair,
I give her for the bride you lose,
 and name her for my heir.

XLIII.

"The young bridegroom hath youthful
 bride, the old bridegroom the old,
Whose faith was kept till term and
 tide so punctually were told;
But blessings on the warder kind
 that ope'd my castle gate,
For had I come at morrow kind, I
 came a day too late."

THE ERL-KING.

FROM THE GERMAN OF GOETHE.

(The Erl-King is a goblin that haunts
 the Black Forest in Thuringia,—To be
 read by a candle particularly long in
 the snuff.)

O, who rides by night thro' the
 woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his
 child;
And close the boy nestles within his loved arm,
To hold himself fast, and to keep himself warm.

"O father, see yonder! see yonder!" he says;
"My boy, upon what doest thou fearfully gaze?"—
"O, ’tis the Erl-King with his crown and his shroud."
"No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

(The Erl-King speaks.)
"O come and go with me, thou loveliest child;
By many a gay sport shall thy time be beguiled;
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,
And many a fine flower shall she pluck for my boy."

"O, father, my father, and did you not hear
The Erl-King whisper so low in my ear?"—
"Be still, my heart’s darling—my child, be at ease;
It was but the wild blast as it sung thro’ the trees."

Erl-King.
"O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;
She shall bear thee so lightly thro’ wet and thro’ wild,
And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child."

"O father, my father, and saw you not plain,
The Erl-King’s pale daughter glide past thro’ the rain?"—
"O yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon;
It was the gray willow that danced to the moon."

Erl-King.
"O come and go with me, no longer delay,
Or else silly child, I will drag thee away."—
"O father! O father! now, now keep your hold,
The Erl-King has seized me—his grasp is so cold."

Sore trembled the father; he spurr’d thro’ the wild,
Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child;
He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread,
But, clasp’d to his bosom, the infant was dead!"
SONGS AND VERSES
FROM THE WAVERLEY NOVELS.

FROM WAVERLEY.

BRIDAL SONG.

And did ye not hear of a mirth befell
The morrow after a wedding day,
And carrying a bride at home to dwell?
And away to Tewin, away, away?
The quintain was set, and the garlands were made,
'Tis pity old customs should ever decay;
And woe be to him that was horsed on a jade,
For he carried no credit away, away.

We met a concert of fiddle-de-dees;
We set them a cockhorse, and made them play
The winning of Bullen, and Upsey-frees,
And away to Tewin, away away!

There was ne'er a lad in all the parish
That would go to the plough that day;
But on his fore-horse his wench he carries,
And away to Tewin, away away!

The butler was quick, and the ale he did tap,
The maidens did make the chamber full gay;
The servants did give me a fuddling cup,
And I did carry't away, away.

The smith of the town his liquor so took,
That he was persuaded that the ground look'd blue;
And I dare boldly be sworn on a book,
Such smiths as he there's but a few.

A posset was made, and the women did sip,
And simpering said, they could eat no more;
Full many a maiden was laid on the lip,—
I'll say no more, but give o'er, (give o'er).

APPENDIX TO GENERAL PREFACE.

BY CAPTAIN WAVERLEY.

ON RECEIVING HIS COMMISSION IN COLONEL GARDINER'S REGIMENT.

Late, when the autumn evening fell
On Mirkwood-Mere's romantic dell,
The lake return'd, in chas'ten'd gleam,
The purple cloud, the golden beam:
Reflected in the crystal pool,
Headland and bank lay fair and cool;
The weather-tinted rock and tower,
Each drooping tree, each fairy flower,
So true, so soft, the mirror gave,
As if there lay beneath the wave,
Secure from trouble, toil, and care,
A world than earthly world more fair.

But distant winds began to wake,
And roused the Genius of the Lake! He heard the groaning of the oak,
And donn'd at once his sable cloak,
As warrior, at the battle cry,
Invests him with his panoply:
Then, as the whirlwind nearer press'd,
He 'gan to shake his foamy crest
O'er furrow'd brow and blackened cheek,
And bade his surge in thunder speak.
"He spurr'd his steed, he couch'd his lance,
And darted on the Bruce at once."
SONGS AND VERSES.

In wild and broken eddies whirl'd,
Flitted that fond ideal world;
And, to the shore in tumult tost,
The realms of fairy bliss were lost.

Yet, with a stern delight and strange,
I saw the spirit-stirring change.
As warr'd the wind with wave and wood,
Upon the ruin'd tower I stood,
And felt my heart more strongly bound.
Responsive to the lofty sound,
While, joying in the mighty roar,
I mourn'd that tranquil scene no more.

So, on the idle dreams of youth
Breaks the loud trumpet-call of truth,
Bids each fair vision pass away,
Like landscape on the lake that lay,
As fair, as flitting, and as frail,
As that which fled the autumn gale—
For ever dead to fancy's eye
Be each gay form that glided by,
While dreams of love and lady's charms
Give place to honour and to arms!

DAVIE GELLATLEY'S SONG.

FALSE love, and hast thou play'd me this
In summer among the flowers?
I will repay thee back again
In winter among the showers.
Unless again, again, my love,
Unless you turn again;
As you with other maidens rove,
I'll smile on other men.

THE Knight's to the mountain
His bugle to wind;
The Lady's to Greenwood
Her garland to bind.
The bower of Burd Ellen
Has moss on the floor,
That the step of Lord William
Be silent and sure.

IN LUCKIE MACLEARY'S TAVERN.

BARON BRADWARDINE SINGS:

Mon cœur volage, dit-elle,
N'est pas pour vous, garçon;
Mais pour un homme de guerre,
Qui a barbe au menton.

Lon, Lon, Laridon.

Qui porte chapeau à plume,
Soulier à rouge talon,
Qui joue de la flûte,
Aussi du violon.

Lon, Lon, Laridon.

BALMAWHAPPLE SINGS:

It's up Glenbarchan's braes I gaed,
And o'er the bent of Killiebraid,
And mony a weary cast I made,
To cuittle the moor-fowl's tail.

If up a bonny black-cock should spring,
To whistle him down wi' a slug in his wing,
And strap him on to my lunzie string,
Right seldom would I fail.

DAVIE GELLATLEY'S SONG.

HIE AWAY.

Hie away, hie away,
Over bank and over brae,
Where the copsewood is the greenest,
Where the fountains glisten sheenest,
Where the lady-fern grows strongest,
Where the morning dew lies longest.

Where the black-cock sweetest sips it,
Where the fairy latest trips it:
Hie to haunts right seldom seen,
Lovely, lonesome, cool, and green,
Over bank and over brae,
Hie away, hie away.

Chap. xi.
ST. SWITHIN'S CHAIR.

On Hallow-Mass Eve, ere you bouned ye to rest,
Ever beware that your couch be bless'd;
Sign it with cross, and sain it with bead,
Sing the Ave, and say the Creed.

For on Hallow-Mass Eve the Night-Hag will ride,
And all her nine-fold sweeping on by her side,
Whether the wind sing lowly or loud
Sailing through moonshine or swath'd in the cloud.

The Lady she sate in Saint Swithin's Chair,
The dew of the night has damp'd her hair;
Her cheek was pale—but resolved and high
Was the word of her lip and the glance of her eye.

She mutter'd the spell of Swithin bold,
When his naked foot traced the midnight wold,
When he stopp'd the Hag as she rode the night,
And bade her descend, and her promise plight.

He that dare sit on Saint Swithin's Chair,
When the Night-Hag wings the troubled air,
Questions three, when he speaks the spell,
He may ask, and she must tell.

The Baron has been with King Robert his liege,
These three long years, in battle and siege;
News are there none of his weal or his woe,
And fain the Lady his fate would know.

She shudders and stops as the charm she speaks;—
Is it the moody owl that shrieks?
Or is that sound, betwixt laughter and scream,
The voice of the Demon who haunts the stream?

The moan of the wind sunk silent and low,
And the roaring torrent had ceased to flow;
The calm was more dreadful than raging storm,
When the cold gray mist brought the ghastly form!

Chap. xiii.

DAVIE GELLATLEY'S SONG.

Young men will love thee more fair
and more fast;
Heard ye so merry the little bird sing?
Old men's love the longest will last,
And the throstle-cock's head is under his wing.

The young man's wrath is like light straw on fire;
Heard ye so merry the little bird sing?
But like red-hot steel is the old man's ire,
And the throstle-cock's head is under his wing.

The young man will brawl at the evening board;
Heard ye so merry the little bird sing?
But the old man will draw at the dawning the sword,
And the throstle-cock's head is under his wing.

Chap. xiv.

FLORA MACIVOR'S SONG.

There is mist on the mountain, and
night on the vale,
But more dark is the sleep of the sons of the Gael.
SONGS AND VERSES.

A stranger commanded—it sunk on
the land,
It has frozen each heart, and be-
numb'd every hand!

The dirk and the target lie sordid
with dust,
The bloodless claymore is but
redden'd with rust;
On the hill or the glen if a gun
should appear,
It is only to war with the heath-
cock or deer.

The deeds of our sires if our bards
should rehearse,
Let a blush or a blow be the meed
of their verse!
Be mute every string, and be hush'd
every tone,
That shall bid us remember the
fame that is flown.

But the dark hours of night and of
slumber are past,
The morn on our mountains is
dawning at last;
Glenaladale's peaks are illumed with
the rays,
And the streams of Glenfinnan leap
bright in the blaze.

O high-minded Moray!—the exiled—
the dear!—
In the blush of the dawning the
Standard uprear!
Wide, wide on the winds of the north
let it fly,
Like the sun's latest flash when the
tempest is nigh!

Ye sons of the strong, when that
dawning shall break,
Need the harp of the aged remind
you to wake?
That dawn never beam'd on your
forefathers' eye,
But it roused each high chieftain to
vanquish or die.

O, sprung from the kings who in
Islay kept state,
Proud chiefs of Clan-Ranald, Glen-
garry, and Sleat!
Combine like three streams from
one mountain of snow,
And resistless in union rush down
on the foe.

True son of Sir Evan, undaunted
Lochiel,
Place thy targe on thy shoulder and
burnish thy steel!
Rough Keppoch, give breath to thy
bugle's bold swell,
Till far Coryarrick resound to the
knell!

Stern son of Lord Kenneth, high
chief of Kintail,
Let the stag in thy standard bound
wild in the gale!
May the race of Clan-Gillean, the
fearless and free,
Remember Glenlivat, Harlaw, and
Dundee!

Let the clan of gray Fingon, whose
offspring has given
Such heroes to earth, and such
martyrs to heaven,
Unite with the race of renown'd
Rorri More,
To launch the long galley, and
stretch to the oar!

How Mac-Shimei will joy when their
chief shall display
The yew-crested bonnet o'er tresses
of gray!
How the race of wrong'd Alpine and
murder'd Glencoe
Shall shout for revenge when they
pour on the foe!

Ye sons of brown Dermid, who
slew the wild boar,
Resume the pure faith of the great
Callum-More!
SONGS AND VERSES.

Mac-Niel of the Islands, and Moy of the Lake,
For honour, for freedom, for vengeance awake!

Awake on your hills, on your islands awake,
Brave sons of the mountain, the frith, and the lake!
’Tis the bugle—but not for the chase
is the call;
’Tis the pibroch’s shrill summons—but not to the hall.

’Tis the summons of heroes for conquest or death,
When the banners are blazing on mountain and heath;
They call to the dirk, the claymore, and the targe,
To the march and the muster, the line and the charge.

Be the brand of each chieftain like Fin’s in his ire!
May the blood through his veins flow like currents of fire!
Burst the base foreign yoke as your sires did of yore!
Or die, like your sires, and endure it no more!
Chap. xxii.

FERGUS SINGS:

O Lady of the desert, hail!
That lovèst the harping of the Gael,
Through fair and fertile regions borne,
Where never yet grew grass or corn.

FERGUS AGAIN:

O vous, qui buvez à tasse pleine,
A cette heureuse fontaine,
Où on ne voit sur le rivage
Que quelques vilains troupeaux,
Suivis de nymphes de village,
Qui les escortent sans sabots—
Chap. xxiii.

TO AN OAK TREE,

IN THE CHURCHYARD OF ——, IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND, SAID TO MARK THE GRAVE OF CAPTAIN WOGAN, KILLED IN 1640.

EMBLEM OF ENGLAND’S ANCIENT FAITH,
Full proudly may thy branches wave,
Where loyalty lies low in death,
And valour fills a timeless grave.

And thou, brave tenant of the tomb!
Repine not if our clime deny,
Above thine honour’d sod to bloom,
The flowrets of a milder sky.

These owe their birth to genial May;
Beneath a fiercer sun they pine,
Before the winter storm decay—
And can their worth be type of thine?

No! for, ’midstorms of Fate opposing,
Still higher swell’d thy dauntless heart,
And, while Despair the scene was closing,
Commenced thy brief but brilliant part.

’Twas then thou sought’st on Albyn’s hill
(When England’s sons the strife resign’d)
A rugged race, resisting still,
And unsubdued, though unrefined,

Thy death’s hour heard no kindred wail,
No holy knell thy requiem rung;
Thy mourners were the plaided Gael,
Thy dirge the clamorous pibroch sung.

Yet who, in Fortune’s summer-shine
To waste life’s longest term away,
Would change that glorious dawn of thine,
Though darken’d ere its noontide day?
Be thine the Tree whose dauntless boughs
Brave summer’s drought and winter’s gloom!
Rome bound with oak her patriots’ brows,
As Albyn shadows Wogan’s tomb.
Chap. xxix.

GELLATLEY sings:—

They came upon us in the night,
And brake my bower and slew my knight;
My servants a’ for life did flee
And left us in extremity.

They slew my knight to me sae dear;
They slew my knight, and drave his gear;
The moon may set, the sun may rise,
But a deadly sleep has closed his eyes.

But follow, follow me,
While glow-worms light the lea,
I’ll show ye where the dead should be—
Each in his shroud,
While winds pipe loud,
And the red moon peeps dim through the cloud.

Follow, follow me;
Brave should he be
That treads by night the dead man’s lea.
Chap. lxiii

FROM GUY MANNERING.

NATIVITY OF HARRY BERTRAM.

Meg Merrilies sings:—

Canny moment, lucky fit;
Is the lady lighter yet?
Be it lad, or be it lass,
Sign wi’ cross, and sain wi’ mass.

Trefoil, vervain, John’s-wort, dill,
Hinders witches of their will;
Weel is them, that weel may
Fast upon Saint Andrew’s day.

Saint Bride and her brat,
Saint Colme and her cat,
Saint Michael and his spear,
Keep the house frae reif and wear,
Chap. iii.

TWIST YE, TWINE YE.

Meg Merrilies sings:—

Twist ye, twine ye! even so
Mingle shades of joy and woe,
Hope, and fear, and peace, and strife,
In the thread of human life.

While the mystic twist is spinning,
And the infant’s life beginning,
Dimly seen through twilight bending,
Lo, what varied shapes attending!

Passions wild, and follies vain,
Pleasures soon exchanged for pain;
Doubt, and jealousy, and fear,
In the magic dance appear.

Now they wax, and now they dwindle,
Whirling with the whirling spindle.
Twist ye, twine ye! even so
Mingle human bliss and woe.
Chap. iv.

THE DYING GIPSY SMUGGLER.

Meg Merrilies sings:—

Wasted, weary, wherefore stay,
Wrestling thus with earth and clay?
From the body pass away;—
Hark! the mass is singing.

From thee doff thy mortal weed,
Mary Mother be thy speed,
Saints to help thee at thy need;—
Hark! the knell is ringing.

Fear not snowdrift driving fast,
Sleet, or hail, or levin blast;
Soon the shroud shall lap thee fast,
And the sleep be on thee cast
That shall ne'er know waking.

Haste thee, haste thee, to be gone,
Earth flits fast, and time draws on,—
Gasp thy gasp, and groan thy groan,
Day is near the breaking.

Open locks, end strife,
Come death, and pass life.
Chap. xxvii.

GLOSSIN'S SONG.

Gin by pailfuls, wine in rivers,
Dash the window-glass to shivers,
For three wild lads were we, brave boys,
And three wild lads were we;
Thou on the land, and I on the sand,
And Jack on the gallows-tree!
Chap. xxxiv.

THE PROPHECY.

Meg Merrilies sings:—

The dark shall be light,
And the wrong made right,
When Bertram's right and Bertram's might
Shall meet on Ellangowan's height.
Chap. xli.

FROM THE ANTIQUARY.

TIME.

"Why sit'st thou by that ruin'd hall,
Thou aged carle so stern and gray?
Dost thou its former pride recall,
Or ponder how it pass'd away?"—

"Know'st thou not me?" the Deep Voice cried;
"So long enjoy'd, so oft misused—
Alternate, in thy fickle pride,
Desired, neglected, and accused!

"Before my breath, like blazing flax,
Man and his marvels pass away!
And changing empires wane and wax,
Are founded, flourish, and decay.

"Redeem mine hours—the space is brief—
While in my glass the sand-grains shiver,
And measureless thy joy or grief
When Time and thou shall part for ever!"

Chap. x.

EPITAPH ON JOHN O' YE GIRNELL.

Heir lyeth John o' ye Girnell;
Erth has ye nit and heuen ye kirnell.
In hys tyme ilk wyfe's hennis clokit,
Ilk gud mannis herth wi' bairnis was stokit.
He deled a boll o' bear in firlottis fyve,
Four for ye halie kirke and ane for pure mennis wyvis.
Chap. xi.

ELSPETH'S BALLAD.

"The herring loves the merry moon-light,
The mackerel loves the wind,
But the oyster loves the dredging sang,
For they come of a gentle kind."

Now haud your tongue, baith wife and carle,
And listen, great and sma',
And I will sing of Glenallan's Earl
That fought on the red Harlaw.
The cronach's cried on Bennachie,
And doun the Don and a',
And hieland and lawland may
mournfu' be
For the sair field of Harlaw.

They saddled a hundred milk-white
steeds,
They hae bridled a hundred black,
With a chafron of steel on each
horse's head,
And a good knight upon his back.

They hadna ridden a mile, a mile,
A mile, but barely ten,
When Donald came branking down
the brae
Wi' twenty thousand men.

Their tartans they were waving wide,
Their glaives were glancing clear,
The pibrochs rung frae side to side,
Would deafen ye to hear.

The great Earl in his stirrups stood,
That Highland host to see;
Now here a knight that's stout and
good
May prove a jeopardie:

"What would'st thou do, my squire
so gay,
That rides beside my reyne,
Were ye Glenallan's Earl the day,
And I were Roland Cheyne?"

"To turn the rein were sin and
shame,
To fight were wond'rous peril;
What would ye do now, Roland
Cheyne,
Were ye Glenallan's Earl?"

"Were I Glenallan's Earl this tide,
And ye were Roland Cheyne,
The spur should be in my horse's side,
And the bridle upon his mane.

"If they hae twenty thousand blades,
And we twice ten times ten,
Yet they hae but their tartan plaids,
And we are mail-clad men.

"My horse shall ride through ranks
sae rude,
As through the moorland fern,—
Then ne'er let the gentle Norman
blude
Grow cauld for Highland kerne."

He turn'd him right and round
again,
Said—"Scorn na at my mither;
Light loves I may get mony a ane,
But minnie ne'er anither."
Chap. xl.

**MOTTOES.**

I knew Anselmo. He was shrewd
and prudent,
Wisdom and cunning had their
shares of him;
But he was shrewish as a wayward
child,
And pleased again by toys which
childhood please;
As—book of fables graced with print
of wood,
Or else the jingling of a rusty medal,
Or the rare melody of some old ditty,
That first was sung to please King
Pepin's cradle,
Advertisement.

"Be brave," she cried, "you yet
may be our guest.
Our haunted room was ever held
the best:
If, then, your valour can the fight
sustain
Of rustling curtains, and the clinking
chain;
If your courageous tongue have
powers to talk
When round your bed the horrid
ghost shall walk;
If you dare ask it why it leaves its
tomb,
I'll see your sheets well air'd, and
show the room."

Chap. ix.

*True Story.*
SONGS AND VERSES.

Here has been such a stormy encounter
Betwixt my cousin Captain, and this soldier,
About I know not what!—nothing, indeed;
Competitions, degrees, and comparatives
Of soldiership!  
\textit{A Faire Quarrel.}

Chap. xix.

If you fail honour here,
Never presume to serve her any more;
Bid farewell to the integrity of arms,
And the honourable name of soldier
Fall from you, like a shiver'd wreath of laurel
By thunder struck from a desertless forehead.

\textit{A Faire Quarrel.}

Chap. xx.

The Lord Abbot had a soul
Subtile and quick, and searching as the fire:
By magic stairs he went as deep as hell,
And if in devils' possession gold be kept,
He brought some sure from thence—'tis hid in caves,
Known, save to me, to none.
\textit{The Wonder of a Kingdome.}

Chap. xxi.

Who is he?—One that for the lack of land
Shall fight upon the water—he hath challenged
Formerly the grand whale; and by his titles
Of Leviathan, Behemoth, and so forth.
He tilted with a sword-fish—Marry, sir,
Th' aquatic had the best—the argument
Still galls our champion's breech.

\textit{Old Play.}

Tell me not of it, friend—when the young weep,
Their tears are lukewarm brine;—from our old eyes
Sorrow falls down like hail-drops of the North,
Chilling the furrows of our wither'd cheeks,
Cold as our hopes, and harden'd as our feeling:
Theirs, as they fall, sink sightless—ours recoil,
Heap the fair plain, and bleaken all before us.

\textit{Old Play.}

Chap. xxxi.

Remorse—she ne'er forsakes us!—
A bloodhound stanch—she tracks our rapid step
Through the wild labyrinth of youthful frenzy,
Unheard, perchance, until old age hath tamed us;
Then in our lair, when Time hath chill'd our joints,
And maim'd our hope of combat, or of flight,
We hear her deep-mouth'd bay, announcing all,
Of wrath, and woe, and punishment, that bides us.

\textit{Old Play.}

Chap. xxxiii.

Still in his dead hand clench'd remain the strings
That thrill his father's heart—e'en as the limb,
Lopp'd off and laid in grave, retains, they tell us,
Strange commerce with the mutilated stump,
Whose nerves are twingeing still in maim'd existence.

\textit{Old Play.}

Chap. xxxiv.

Life, with you,
Glows in the brain and dances in the arteries;
'Tis like the wine some joyous guest
hath quaff'd,
That glads the heart and elevates
the fancy:
Mine is the poor residuum of the
cup,
Vapid, and dull, and tasteless, only
soiling
With its base dregs the vessel that
contains it.

Chap. xxxv.

YES! I love Justice well—as well
as you do—
But, since the good dame's blind, she
shall excuse me
If, time and reason fitting, I prove
dumb;—
The breath I utter now shall be no
means
To take away from me my breath
in future.

Chap. xxxvii.

Well, well, at worst, 'tis neither
theft nor coinage,
Granting I knew all that you charge
me with.
What tho' the tomb hath born a
second birth,
And given the wealth to one that
knew not on't,
Yet fair exchange was never robbery,
Far less pure bounty.

Chap. xxxviii.

Life ebbs from such old age,
unmark'd and silent,
As the slow neap-tide leaves yon
stranded galley.
Late she rock'd merrily at the least
impulse
That wind or wave could give; but
now her keel
Is settling on the sand, her mast
has ta'en
An angle with the sky, from which
it shifts not.

Chap. xxxix.

Each wave receding shakes her less
and less,
Till, bedded on the strand, she shall
remain
Useless as motionless.

Chap. xl.

So, while the Goose, of whom the
fable told,
Incumbent, brooded o'er her eggs
of gold,
With hand outstretch'd, impatient to
destroy,
Stole on her secret nest the cruel
Boy,
Whose gripe rapacious changed her
splendid dream,
For wings vain fluttering, and for
dying scream.

Chap. xli.

Let those go see who will—I like
it not—
For, say he was a slave to rank
and pomp,
And all the nothings he is now
divorced from
By the hard doom of stern necessity;
Yet it is sad to mark his alter'd
brow,
Where Vanity adjusts her flimsy
veil
O'er the deep wrinkles of repentant
anguish.

Chap. xlii.

Fortune, you say, flies from us; she
but circles
Like the fleet sea-bird round the
fowler's skiff,—
Lost in the mist one moment, and
the next
Brushing the white sail with her
whiter wing,
As if to court the aim.—Experience
watches,
And has her on the wheel.
SONGS AND VERSES.

Nay, if she love me not, I care not for her:
Shall I look pale because the maiden blooms?
Or sigh because she smiles—and smiles on others?
Not I, by Heaven!—I hold my peace too dear,
To let it, like the plume upon her cap,
Shake at each nod that her caprice shall dictate.
Chap. xlv.

FROM THE BLACK DWARF.

When the devil was sick, the devil
a monk would be,
When the devil was well, the devil
a monk was he.
Chap. vi.

MOTTOES.

So spak the knicht; the geaunt sed—
"Lead forth with the the sely maid,
And mak me quite of the and sche;
For glaunsing ee, or brow so brent,
Or cheek with rose and lilye blient,
Me-lists not fecht with the."
Chap. ix.

I LEFT my ladye's bower last night,
It was clad in wreaths of snaw;
I'll seek it when the sun is bright
And sweet the roses blaw.
Chap. x.

'TWAS time and griefs
That framed him thus: Time, with
his fairer hand,
Offering the fortunes of his former
days,
The former man may make him:
bring us to him,
And chance it as it may.
Chap. xvi.

FROM OLD MORTALITY.

MAJOR BELLENDEN'S SONG.

And what though winter will pinch severe
Through locks of gray and a cloak that's old,
Yet keep up thy heart, bold cavalier,
For a cup of sack shall fence the cold.

For time will rust the brightest blade,
And years will break the strongest bow;
Was never wight so starkly made,
But time and years would over-throw.
Chap. xix.

VERSES FOUND IN BOTH-WELL'S POCKET-BOOK.

Thy hue, dear pledge, is pure and bright,
As in that well-remember'd night
When first thy mystic braid was wove,
And first my Agnes whisper'd love.

Since then how often hast thou press'd
The torrid zone of this wild breast,
Whose wrath and hate have sworn to dwell
With the first sin which peopled hell,
A breast whose blood's a troubled ocean,
Each throb the earthquake's wild commotion!—
O, if such clime thou canst endure,
Yet keep thy hue unstain'd and pure,
What conquest o'er each erring thought
Of that fierce realm had Agnes wrought!
I had not wander'd wild and wide,
With such an angel for my guide;
Nor heaven nor earth could then reprove me,
If she had lived, and lived to love me.
SONGS AND VERSES.

619

Not then this world's wild joys had been
To me one savage hunting scene,
My sole delight the headlong race,
And frantic hurry of the chase;
To start, pursue, and bring to bay,
Rush in, drag down, and rend my prey,
Then—from the carcass turn away!
Mine ireful mood had sweetness tamed,
And soothed each wound which pride inflamed!
Yes, God and man might now approve me,
If thou hadst lived, and lived to love me.
Chap. xiv.

EPITAPH ON BALFOUR OF BURLEY.

Here lyes ane saint to prelates surly,
Being John Balfour, sometime of Burley,
Who, stirred up to vengeance take,
For Sollemn League and Cov'nant's sake
Upon the Magus Moor in Fife
Did tak James Sharpe the apostate's life;
By Dutchman's hands was hacked and shot,
And drowned in Clyde near this saam spot.
Chap. xliv.

MOTTOES.

AROUSE thee, youth!—it is no common call,—
God's Church is leaguer'd—haste to man the wall;
Haste where the Red-cross banners wave on high,
Signals of honour'd death or victory.
Chap. v.

My hounds may a' rin masterless,
My hawks may fly frae tree to tree,
My Lord may grip my vassal lands,
For there again maun I never be!

Chap. xxxiv.

FROM ROB ROY.

FRANCIS OSBALDISTONE’S LINES TO THE MEMORY OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE.

O for the voice of that wild horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
The dying hero's call,
That told imperial Charlemagne
How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain
Had wrought his champion's fall.
Sad over earth and ocean sounding,
And England's distant cliffs astounding,
Such are the notes should say
How Britain's hope, and France's fear,
Victor of Cressy and Poitier,
In Bordeaux dying lay.

"Raise my faint head, my squires," he said,
"And let the casement be display'd,
That I may see once more
The splendour of the setting sun
Gleam on thy mirror’d wave, Garonne,
And Blay’s empurpled shore.

"Like me, he sinks to Glory's sleep,
His fall the dews of evening steep,
As if in sorrow shed.
So soft shall fall the trickling tear,
When England's maids and matrons hear
Of their Black Edward dead.
"And though my sun of glory set,
Nor France nor England shall forget
The terror of my name;
And oft shall Britain's heroes rise,
New planets in these southern skies,
Through clouds of blood and flame."
Chap. ii.

TRANSLATION FROM ARIOSTO.

Ladies, and knights, and arms, and
love's fair flame,
Deeds of emprise and courtesy, I
sing;
What time the Moors from sultry
Africk came,
Led on by Agramant, their youth-
ful king—
Him whom revenge and hasty ire did
bring
O'er the broad wave, in France to
waste and war;
Such ills from old Trojano's death
did spring,
Which to avenge he came from realms afar,
And menaced Christian Charles, the
Roman Emperor.

Of dauntless Roland, too, my strain
shall sound,
In import never known in prose or
rhyme,
How he, the chief of judgment
deem'd profound,
For luckless love was crazed upon
a time—
Chap. xvi.

MOTTOES.

In the wide pile, by others heeded not,
Hers was one sacred solitary spot,
Whose gloomy aisles and bending
shelves contain,
For moral hunger food, and cures
for moral pain.

Chap. x.

Anonymous.

Dire was his thought, who first in
poison steep'd
The weapon form'd for slaughter—
diser his,
And worthier of damnation, who
instill'd
The mortal venom in the social cup,
To fill the veins with death instead
of life.

Anonymous.

Yon lamp its line of quivering light
Shoots from my lady's bower;
But why should Beauty's lamp be
bright
At midnight's lonely hour?

Old Ballad.

Look round thee, young Astolpho:
Here's the place
Which men (for being poor) are sent
to starve in,—
Rude remedy, I trow, for sore
disease.

Within these walls, stifled by damp
and stench,
Doth Hope's fair torch expire; and
at the snuff,
Ere yet 'tis quite extinct, rude, wild,
and wayward,
The desperate revelries of wild
despair,
Kindling their hell-born cressets,
light to deeds
That the poor captive would have
died ere practised,
Till bondage sunk his soul to his
condition.

The Prison, Act i. Sc. iii.

Chap. xxii.

Far as the eye could reach no tree
was seen,
Earth, clad in russet, scorn'd the
lively green;
No birds, except as birds of passage,
REW;
No bee was heard to hum, no dove
to coo;
SONGS AND VERSES.

No streams, as amber smooth, as amber clear,
Were seen to glide, or heard to warble here.

Prophecy of Famine.
Chap. xxvii.

"Woe to the vanquish'd!" was stern Brenno's word,
When sunk proud Rome beneath the Gallic sword—
"Woe to the vanquish'd!" when his massive blade
Bore down the scale against her ransom weigh'd,
And on the field of foughten battle still,
Who knows no limit save the victor's will.

The Gaulliad.

Chap. xxxi.

And be he safe restored ere evening set,
Or, if there's vengeance in an injured heart,
And power to wreck it in an armed hand,
Your land shall ache for't.

Old Play.

Chap. xxxii.

Farewell to the land where the clouds love to rest,
Like the shroud of the dead on the mountain's cold breast;
To the cataract's roar where the eagles reply,
And the lake her lone bosom expands to the sky.

Chap. xxxvi.

FROM THE HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN.

MADGE WILDFIRE'S SONGS.

When the glede's in the blue cloud,
The lavrock lies still;
When the hound's in the greenwood
The hind keeps the hill.

O sleep ye sound, Sir James, she said,
When ye suld rise and ride!
There's twenty men, wi' bow and blade,
Are seeking where ye hide.

I glance like the wildfire through country and town;
I'm seen on the causeway—I'm seen on the down;
The lightning that flashes so bright and so free,
Is scarcely so blithe or so bonny as me.

What did ye wi' the bridal ring, bridal ring, bridal ring?
What did ye wi' your wedding ring, ye little cutty quean, O?
I gied it till a sodger, a sodger, a sodger,
I gied it till a sodger, an auld true love o' mine, O.

Good even, good fair moon, good even to thee;
I prithee, dear moon, now show to me
The form and the features, the speech and degree,
Of the man that true lover of mine shall be.

It is the bonny butcher lad
That wears the sleeves of blue,
He sells the flesh on Saturday,
On Friday that he slew.

There's a bloodhound ranging Tinwald Wood,
There's harness glancing sheen;
There's a maiden sits on Tinwald brae,
And she sings loud between.

In the bonnie cells of Bedlam,
Ere I was ane and twenty,
I had hempen bracelets strong,
And merry whips, ding-dong,
And prayer and fasting plenty.
SONGS AND VERSES.

My banes are buried in yon kirk-yard
Sae far ayont the sea,
And it is but my blithesome ghaist
That's speaking now to thee.

I'm Madge of the country, I'm Madge of the town,
And I'm Madge of the lad I am blithest to own—
The Lady of Beever in diamonds may shine,
But has not a heart half so lightsome as mine.

I am Queen of the Wake, and I'm Lady of May,
And I lead the blithe ring round the May-pole to-day;
The wildfire that flashes so fair and so free
Was never so bright, or so bonnie as me.

Our work is over—over now,
The goodman wipes his weary brow,
The last long wain wends slow away,
And we are free to sport and play.

The night comes on when sets the sun,
And labour ends when day is done.
When Autumn's gone, and Winter's come,
We hold our jovial harvest-home.

When the fight of grace is fought,
When the marriage vest is wrought,
When Faith has chased cold Doubt away,
And Hope but sickens at delay,
When Charity, imprisoned here,
Longs for a more expanded sphere,—
Doff thy robes of sin and clay,
Christian, rise, and come away.

Cauld is my bed, Lord Archibald,
And sad my sleep of sorrow:
But thine shall be as sad and cauld,
My fause true-love! to-morrow.

And weep ye not, my maidens free,
Though death your mistress borrow:
For he for whom I die to-day,
Shall die for me to-morrow.

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell, me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?"
"When six braw gentlemen Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?"
"The gray-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing,
'Welcome, proud lady.'"
Chaps. xv.-xl.

MOTTOES.

Law, take thy victim!—May she find the mercy
In yon mild heaven which this hard world denies her!
Chap. xxiv.

And Need and Misery, Vice and Danger, bind
In sad alliance, each degraded mind.
Chap. xxix.

I beseech you,
These tears beseech you, and these chaste hands woo you,
That never yet were heaved but to things holy—
Things like yourself. You are a God above us;
Be as a God, then, full of saving mercy!

The Bloody Brother.
Chap. xxxvii.
SONGS AND VERSES.

FROM THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR.

LUCY ASHTON'S SONG.

Look not thou on beauty's charming,
Sit thou still when kings are arming,
Taste not when the wine-cup glistens,
Stop thine ear against the singer,
From the red gold keep thy finger;
Vacant heart and hand and eye.

Easy live and quiet die.

Chap. iii.

NORMAN THE FORESTER'S SONG.

The monk must arise when the matins ring;
The abbot may sleep to their chime;
But the yeoman must start when the bugles sing,
'Tis time, my hearts, 'tis time.

There's bucks and raes on Billhope braes,
There's a herd on Shortwood Shaw;
But a lily-white doe in the garden goes,
She's fairly worth them a'.

Chap. iii.

THE PROPHECY.

When the last Laird of Ravenswood to Ravenswood shall ride,
And woo a dead maiden to be his bride,
He shall stable his steed in the Kelpie's flow,
And his name shall be lost for evermoe!

Chap. xviii.

MOTTOES.

AY, and when huntsmen wind the merry horn,
And from its covert starts the fearful prey,
Who, warm'd with youth's blood in his swelling veins,
Would, like a lifeless clod, out-stretched lie,
Shut out from all the fair creation offers?

Etwald, Act i. Sc. i.

Chap. ix.

LET them have meat enough, woman —half a hen!
There be old rotten pilchards—put them off too!
'Tis but a little new anointing of them,
And a strong onion that confounds the savour.

Love's Pilgrimage.

Chap. xi.

SHOULD I take aught of you? 'tis true I begg'd now;
And, what is worse than that, I stole a kindness;
And, what is worst of all, I lost my way in't.

Wit without Money.

Chap. xiii.

As, to the Autumn breeze's bugle-

Various and vague the dry leaves dance their round;
Or, from the garner-door, on ether borne,
The chaff flies devious from the winnow'd corn;
So vague, so devious, at the breath of heaven,
From their fix'd aim are mortal counsels driven.


Here is a father now
Will truck his daughter for a foreign venture,
Make her the stop-gap to some canker’d leud,
Or fling her o’er, like Jonah, to the fishes,
To appease the sea at highest.


Sir, stay at home and take an old man’s counsel:
Seek not to bask you by a stranger’s hearth;
Our own blue smoke is warmer than their fire.
Domestic food is wholesome, though ’tis homely.
And foreign dainties poisonous, though tasteful.

The French Courtezan.

Chap. xviii.

I do too ill in this,
And must not think but that a parent’s plaint
Will move the heavens to pour forth misery
Upon the head of disobedience.
Yet reason tells us parents are o’erseen
When with too strict a rein they do hold in
Their child’s affection, and control that love
Which the High Powers Divine inspire them with.

The Hog hath lost his Pearl.

Chap. xix.

And soon they spied the merry-men green,
And eke the coach-and-four.

Duke upon Duke.

Chap. xxii.

Why, now I have Dame Fortune by the forelock,
And if she ‘scape my grasp, the fault is mine;
He that hath buffeted with stern adversity
Best knows to shape his course to favouring breezes.

Chap. xxvii. Old Play.

FROM THE LEGEND OF MONTROSE.

ANCIENT GAELIC MELODY.

Annot Lyle sings:—

Birds of omen dark and foul,
Night-crow, raven, bat, and owl,
Leave the sick man to his dream—
All night long he heard your scream.
Haste to cave and ruin’d tower,
Ivy tod, or dingled-bower,
There to wink and mope, for, hark!
In the mild air sings the lark.

Hie to moorish gills and rocks,
Prowling wolf and wily fox;
Hie ye fast, nor turn your view,
Though the lamb bleats to the ewe.
Couch your trains, and speed your flight,
Safety parts with parting night;
And on distant echo borne,
Comes the hunter’s early horn.

The moon’s wan crescent scarcely gleams,
Ghost-like she fades in morning beams:
Hie hence, each peevish imp and lay
That scare the pilgrim on his way.
Quench, kelpie! quench, in bog and fen,
Thy torch, that cheats benighted men;
Thy dance is o’er, thy reign is done,
For Ben-y-glow hath seen the sun.

Wild thoughts that, sinful, dark, and deep,
O’erpower the passive mind in sleep,
Pass from the slumberer’s soul away,
Like night-mists from the brow of day:
Foul hag, whose blasted visage grim
Smothers the pulse, unnerves the limb,
Spur thy dark palfrey, and begone!
Thou dar’st not face the godlike sun.

Chap. vi.
SONGS AND VERSES.

THE ORPHAN MAID.

ANNOT LYLE SINGS:—

November's hail-cloud drifts away,
November's sunbeam wan
Looks coldly on the castle gray,
When forth comes Lady Anne.

The orphan by the oak was set,
Her arms, her feet, were bare;
The hail-drops had not melted yet,
Amid her raven hair.

"And, dame," she said, "by all the ties
That child and mother know,
Aid one who never knew these joys,
Relieve an orphan's woe."

The lady said, "An orphan's state
Is hard and sad to bear;
Yet worse the widow'd mother's fate,
Who mourns both lord and heir.

"Twelve times the rolling year has sped,
Since, when from vengeance wild
Of fierce Strathallan's Chief I fled,
Forth's eddies whelm'd my child."

"Twelve times the year its course has borne,"
The wandering maid replied;
"Since fishers on Saint Bridget's morn
Drew nets on Campsie side.

"Saint Bridget sent no scaly spoil;
An infant, wellnigh dead,
They saved, and rear'd in want and toil,
To beg from you her bread."

That orphan maid the lady kiss'd,—
"My husband's looks you bear;
Saint Bridget and her morn be bless'd!
You are his widow's heir."

They've robed that maid, so poor and pale,
In silk and sandals rare;
And pearls, for drops of frozen hail,
Are glistening in her hair.

MOTTOES.

Dark on their journey lour'd the gloomy day,
Wild were the hills, and doubtful grew the way;
More dark, more gloomy, and more doubtful, show'd
The mansion which received them from the road.

The Travellers, a Romance.

Chap. ix.

Is this thy castle, Baldwin?
Melancholy Displays her sable banner from the donjon,
Dark'ning the foam of the whole surge beneath.
Were I a habitant, to see this gloom
Pollute the face of nature, and to hear
The ceaseless sound of wave and seabird's scream,
I'd wish me in the hut that poorest peasant
E'er framed to give him temporary shelter.

Brown.

Chap. xi.

This was the entry, then, these stairs—but whither after?
Yet he that's sure to perish on the land
May quit the nicety of card and compass,
And trust the open sea without a pilot.

Tragedy of Brennivalt.

Chap. xiv.
FROM IVANHOE.

THE CRUSADER'S RETURN.

High deeds achieved of knightly fame,
From Palestine the champion came;
The cross upon his shoulders borne,
Battle and blast had dimn'd and torn.
Each dint upon his batter'd shield
Was token of a foughten field;
And thus, beneath his lady's bower,
He sung, as fell the twilight hour:

"Joy to the fair!—thy knight behold,
Return'd from yonder land of gold;
No wealth he brings, nor wealth can need,
Save his good arms and battle-steed;
His spurs to dash against a foe,
His lance and sword to lay him low;
Such all the trophies of his toil,
Such—and the hope of Tekla's smile!

"Joy to the fair! whose constant knight
Her favour fired to feats of might!
Unnoted shall she not remain
Where meet the bright and noble train;
Minstrel shall sing; and herald tell—'
Mark yonder maid of beauty well,
'Tis she for whose bright eyes was won
The listed field of Ascalon!

"Note well her smile!—it edged the blade
Which fifty wives to widows made,
When, vain his strength and Mahound's spell,
Iconium's turban'd Soldan fell.
See'st thou her locks, whose sunny glow
Half shows, half shades, her neck of snow?
Twines not of them one golden thread,
But for its sake a Paynim bled.'

"Joy to the fair!—my name unknown,
Each deed, and all its praise, thine own;
Then, oh! unbar this churlish gate,
The night-dew falls, the hour is late.
Inured to Syria's glowing breath,
I feel the north breeze chill as death;
Let grateful love quell maiden shame,
And grant him bliss who brings thee fame!"

Chap. xvii.

THE BAREFOOTED FRIAR.

I'll give thee, good fellow, a twelve-month or twain,
To search Europe through from Byzantium to Spain;
But ne'er shall you find, should you search till you tire,
So happy a man as the Barefooted Friar.

Your knight for his lady pricks forth in career,
And is brought home at even-song prick'd through with a spear;
I confess him in haste—for his lady desires
No comfort on earth save the Barefooted Friar's.

Your monarch?—Pshaw! many a prince has been known
To barter his robes for our cowl and our gown;
But which of us e'er felt the idle desire
To exchange for a crown the gray hood of a Friar?

The Friar has walk'd out, and where'er he has gone,
The land and its fatness is mark'd for his own;
He can roam where he lists, he can stop when he tires,
For every man's house is the Barefooted Friar's.
SONGS AND VERSES.

627

He's expected at noon, and no wight, till he comes,
May profane the great chair, or the porridge of plums;
For the best of the cheer, and the seat by the fire,
Is the undenied right of the Bare-footed Friar.

He's expected at night, and the pasty's made hot,
They broach the brown ale, and they fill the black pot;
And the goodwife would wish the goodman in the mire,
Ere he lack'd a soft pillow, the Bare-footed Friar.

Long flourish the sandal, the cord, and the cope,
The dread of the devil and trust of the Pope!
For to gather life's roses, unscathed by the brier,
Is granted alone to the Bare-footed Friar.
Chap. xvii.

NORMAN.

NORMAN saw on English oak,
On English neck a Norman yoke,
Norman spoon in English dish,
And England ruled as Normans wish;
Blithe world in England never will be more,
Till England's rid of all the four.
Chap. xxvii.

ULRICA'S WAR-SONG.

Whet the bright steel,
Sons of the White Dragon!
Kindle the torch,
Daughter of Hengist!
The steel glimmers not for the carving of the banquet,
It is hard, broad, and sharply pointed;
The torch goeth not to the bridal chamber,
It steams and glitters blue with sulphur.
Whet the steel, the raven croaks!
Light the torch, Zernebock is yelling!
Whet the steel, sons of the Dragon!
Kindle the torch, daughter of Hengist!

The black clouds are low over the thane's castle:
The eagle screams—he rides on their bosom.
Scream not, gray rider of the sable cloud,
Thy banquet is prepared!
The maidens of Valhalla look forth,
The race of Hengist will send them guests.
Shake your black tresses, maidens of Valhalla!
And strike your loud timbrels for joy!
Many a haughty step bends to your halls,
Many a helmed head.

Dark sits the evening upon the thane's castle,
The black clouds gather round;
Soon shall they be red as the blood of the valiant!
The destroyer of forests shall shake his red crest against them;
He, the bright consumer of palaces,
Broad waves be his blazing banner,
Red, wide, and dusky,
Over the strife of the valiant;
His joy is in the clashing swords and broken bucklers;
He loves to lick the hissing blood as it bursts warm from the wound!

All must perish!
The sword cleaveth the helmet;
The strong armour is pierced by the lance:
Fire devoureth the dwelling of princes,
Engines break down the fences of the battle.
All must perish!
SONGS AND VERSES.

The race of Hengist is gone—  
The name of Horsa is no more!  
Shrink not then from your doom,  
sons of the sword!

Let your blades drink blood like wine;  
Feast ye in the banquet of slaughter,  
By the light of the blazing halis!  
Strong be your swords while your blood is warm,  
And spare neither for pity nor fear,  
For vengeance hath but an hour;  
Strong hate itself shall expire!  
I also must perish.  
Chap. xxxi.

REBECCA'S HYMN.

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,  
Out from the land of bondage came,  
Her fathers' God before her moved,  
An awful guide in smoke and flame.  
By day, along the astonish'd lands  
The cloudy pillar glided slow;  
By night, Arabia's crimson'd sands  
Return'd the fiery column's glow.

There rose the choral hymn of praise,  
And trump and timbrel answer'd keen,  
And Zion's daughters pour'd their lays,  
With priest's and warrior's voice between  
No portents now our foes amaze,  
Forsaken Israel wanders lone;  
Our fathers would not know Thy ways,  
And 'tis thou hast left them to their own.

But present still, though now unseen!  
When brightly shines the prosperous day,  
Be thoughts of Thee a cloudy screen  
To temper the deceitful ray.  
And oh, when stoops on Judah's path  
In shade and storm the frequent night,

Be Thou, long-suffering, slow to wrath,  
A burning and a shining light!

Our harps we left by Babel's streams,  
The tyrant's jest, the Gentile's scorn;  
No censer round our altar beams,  
And mute are timbrel, harp, and horn.

But Thou hast said, The blood of goat,  
The flesh of rams I will not prize;  
A contrite heart, a humble thought,  
Are mine accepted sacrifice.  
Chap. xxxix.

THE BLACK KNIGHT'S SONG.

Anna-Marie, love, up is the sun,  
Anna-Marie; love, morn is begun,  
Mists are dispersing, love, birds singing free,  
Up in the morning, love, Anna-Marie.

Anna-Marie, love, up in the morn,  
The hunter is winding blithe sounds on his horn,  
The echo rings merry from rock and from tree,  
'Tis time to arouse thee, love, Anna-Marie.

Wamba:—  
O Tybalt, love, Tybalt, awake me not yet,  
Around my soft pillow while softer dreams flit;  
For what are the joys that in waking we prove,  
Compared with these visions, O Tybalt! my love?

Let the birds to the rise of the mist carol shrill,  
Let the hunter blow out his loud horn on the hill,  
Softer sounds, softer pleasures, in slumber I prove,  
But think not I dream'd of thee, Tybalt, my love.  
Chap. xl.
SONGS AND VERSES.

Knight and Wamba:—

There came three merry men from south, west, and north, 
Ever more sing the roundelay; 
To win the Widow of Wycombe for h, 
And where was the widow might say them nay?

The first was a knight, and from Tynedale he came, 
Ever more sing the roundelay; 
And his fathers, God save us, were men of great fame, 
And where was the widow might say him nay?

Of his father the laird, of his uncle the squire, 
He boasted in rhyme and in roundelay; 
She bade him go bask by his sea-coal fire, 
For she was the widow would say him nay.

Wamba:—

The next that came forth, swore by blood and by nails, 
Merrily sing the roundelay; 
Hur’s a gentleman, God wot, and hur’s lineage was of Wales, 
And where was the widow might say him nay?

Sir David ap Morgan ap Griffith ap Hugh 
Ap Tudor ap Rhice, quoth his roundelay; 
She said that one widow for so many was too few, 
And she bade the Welshman wend his way.

But then next came a yeoman, a yeoman of Kent, 
Jollily singing his roundelay; 
He spoke to the widow of living and rent, 
And where was the widow could say him nay?

Both:—

So the knight and the squire were both left in the mire, 
There for to sing their roundelay; 
For a yeoman of Kent, with his yearly rent, 
There ne’er was a widow could say him nay. 

Chap. xli.

Dirge for Athelstan.

Dust into dust, 
To this all must; 
The tenant hath resign’d 
The faded form 
To waste and worm—
Corruption claims her kind.

Through paths unknown 
Thy soul hath flown, 
To seek the realms of woe, 
Where fiery pain 
Shall purge the stain 
Of actions done below. 

In that sad place 
By Mary’s grace, 
Brief may thy dwelling be! 
Till prayers and alms, 
And holy psalms, 
Shall set the captive free. 

Chap. xlii.

Mottoes.

Away! our journey lies through dell and dingle, 
Where the blithe fawn trips by its timid mother, 
Where the broad oak, with intercepting boughs, 
Chequers the sunbeam in the green-sward alley— 
Up and away!—for lovely paths are these. 
To tread, when the glad sun is on his throne; 
Less pleasant, and less safe, when Cynthia’s lamp 
With doubtful glimmer lights the dreary forest. 

Chap. xviii. Etrict Forest.
SONGS AND VERSES.

A TRAIN of armèd men, some noble dame
Escorting (so their scatter'd words discover'd,
As unperceiv'd I hung upon their rear),
Are close at hand, and mean to pass the night
Within the castle.  

Orra, a Tragedy.

Chap. xix.

WHEN autumn nights were long and drear,
And forest walks were dark and dim,
How sweetly on the pilgrim's ear
Was wont to steal the hermit's hymn!

Devotion borrows Music's tone,
And Music took Devotion's wing,
And, like the bird that hails the sun,
They soar to heaven, and soaring sing.
The Hermit of St. Clement's Well.
Chap. xx.

ALAS! how many hours and years have pass'd
Since human forms have round this table sate,
Or lamp or taper on its surface gleam'd!
Methinks I hear the sound of time long past
Still murmuring o'er us in the lofty void
Of these dark arches, like the ling'ring voices
Of those who long within their graves have slept.

Orra, a Tragedy.

Chap. xxi.

The hottest horse will oft be cool,
The dullest will show fire;
The friar will often play the fool,
The fool will play the friar.

Old Song.

Chap. xxvi.

This wandering race, sever'd from other men,
Boast yet their intercourse with human arts;
The seas, the woods, the deserts which they haunt,
Find them acquainted with their secret treasures;
And unregarded herbs, and flowers, and blossoms,
Display undream'd-of powers when gather'd by them.

Chap. xxviii.  The Jew.

APPROACH the chamber, look upon his bed.
His is the passing of no peaceful ghost,
Which, as the lark arises to the sky,
'Mid morning's sweetest breeze and softest dew,
Is wing'd to heaven by good men's sighs and tears!
Anselm parts otherwise.

Chap. xxx.  Old Play.

TRUST me, each state must have its policies:
Kingdoms have edicts, cities have their charters;
Even the wild outlaw, in his forest-walk,
Keeps yet some touch of civil discipline.
For not since Adam wore his verdant apron
Hath man with man in social union dwelt,
But laws were made to draw that union closer.

Chap. xxxii.  Old Play.

AROUSE the tiger of Hyrcanian deserts,
Strive with the half-starved lion for his prey;
Lesser the risk, than rouse the slumbering fire
Of wild Fanaticism.

Chap. xxxv.  Anonymous.
SONGS AND VERSES.

Say not my art is fraud—all live by seeming.
The beggar begs with it, and the gay courtier
Gains land and title, rank and rule, by seeming:
The clergy scorn it not, and the bold soldier
Will eke with it his service. All admit it,
All practise it; and he who is content
With showing what he is, shall have small credit
In church, or camp, or state. So wags the world.
Chap. xxxvi.  Old Play.

Stern was the law which bade its vot’ries leave
At human woes with human hearts to grieve;
Stern was the law, which at the winning wile
Of frank and harmless mirth forbade to smile;
But sterner still, when high the iron rod
Of tyrant power she shook, and call’d that power of God.
Chap. xxxvii.  The Middle Ages.

FROM THE MONASTERY.

Ne sit ancillae, etc.

Take thou no scorn
Of fiction born,
Fair fiction’s muse to woo;
Old Homer’s theme
Was but a dream,
Himself a fiction too.
Answer to the Introductory Epistle.

SONGS OF THE WHITE LADY OF AVENEL.

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
Both current and ripple are dancing in light:
We have roused the night raven, I heard him croak
As we plashed along beneath the oak
That flings its broad branches so far and so wide,
Their shadows are dancing in midst of the tide.
"Who wakens my nestlings?" the raven he said,
"My beak shall ere morn in his blood be red!
For a blue swollen corpse is a dainty meal,
And I’ll have my share with the pike and the eel."

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
There’s a golden gleam on the distant height:
There’s a silver shower on the alders dank,
And the drooping willows that wave on the bank.
I see the Abbey, both turret and tower,
It is all astir for the vesper hour;
The monks for the chapel are leaving each cell,
But where’s Father Philip should toll the bell?

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
Downward we drift through shadow and light;
Under yon rock the eddies sleep,
Calm and silent, dark and deep.
The Kelpy has risen from the fathomless pool,
He has lighted his candle of death and of dool:
Look, Father, look, and you’ll laugh to see
How he gapes and glares with his eyes on thee!

Good luck to your fishing, whom watch ye to-night?
A man of mean or a man of might?
Is it layman or priest that must float
in your cove,
Or lover who crosses to visit his
love?
Hark! heard ye the Kelpy reply as
we pass'd,—
"God's blessing on the warder, he
lock'd the bridge fast!
All that come to my cove are sunk,
Priest or layman, lover or monk."

Landed — landed! the black book
hath won,
Else had you seen Berwick with
morning sun!
Sain ye, and save ye, and blithe
ye be,
For seldom they land that go swim-
ning with me.
Chap. v.

TO THE SUB-PRIOR.

The White Lady sings:—

Good evening, Sir Priest, and so
late as you ride,
With your mule so fair, and your
mantle so wide;
But ride you through valley, or ride
you o'er hill,
There is one that has warrant to
wait on you still.
Back, back,
The volume black!
I have a warrant to carry it back.

What, ho! Sub-Prior, and came you
but here
To conjure a book from a dead
woman's bier?
Sain you, and save you, be wary and
wise,
Ride back with the book, or you'll
pay for your prize.
Back, back,
There's death in the track!
In the name of my master, I bid thee
bear back.

That which is neither ill nor well,
That which belongs not to heaven
nor to hell,
A wreath of the mist, a bubble of the
stream,
'Twixt a waking thought and a
sleeping dream;
A form that men spy
With the half-shut eye
In the beams of the setting sun,
am I.

Vainly, Sir Prior, wouldst thou bar
me my right!
Like the star when it shoots, I can
dart through the night;
I can dance on the torrent, and ride
on the air,
And travel the world with the bonny
night-mare.
Again, again,
At the crook of the glen,
Where bickers the burnie, I'll meet
thee again.

Men of good are bold as sackless,¹
Men of rude are wild and reckless.
Lie thou still
In the nook of the hill,
For those be before thee that wish
thee ill.
Chap. ix.

The White Lady sings:—

Thank the holly-bush
That nods on thy brow;
Or with this slender rush
I had strangled thee now.

Chap. x.

TO THE WHITE LADY.

Halbert sings:—

Thrice to the holly brake,
Thrice to the well—
I bid thee awake,
White Maid of Avenel!

¹ Sackless—Innocent.
SONGS AND VERSES.

To Halbert.

The White Lady sings or speaks:—
Youth of the dark eye, wherefore didst thou call me?
Wherefore art thou here, if terrors can appal thee?
He that seeks to deal with us must know no fear nor failing;
To coward and churl our speech is dark, our gifts are unavailing.
The breeze that brought me hither now must sweep Egyptian ground,
The fleecy cloud on which I ride for Araby is bound;
The fleecy cloud is drifting by, the breeze sighs for my stay,
For I must sail a thousand miles before the close of day.

What I am I must not show—
What I am thou couldst not know—
Something betwixt heaven and hell—
Something that neither stood nor fell—
Something that through thy wit or will
May work thee good—may work thee ill.
Neither substance quite, nor shadow,
Haunting lonely moor and meadow,
Dancing by the haunted spring,
Riding on the whirlwind's wing;
Aping in fantastic fashion
Every change of human passion,
While o'er our frozen minds they pass
Like shadows from the mirror'd glass.
Wayward, fickle, is our mood,
Hovering betwixt bad and good,
Happier than brief-dated man,
Living twenty times his span;
Far less happy, for we have
Help nor hope beyond the grave!

Man awakes to joy or sorrow;
Ours the sleep that knows no morrow.
This is all that I can show—
This is all that thou may'st know.

Ay! and I taught thee the word and the spell,
To waken me here by the Fairies' spell:
But thou hast loved the heron and hawk,
More than to seek my haunted walk;
And thou hast loved the lance and the sword,
More than good text and holy word;
And thou hast loved the deer to track,
More than the lines and the letters black;
And thou art a ranger of moss and wood,
And scornest the nurture of gentle blood.

Thy craven fear my truth accused;
Thine idlehood my trust abused;
He that draws to harbour late,
Must sleep without, or burst the gate.
There is a star for thee which burn'd,
Its influence wanes, its course is turn'd;
Valour and constancy alone
Can bring thee back the chance that's flown.

Within that awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries!
Happiest they of human race,
To whom God has granted grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, and force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born,
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn.

Many a fathom dark and deep
I have laid the book to sleep;
Ethereal fires around it glowing—
Ethereal music ever flowing—

Noon gleams on the lake,
Noon glows on the fell,—
Wake thee, O wake,
White Maid of Avenel.
Chap. xi.
SONGS AND VERSES.

The sacred pledge of Heav'n
All things revere,
Each in his sphere,
Save man for whom 'twas giv'n:
Lend thy hand, and thou shalt spy
Things ne'er seen by mortal eye.

FEAREST thou to go with me?
Still it is free to thee
A peasant to dwell;
Thou may'st drive the dull steer,
And chase the king's deer,
But never more come near
This haunted well.

Here lies the volume thou boldly
hast sought;
Touch it, and take it,—'twill dearly
be bought.

RASH thy deed,
Mortal weed
To immortal flames applying;
Rasher trust
Has thing of dust,
On his own weak worth relying:
Strip thee of such fences vain,
Strip, and prove thy luck again.

Mortal warp and mortal woof
Cannot brook this charmed roof;
All that mortal art hath wrought
In our cell returns to nought.
The molten gold returns to clay,
The polish'd diamond melts away;
All is altered, all is flown,
Nought stands fast but truth alone.
Not for that thy quest give o'er:
Courage! prove thy chance once more.

ALAS! alas!
Not ours the grace
These holy characters to trace:
Idle forms of painted air,
Not to us is given to share
The boon bestowed on Adam's race.
With patience bide,
Heaven will provide
The fitting time, the fitting guide.
Chap. xii.

This is the day when the fairy kind
Sit weeping alone for their hope-
less lot,
And the wood-maiden sighs to the
sighing wind,
And the mermaid weeps in her
crystal grot;
For this is a day that the deed was
wrought,
In which we have neither part nor
share,
For the children of clay was salvation
bought,
But not for the forms of sea or air!
And ever the mortal is most forlorn,
Who meeteth our race on the Friday
morn.

DARING youth! for thee it is well,
Here calling me in haunted dell,
That thy heart has not quail'd,
Nor thy courage fail'd,
And that thou couldst brook
The angry look
Of Her of Avenel.
Did one limb shiver,
Or an eyelid quiver,
Thou wert lost for ever.
Though I am form'd from the ether
blue,
And my blood is of the unfallen dew,
And thou art framed of mud and
dust,
'Tis thine to speak, reply I must.

A MIGHTIER wizard far than I
Wields o'er the universe his power;
Him owns the eagle in the sky,
The turtle in the bower.
Changeful in shape, yet mightiest
still,
He wields the heart of man at will,
From ill to good, from good to ill,
In cot and castle-tower.

Ask thy heart, whose secret cell
Is fill'd with Mary Avenel!
Ask thy pride, why scornful look
In Mary's view it will not brook?
Ask it, why thou seek'st to rise
Among the mighty and the wise?
Why thou spurn'st thy lowly lot?
Why thy pastimes are forgot?
Why thou wouldest in bloody strife
Mend thy luck or lose thy life?
Ask thy heart, and it shall tell,
Sighing from its secret cell,
'Tis for Mary Avenel.

Do not ask me;
On doubts like these thou canst not
task me.
We only see the passing show
Of human passion's ebb and flow;
And view the pageant's idle glance
As mortals eye the northern dance,
When thousand streamers, flashing
bright,
Career it o'er the brow of night,
And gazers mark their changeful
gleams,
But feel no influence from their
beams.

By ties mysterious link'd, our fated
race
Holds strange connexion with the
sons of men.
The star that rose upon the House of
Avenel,
When Norman Ulric first assumed
the name,
That star, when culminating in its
orbit,
Shot from its sphere a drop of
diamond dew,
And this bright font received it—and
a Spirit
Rose from the fountain, and her date
of life
Hath co-existence with the House of
Avenel,
And with the star that rules it.

Look on my girdle—on this thread
of gold—
'Tis fine as web of lightest gossamer,
And, but there is a spell on't, would
not bind,
Light as they are, the folds of my
thin robe.
But when 'twas donn'd, it was a
massive chain,

Such as might bind the champion of
the Jews,
Even when his locks were longest:
it hath dwindled
Hath 'minish'd in its substance and
its strength,
As sunk the greatness of the House
of Avenel.
When this frail thread gives way, I to
the elements
Resign the principles of life they lent
me.
Ask me no more of this!—the stars
forbid it.

Dim burns the once bright star of
Avenel,
Dim as the beacon when the morn is
nigh,
And the o'er-wearied warder leaves
the light-house;
There is an influence sorrowful and
fearful,
That dogs its downward course.
Disastrous passion,
Fierce hate and rivalry, are in the
aspect
That lowers upon its fortunes.

Complain not on me, child of clay,
If to thy harm I yield the way.
We, who soar thy sphere above,
Know not aught of hate or love;
As will or wisdom rules thy mood,
My gifts to evil turn or good.

When Piercie Shafton boasteth high,
Let this token meet his eye.
The sun is westering from the dell,
Thy wish is granted—fare thee well!
Chap. xvii.

Sir Piercie Shafton sings:

What tongue can her perfections
tell,
On whose each part all pens may
dwell.

. . . . .
Of whose high praise and praiseful
bliss,
Goodness the pen, Heaven paper is;
SONGS AND VERSES.

The ink immortal fame doth send:
As I began so I must end.

THE WHITE LADY chants:—
He whose heart for vengeance sued
Must not shrink from shedding blood;
The knot that thou hast tied with word,
Thou must loose by edge of sword.

You have summon'd me once, you have summon'd me twice,
And without e'er a summons I come to you thrice;
Unask'd for, unsued for, you come to my glen;
Unsued and unask'd, I am with you agen.
Chap. xx.

BORDER MARCH.

March, march, Ettrick, and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread,
Flutters above your head,
Many a crest that is famous in story.
Mount and make ready then,
Sons of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and our old Scottish glory.

Come from the hills where your hirsels are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding,
War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms, and march in good order;
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border.
Chap. xxv.

THE WHITE LADY TO MARY AVENEL.

MAIDEN, whose sorrows wail the living dead,
Whose eyes shall commune with the dead alive,
Maiden, attend! Beneath my foot lies hid
The word, the law, the path which thou dost strive
To find, and canst not find. Could Spirits shed
Tears for their lot, it were my lot to weep,
Showing the road which I shall never tread,
Though my foot points it. Sleep, eternal sleep,
Dark, long, and cold forgetfulness my lot!
But do not thou at human ills repine;
Secure there lies full guerdon in this spot
For all the woes that wait frail Adam's line;
Stoop then and make it yours—I may not make it mine!
Chap. xxx.

THE WHITE LADY TO EDWARD.

Thou who seek'st my fountain lone,
With thoughts and hopes thou dar'st not own;
Whose heart within leap'd wildly glad,
When most his brow seem'd dark and sad;
Hie thee back, thou find'st not here
Corpse or coffin, grave or bier;
The dead alive is gone and fled—
Go thou, and join the living dead!

The living dead, whose sober brow
Oft shrouds such thoughts as thou hast now,
Whose hearts within are seldom cured
Of passions by their vows abjured;
Where, under sad and solemn show,
Vain hopes are nursed, wild wishes glow.
Seek the convent's vaulted room,
Prayer and vigil be thy doom;
Doff the green, and don the gray,
To the cloister hence away!

THE WHITE LADY'S FARE-WELL.

Fare thee well, thou Holly green!
Thou shalt seldom now be seen,
With all thy glittering garlands bending,
As to greet my slow descending,
Startling the bewild'ring hind,
Who sees thee wave without a wind.

Farewell, Fountain! now not long
Shalt thou murmur to my song,
While thy crystal bubbles glancing,
Keep the tune in mystic dancing,
Rise and swell, are burst and lost,
Like mortal schemes by fortune cross'd.

The knot of fate at length is tied,
The Churl is Lord, the Maid is Bride!
Vainly did my magic sleight
Send the lover from her sight;
Wither bush, and perish well,
Fall'n is lofty Avenel!

MOTTOES.

O ay! the Monks, the Monks, they did the mischief!
Th'irs all the grossness, all the superstition
Of a most gross and superstitious age.
May He be praised that sent the healthful tempest,
And scatter'd all these pestilential vapours;
But that we owed them all to yonder Harlot
Throned on the seven hills with her cup of gold,
I will as soon believe, with kind Sir Roger,
That old Moll White took wing with cat and broomstick,
And raised the last night's thunder.

In yon lone vale his early youth was bred,
Not solitary then—the bugle-horn
Of fell Alecto often waked its windings,
From where the brook joins the majestic river,
To the wild northern bog, the curlew's haunt,
Where oozes forth its first and feeble streamlet.

A PRIEST, ye cry, a priest!—lame shepherds they,
How shall they gather in the straggling flock?
Dumb dogs which bark not, how shall they compel
The loitering vagrants to the Master's fold?
Fitter to bask before the blazing fire,
And snuff the mess neat-handed Phillis dresses,
Than on the snow-wreath battle with the wolf.
SONGS AND VERSES.

Now let us sit in conclave. That these weeds
Be rooted from the vineyard of the Church,
That these foul tares be sever'd from the wheat,
We are, I trust, agreed. Yet how to do this,
Nor hurt the wholesome crop and tender vine-plants,
Craves good advisement.
   Chap. vi. The Reformation.

NAY, daily not with time, the wise man's treasure,
Though fools are lavish on't; the fatal Fisher
Hooks souls, while we waste moments.
   Chap. viii. Old Play.

You call this education, do you not?
Why, 'tis the forced march of a herd of bullocks
Before a shouting drover. The glad van
Move on at ease, and pause a while to snatch
A passing morsel from the dewy greensward,
While all the blows, the oaths, the indignation,
Fall on the croupé of the ill-fated laggard
That cripples in the rear.
   Chap. xi. Old Play.

There's something in that ancient superstition,
Which, erring as it is, our fancy loves.
The spring that, with its thousand crystal bubbles,
Bursts from the bosom of some desert rock
In secret solitude, may well be deem'd
The haunt of something purer, more refined,
And mightier than ourselves.
   Chap. xii. Old Play.

NAY, let me have the friends who eat my victuals
As various as my dishes. The feast's naught,
Where one huge plate predominates. John Plaintext,
He shall be mighty beef, our English staple;
The worthy Alderman, a butter'd dumpling;
Yon pair of whisker'd Cornets, ruffs and rees;
Their friend the Dandy, a green goose in sippets.
And so the board is spread at once and fill'd
On the same principle—Variety.
   New Play.

   Chap. xiv.

He strikes no coin, 'tis true, but coins new phrases,
And vends them forth as knaves vend gilded counters,
Which wise men scorn, and fools accept in payment.
   Old Play.

Now choose thee, gallant, betwixt wealth and honour;
There lies the pelf, in sum to bear thee through
The dance of youth, and the turmoil of manhood,
Yet leave enough for age's chimney-corner;
But an thou grasp to it, farewell Ambition!
Farewell each hope of bettering thy condition,
And raising thy low rank above the churls
That till the earth for bread!
   Old Play.

   Chap. xix.

I hope you'll give me cause to think you noble,
And do me right with your sword, sir, as becomes
One gentleman of honour to another;  
All this is fair, sir—let us make no  
days on't,  
I'll lead your way.  

_Love's Pilgrimage._

Chap. xx.

**Indifferent, but indifferent—pshaw!**  
he doth it not  
Like one who is his craft's master—  
ne'ertheless  
I have seen a clown confer a bloody  
coxcomb  
On one who was a master of defence.  

_Old Play._

Chap. xxi.

Yes, life hath left him; every busy  
thought,  
Each fiery passion, every strong  
affection,  
The sense of outward ill and inward  
sorrow,  
Are fled at once from the pale trunk  
before me;  
And I have given that which spoke  
and moved,  
Thought, acted, suffer'd, as a living  
man,  
To be a ghastly form of bloody clay,  
Soon the foul food for reptiles.  

_Old Play._

Chap. xxii.

'Tis when the wound is stiffening  
with the cold,  
The warrior first feels pain; 'tis  
when the heat  
And fiery fever of his soul is past,  
The sinner feels remorse.  

_Old Play._

Chap. xxiii.

I'll walk on tiptoe; arm my eye  
with caution,  
My heart with courage, and my  
hand with weapon  
Like him who ventures on a lion's  
den.  

_Old Play._

Chap. xxiv.

Now, by Our Lady, Sheriff, 'tis hard  
reckoning,  
That I, with every odds of birth and  
barony,  
Should be detain'd here for the  
casual death  
Of a wild forester, whose utmost  
having  
Is but the brazen buckle of the belt  
In which he sticks his hedge-knife.  

_Old Play._

Chap. xxvii.

You call it an ill angel—it may be so;  
But sure I am, among the ranks  
which fell,  
'Tis the first fiend ere counsell'd man  
to rise,  
And win the bliss the sprite himself  
had forfeited.  

_Old Play._

Chap. xxx.

At school I knew him—a sharp-witted  
youth,  
Grave, thoughtful, and reserved  
amongst his mates,  
Turning the hours of sport and food  
to labour,  
Starving his body to inform his  
mind.  

_Old Play._

Chap. xxxi.

Then in my gown of sober gray,  
Along the mountain-path I'll  
wander,  
And wind my solitary way  
To the sad shrine that courts me  
yonder.  

There in the calm monastic shade,  
All injuries may be forgiven;  
And there for thee, obdurate maid,  
My orisons shall rise to heaven.  

_The Cruel Lady of the Mountains._  
Chap. xxxii.

Now on my faith this gear is all  
entangled,  
Like to the yarn-clew of the drowsy  
knitter,
SONGS AND VERSES.

Dragg'd by the frolic kitten through the cabin,
While the good dame sits nodding o'er the fire.
Masters, attend; 'twill crave some skill to clear it.

Old Play.

It is not texts will do it: Church artillery
Are silenced soon by real ordnance,
And canons are but vain opposed to cannon.

Go, coin your crosier, melt your church plate down,
Bid the starved soldier banquet in your halls,
And quaff your long-saved hogsheads; turn them out
Thus primed with your good cheer, to guard your wall,
And they will venture for't.

Old Play.

FROM THE ABBOT.

THE PARDONER'S ADVERTISEMENT.

LISTNETH, gode people, everiche one,
For in the londe of Babylone,
Far eastward I wot it lyeth,
And is the first londe the sonneespieth,
Ther, as he cometh fro out the sé;
In this ilk londe, as thinketh me,
Right as holie legendes tell,
Snottreth from a roke a well,
And falleth into ane bath of ston,
Wher chast Susanne in times long gon,
Was wont to wash her bodie and
lim—
Mickle vertue hath that streme,
As ye shall se er that ye pas,
Ensample by this little glas—
Through nightés cold and dayés hote,
Hiderward I have it brought;
Hath a wife made slip or slide,
Or a maiden stepp'd aside;
Putte this water under her nese,
Wold she nold she, she shall snese.

Old Play.

MOTTOES.

In the wild storm,
The seaman hews his mast down,
And the merchant
Heaves to the billows wares he once deem'd precious:
So prince and peer, 'mid popular contentions,
Cast off their favourites.

Old Play.

Thou hast each secret of the household, Francis.
I dare be sworn thou hast been in the buttery
Steeping thy curious humour in fat ale,
And in the butler's tattle—ay, or chatting
With the glib waiting-woman o'er her comfits:
These bear the key to each domestic mystery.

Old Play.

The sacred tapers' lights are gone,
Gray moss has clad the altar stone,
The holy image is o'erthrown,
The bell has ceased to toll.

Old Play.

The long ribb'd aisles are burst and shrunk,
The holy shrines to ruin sunk,
Departed is the pious monk,—
God's blessing on his soul!

Rediviva.

Kneel with me, swear it! 'Tis not in words I trust,
Save when they're fenced with an appeal to Heaven.

Old Play.
"The wide plain thunder'd to their tread,
As far as Stirling Rock"
SONGS AND VERSES.

Life hath its May, and all is mirthful then:
The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odour;
Its very blast has mirth in't,—and the maidens,
The while they don their cloaks to screen their kirtles,
Laugh at the rain that wets them.  

Chap. xi.

Nay, hear me, brother; I am elder, wiser,
And holier than thou; and age, and wisdom,
And holiness, have peremptory claims,
And will be listen'd to.  

Chap. xii.

What! Dagon up again? I thought we had hurled him
Down on the threshold never more to rise.
Bring wedge and axe; and, neighbours, lend your hands,
And rive the idol into winter fagots!  

Athehtaiie, or the Converted Dane.

Chap. xiii.

Not the wild billow, when it breaks its barrier—
Not the wild wind, escaping from its cavern—
Not the wild fiend, that mingleth both together,
And pours their rage upon the ripening harvest,
Can match the wild freaks of this mirthful meeting—

Comic, yet fearful, droll, and yet destructive.  

The Conspiracy.

Chap. xiv.

Youth! thou wear'st to manhood now
Darker lip and darker brow,
Statelier step, more pensive mien,
In thy face and gait are seen:

Thou must now brook midnight watches,
Take thy food and sport by snatches!
For the gambol and the jest,
Thou wert wont to love the best,
Graver follies must thou follow,
But as senseless, false, and hollow.

Chap. xvi.

The sky is clouded, Gaspard,
And the vexed ocean sleeps a troubled sleep
Beneath a lurid gleam of parting sunshine.
Such slumber hangs o'er discontented lands,
While factions doubt, as yet, if they have strength
To front the open battle.

Chap. xviii.

It is and is not; 'tis the thing I sought for,
Have kneel'd for, pray'd for, risk'd my life and fame for;
And yet it is not—no more than the shadow
Upon the hard, cold, flat, and polish'd mirror,
Is the warm, graceful, rounded, living substance
Which it presents in form and lineament.

Chap. xix.

Now have you reft me from my staff, my guide,
Who taught my youth, as men teach untamed falcons,
To use my strength discreetly: I am reft
Of comrade and of counsel.

Chap. xx.

Give me a morsel on the greensward rather,
Coarse as you will the cooking; let

X
Bubble beside my napkin, and the free birds,
Twittering and chirping, hop from bough to bough,
To claim the crumbs I leave for perquisites:
Your prison-feasts I like not.

*The Woodsman, a Drama.*

'Tis a weary life this—
Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my sad hours spent with as sad companions,
Whose thoughts are brooding o'er their own mischances,
Far, far too deeply to take part in mine.

*The Woodsman.*

And when Love's torch hath set the heart in flame,
Comes Signor Reason, with his saws and cautions,
Giving such aid as the old gray-beard Sexton,
Who from the church-vault drags his crazy engine,
To ply its dribbling ineffectual streamlet
Against a conflagration.

*Old Play.*

Yes, it is she whose eyes look'd on thy childhood,
And watch'd with trembling hope thy dawn of youth,
That now, with these same eye-balls, dimm'd with age,
And dimmer yet with tears, sees thy dishonour.

*Old Play.*

In some breasts passion lies conceal'd and silent,
Like war's swart powder in a castle vault,
Until occasion, like the linstock, lights it;
Then comes at once the lightning and the thunder,
And distant echoes tell that all is rent asunder.

*Old Play.*

Death distant?—No, alas! he's ever with us,
And shakes the dart at us in all our actings:
He lurks within our cup while we're in health;
Sits by our sick-bed, mocks our medicines;
We cannot walk, or sit, or ride, or travel,
But Death is by to seize us when he lists.

*The Spanish Father.*

Ay, Pedro? Come you here with mask and lantern,
Ladder of ropes, and other moonshine tools?
Why, youngster, thou may'st cheat the old Duenna,
Flatter the waiting-woman, bribe the valet;
But know, that I her father play the Gryphon,
Tameless and sleepless, proof to fraud or bribe,
And guard the hidden treasure of her beauty.

*The Spanish Father.*

It is a time of danger, not of revel,
When churchmen turn to masquers.

*The Spanish Father.*

Ay, sir—our ancient crown, in these wild times,
Oft stood upon a cast; the gamester's ducat,
So often staked, and lost, and then
Scarce knew so many hazards.

The Spanish Father.
Chap. xxxvii.

FROM KENILWORTH.

GOLDFTHRED'S SONG.

Of all the birds on bush or tree,
Commend me to the owl,
Since he may best ensample be
To those the cup that trowl.
For when the sun hath left the west,
He chooses the tree that he loves the best,
And he whoops out his song, and he laughs at his jest.
Then, though hours be late, and weather foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.

The lark is but a bumpkin fowl,
He sleeps in his nest till morn;
But my blessing upon the jolly owl,
That all night blows his horn.

Then up with your cup till you stagger in speech,
And match me this catch, till you swagger and screech,
And drink till you wink, my merry men each;
For, though hours be late, and weather be foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.

Chap. ii.

THE WARDER'S WELCOME TO KENILWORTH.

What stir, what turmoil, have we for the nones?
Stand back, my masters, or beware your bones!
Sirs, I'm a warder, and no man of straw;
My voice keeps order, and my club gives law.

Yet soft! nay stay—what vision have we here?
What dainty darling's this? what peerless peer?
What loveliest face, that lovely ranks enfold,
Like brightest diamond chased in purest gold?

Dazzled and blind, mine office I forsake,
My club, my key, my knee, my homage take.
Bright paragon, pass on in joy and bliss;
Beshrew the gate that opes not wide at such a sight as this!

Chap. xxx.

MOTTOES.

Nay, I'll hold touch; the game shall be play'd out;
It ne'er shall stop for me, this merry wager:
That which I say when gamesome,
I'll avouch in my most sober mood—ne'er trust me else.

Chap. iii. The Hazard-Table.

Not serve two masters?—Here's a youth will try it,
Would fain serve God, yet give the devil his due;
Says grace before he doth a deed of villany,
And returns his thanks devoutly when 'tis acted.

Chap. iv. Old Play.

He was a man Versed in the world as pilot in his compass.
The needle pointed ever to that interest
Which was his loadstar, and he spread his sails
With vantage to the gale of others' passion.

The Deceiver, a Tragedy.
Chap. v.
SONGS AND VERSES.

This is He
Who rides on the court-gale; controls its tides;
Knows all their secret shoals and fatal eddies;
Whose frown abases, and whose smile exalts.
He shines like any rainbow—and, perchance,
His colours are as transient.
Chap. vii. Old Play.

This is rare news thou tell'st me, my good fellow;
There are two bulls fierce battling on the green
For one fair heifer—if the one goes down,
The dale will be more peaceful, and the herd,
Which have small interest in their brulziement,
May pasture there in peace.
Chap. xiv. Old Play.

Well, then, our course is chosen:
spread the sail,—
Heave oft the lead, and mark the soundings well;
Look to the helm, good master; many a shoal
Marks this stern coast, and rocks where sits the siren,
Who, like ambition, lures men to their ruin.
Chap. xvii. The Shipwreck.

Now God
Be good to me in this wild pilgrimage!
All hope in human aid I cast behind me.
Oh, who would be a woman? who that fool,
A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman?
She hath hard measure still where she hopes kindest,
And all her bounties only make her ingrates.
Chap. xxiii. Love's Pilgrimage.

Hark! the bells summon, and the bugle calls,
But she the fairest answers not; the tide
Of nobles and of ladies throngs the halls,
But she the loveliest must in secret hide.
What eyes were thine, proud Prince, which in the gleam
Of yon gay meteors lost that better sense,
That o'er the glow-worm doth the star esteem,
And merit's modest blush o'er courtly insolence?
Chap. xxv. The Glass Slipper.

What, man! ne'er lack a draught when the full can
Stands at thine elbow, and craves emptying!—
Nay, fear not me, for I have no delight
To watch men's vices, since I have myself
Of virtue nought to boast of. I'm a striker,
Would have the world strike with me, pell-mell all.
Chap. xxviii. Pandaemonium.

Now fare thee well, my master! if true service
Be guerdon'd with hard looks, e'en cut the tow-line,
And let our barks across the pathless flood
Hold different courses.
Chap. xxix. Shipwreck.

Now bid the steeple rock—she comes, she comes!
Speak for us, bells! speak for us, shrill-tongued tuckets!
Stand to the linstock, gunner; let thy cannon
Play such a peal, as if a Paynim foe Came stretch'd in turban'd ranks to storm the ramparts.
We will have pageants too; but that
cares wit,
And I'm a rough-hewn soldier.
*The Virgin Queen, a Tragi-Comedy.*
Chap. xxx.

The wisest sovereigns err like private
men,
And royal hand has sometimes laid
the sword
Of chivalry upon a worthless
shoulder,
Which better had been branded by
the hangman.
What then? Kings do their best,—
and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not
the event.

Old Play.

Chap. xxxii.

Here stands the victim—there the
proud betrayer,
E'en as the hind pull'd down by
strangling dogs
Lies at the hunter's feet, who
courteous proffers
To some high dame, the Dian of the
chase,
To whom he looks for guerdon, his
sharp blade,
To gash the sobbing throat.
*The Woodsman.*

Chap. xxxiii.

High o'er the eastern steep the sun
is beaming,
And darkness flies with her deceitful
shadows;
So truth prevails o'er falsehood.

Old Play.

Chap. xl.

FROM THE PIRATE.

THE SONG OF THE TEMPEST.

Stern eagle of the far north-west,
Thou that bearest in thy grasp the
thunderbolt,
Thou whose rushing pinions stir
ocean to madness,
Thou the destroyer of herds, thou the
scatterer of navies,
Amidst the scream of thy rage,
Amidst the rushing of thy onward
wings,
Though thy scream be loud as the
cry of a perishing nation,
Though the rushing of thy wings be
like the roar of ten thousand
waves,
Yet hear, in thine ire and thy haste,
Hear thou the voice of the Reim-
kennar.

Thou hast met the pine-trees of
Drontheim,
Their dark-green heads lie prostrate
beside their up-rooted stems;
Thou hast met the rider of the ocean,
The tall, the strong bark of the
fearless rover,
And she has struck to thee the
topsail
That she had not veil'd to a royal
armada.

Thou hast met the tower that bears
its crest among the clouds,

The battled massive tower of the
Jarl of former days,

And the cope-stone of the turret
Is lying upon its hospitable hearth;
But thou too shalt stoop, proud
compeller of clouds,

When thou hearest the voice of the
Reim-kennar.

There are verses that can stop the
stag in the forest,
Ay, and when the dark-colour'd dog
is opening on his track;
There are verses can make the wild
hawk pause on the wing,

Like the falcon that wears the hood
and the jesses,

And who knows the shrill whistle of
the fowler.

Thou who canst mock at the scream of
the drowning mariner,

And the crash of the ravaged forest,

And the groan of the overwhelmed
crowds,

When the church hath fallen in the
moment of prayer;
There are sounds which thou also must list,
When they are chanted by the voice of the Reim-kennar.

Enough of woe hast thou wrought on the ocean.
The widows wring their hands on the beach;
Enough of woe hast thou wrought on the land,
The husbandman folds his arms in despair;
Cease thou the waving of thy pinions,
Let the ocean repose in her dark strength;
Cease thou the flashing of thine eye,
Let the thunderbolt sleep in the armoury of Odin;
Be thou still at my bidding, viewless racer of the north-western heaven,—
Sleep thou at the voice of Norna the Reim-kennar.

Eagle of the far north-western waters,
Thou hast heard the voice of the Reim-kennar,
Thou hast closed thy wide sails at her bidding,
And folded them in peace by thy side. My blessing be on thy retiring path;
When thou stoopest from thy place on high,
Soft be thy slumbers in the caverns of the unknown ocean,
Rest till destiny shall again awaken thee;
Eagle of the north-west, thou hast heard the voice of the Reim-kennar.
Chap. vi.

CLAUD HALCRO’S SONG.

MARY.

Farewell to Northmaven,
Gray Hillswicke, farewell!
To the calms of thy haven,
The storms on thy fell,

To each breeze that can vary
The mood of thy main,
And to thee, bonny Mary I
We meet not again!

Farewell the wild ferry,
Which Hacon could brave,
When the peaks of the Skerry
Were white in the wave.
There's a maid may look over
These wild waves in vain,—
For the skiff of her lover—
He comes not again!

The vows thou hast broke,
On the wild currents sling them;
On the quicksands and rock
Let the mermaidens sing them;
New sweetness they'll give her
Bewildering strain;
But there's one who will never
Believe them again.

O were there an island,
Though ever so wild,
Where woman could smile, and
No man be beguiled—
Too tempting a snare
To poor mortals were given;
And the hope would fix there,
That should anchor in heaven.
Chap. xii.

THE SONG OF HAROLD HARFAGER.

The sun is rising dimly red,
The wind is wailing low and dread;
From his cliff the eagle sallies,
Leaves the wolf his darksome valleys,
In the mist the ravens hover,
Peep the wild dogs from the cover,
Screaming, croaking, baying, yelling,
Each in his wild accents telling,
"Soon we feast on dead and dying,
Fair-hair'd Harold's flag is flying."

Many a crest on air is streaming,
Many a helmet darkly gleaming,
Many an arm the axe uprears,  
Doom'd to hew the wood of spears.  
All along the crowded ranks  
Horses neigh and armour clanks;  
Chiefs are shouting, clarions ringing,  
Louder still the bard is singing.  
"Gather footmen, gather horsemen,  
To the field, ye valiant Norsemen!"

"Halt ye not for food or slumber,  
View not vantage, count not number:  
Jolly reapers, forward still;  
Grow the crop on vale or hill,  
Thick or scatter'd, stiff or lithe,  
It shall down before the scythe.  
Forward with your sickles bright,  
Reap the harvest of the fight;  
Onward footmen, onward horsemen,  
To the charge ye gallant Norsemen!"

"Fatal Choosers of the Slaughter,  
O'er you hovers Odin's daughter;  
Hear the choice she spreads before  
ye,—  
Victory, and wealth, and glory;  
Or old Valhalla's roaring hail,  
Her ever-circling mead and ale,  
Where for eternity unite  
The joys of wassail and of fight.  
Headlong forward, foot and horse- 
men,  
Charge and fight, and die like  
Norsemen!"

Chap. xv.

SONG OF THE MERMAIDS  
AND MERMEN.

MERMAID.

FATHOMS deep beneath the wave,  
Stringing beads of glistening pearl,  
Singing the achievements brave  
Of many an old Norwegian earl;  
Dwelling where the tempest's raving,  
Falls as light upon our ear,  
As the sigh of lover, craving  
Pity from his lady dear,  
Children of wild Thule, we,  
From the deep caves of the sea,  
As the lark springs from the lea,  
Hither come, to share your glee.

MERMAN.

From reining of the water-horse,  
That bounded till the waves were foaming,  
Watching the infant tempest's course,  
Chasing the sea-snake in his roaming;  
From winding charge-notes on the shell,  
When the huge whale and sword-fish duel,  
Or toiling shroudless seamen's knell,  
When the winds and waves are cruel;  
Children of wild Thule, we  
Have plough'd such furrows on the sea,  
As the steer draws on the lea,  
And hither we come to share your glee.

MERMAIDS AND MERMEN.

We heard you in our twilight caves,  
A hundred fathom deep below,  
For notes of joy can pierce the waves,  
That drown each sound of war and woe.

Those who dwell beneath the sea  
Love the sons of Thule well;  
Thus, to aid your mirth, bring we  
Dance, and song, and sounding shell.

Children of dark Thule, know,  
Those who dwell by haaf and voe,  
Where your daring shallop row,  
Come to share the festal show.  
Chap. xvi.

NORNA'S SONG.

For leagues along the watery way,  
Through gulf and stream my course has been;  
The billows know my Runic lay,  
And smooth their crests to silent green.

The billows know my Runic lay,—  
The gulf grows smooth, the stream is still;
But human hearts, more wild than they,
Know but the rule of wayward will.

One hour is mine, in all the year,
To tell my woes,—and one alone;
When gleams this magic lamp, 'tis here,—
When dies the mystic light, 'tis gone.

Daughters of northern Magnus, hail!
The lamp is lit, the flame is clear,—
To you I come to tell my tale,
Awake, arise, my tale to hear!

NORNA'S INVOCATION.

Dwellers of the mountain, rise,
Trolld the powerful, Haims the wise!
Ye who taught weak woman's tongue Words that sway the wise and strong;
Ye who taught weak woman's hand How to wield the magic wand,
And wake the gales on Foulah's steep
Or lull wild Sumburgh's waves to sleep!
Still live ye yet? Not yours the pow'r
Ye knew in Odin's mightier hour.
What are ye now but empty names,
Powerful Trolld, sagacious Haims,
That, lightly spoken, lightly heard,
Float on the air like thistle's beard?

TROLLD'S REPLY.

A thousand winters dark have flown
Since o'er the threshold of my Stone
A votaress pass'd, my power to own.
Visitor bold
Of the mansion of Trolld,
Maiden, haughty of heart,
Who hast hither presum'd,—
Ungifted, undoom'd,
Thou shalt not depart!

The power thou dost covet
O'er tempest and wave,
Shall be thine, thou proud maiden!
By beach and by cave,
By stack and by skerry, by noup and by voe,
By air and by wick, and by helyer and gio,
And by every wild shore which the northern winds know
And the northern tides lave.
But tho' this shall be given thee, thou desperately brave,
I doom thee that never the gift thou shalt have
Till thou reave thy life's giver of the gift which he gave.

NORNA'S ANSWER.

Dark are thy words, and severe,
Thou Dweller in the Stone;
But trembling and fear
To her are unknown
Who hath sought thee here,
In thy dwelling lone.

Come what comes soever,
The worst I can endure:
Life is but a short fever,
And Death's the cure.
Chap. xix.

CLAUD HALCRO AND NORNA.

CLAUD HALCRO.

Mother darksome, Mother dread,
Dweller on the Fitful-head,
Thou canst see what deeds are done
Under the never-setting sun.
Look through sleet, and look through frost,
Look to Greenland's caves and coast,—
By the ice-berg is a sail
Chasing of the swarthy whale;
Mother doubtful, Mother dread,
Tell us, has the good ship sped?
SONGS AND VERSES.

Norna.
The thought of the aged is ever on gear, 
On his fishing, his furrow, his flock, and his steer;  
But thrive may his fishing, flock, furrow, and herd, 
While the aged for anguish shall tear his gray beard. 
The ship, well-laden as bark need be, 
Lies deep in the furrow of the Iceland sea;  
The breeze for Zetland blows fair and soft, 
And gaily the garland is fluttering aloft: 
Seven good fishes have spouted their last, 
And their jaw-bones are hanging to yard and mast;  
Two are for Lerwick, and two for Kirkwall, 
Three for Burgh Westra, the choicest of all. 

Claud Halcro. 
Mother doubtful, Mother dread, 
Dweller of the Fitful-head, 
Thou hast conn'd full many a rhyme, 
That lives upon the surge of time: 
Tell me, shall my lays be sung, 
Like Hacon's of the golden tongue, 
Long after Halcro's dead and gone? 
Or, shall Hialtland's minstrel own 
One note to rival glorious John? 

Norna. 
The infant loves the rattle's noise; 
Age, double childhood, hath its toys;  
But different far the descant rings, 
As strikes a different hand the strings. 
The eagle mounts the polar sky— 
The Imber-goose, unskill'd to fly, 
Must be content to glide along, 
Where seal and sea-dog list his song. 

Claud Halcro. 
Be mine the Imber-goose to play, 
And haunt lone cave and silent bay; 
The archer's aim so shall I shun— 
So shall I 'scape the level'd gun— 
Content my verses' tuneless jingle, 
With Thule's sounding tides to mingle, 
While, to the ear of wondering wight, 
Upon the distant headland's height, 
Soften'd by murmur of the sea, 
The rude sounds seem like harmony! 

Mother doubtful, Mother dread, 
Dweller of the Fitful-head, 
A gallant bark from far abroad, 
Saint Magnus hath her in his road, 
With guns and firelocks not a few— 
A silken and a scarlet crew, 
Deep stored with precious merchandise, 
Of gold, and goods of rare device— 
What interest hath our comrade bold 
In bark and crew, in goods and gold? 

Norna. 
Gold is ruddy, fair, and free, 
Blood is crimson, and dark to see; 
I look'd out on Saint Magnus Bay, 
And I saw a falcon that struck her prey,— 
A goblet of flesh in her beak she bore, 
And talons and singles are dripping with gore; 
Let him that asks after them look on his hand, 
And if there is blood on't, he's one of their band. 

Claud Halcro. 
Mother doubtful, Mother dread, 
Dweller of the Fitful-head, 
Well thou know'st it is thy task 
To tell what Beauty will not ask; 
Then steep thy words in wine and milk, 
And weave a doom of gold and silk,— 
For we would know, shall Brenda prove 
In love, and happy in her love?
NOMNA.

Untouch'd by love, the maiden's breast
Is like the snow on Rona's crest,
High seated in the middle sky,
In bright and barren purity;
But by the sunbeam gently kiss'd,
Scarce by the gazing eye 'tis miss'd,
Ere, down the lonely valley stealing,
Fresh grass and growth its course revealing,
It cheers the flock, revives the flower,
And decks some happy shepherd's bower.

MAGNUS TROIL.

Mother speak, and do not tarry,
Here's a maiden fain would marry.
Shall she marry, ay or not?
If she marry, what's her lot?

NOMNA.

Untouch'd by love, the maiden's breast
Is like the snow on Rona's crest;
So pure, so free from earthy dye,
It seems, whilst leaning on the sky,
Part of the heaven to which 'tis nigh;
But passion, like the wild March rain,
May soil the wreath with many a stain.
We gaze—the lovely vision's gone—
A torrent fills the bed of stone,
That hurrying to destruction's shock,
Leaps headlong from the lofty rock.
Chap. xxi.

SONG OF THE ZETLAND FISHERMAN.

Farewell, merry maidens, to song,
and to laugh,
For the brave lads of Westra are bound to the Haaf;
And we must have labour, and hunger, and pain,
Ere we dance with the maids of Dunrossness again.

For now, in our trim boats of Noroway deal,
We must dance on the waves, with the porpoise and seal;
The breeze it shall pipe, so it pipe not too high,
And the gull be our songstress whene'er she flits by.

Sing on, my brave bird, while we follow, like thee,
By bank, shoal, and quicksand, the swarms of the sea;
And when twenty-score fishes are straining our line,
Sing louder, brave bird, for their spoils shall be thine.

We'll sing while we bait, and we'll sing while we haul
For the deeps of the Haa have enough for us all:
There is torsk for the gentle, and skate for the earl,
And there's wealth for bold Magnus, the son of the earl.

Huzza! my brave comrades, give way for the Haaf,
We shall sooner come back to the dance and the laugh;
For light without mirth is a lamp without oil;
Then, mirth and long life to the bold Magnus Troil!
Chap. xxii.

CLEVELAND'S SONGS.

Love wakes and weeps
While Beauty sleeps!
O for music's softest numbers,
To prompt a theme,
For Beauty's dream,
Soft as the pillow of her slumbers!

Through groves of palm
Sigh gales of balm,
Fire-flies on the air are wheeling;
While through the gloom  
Comes soft perfume,  
The distant beds of flowers revealing  
O wake and live!  
No dream can give  
A shadow’d bliss, the real excelling;  
No longer sleep,  
From lattice peep,  
And list the tale that Love is telling.

Farewell! Farewell! the voice you hear  
Has left its last soft tone with you;  
Its next must join the seaward cheer,  
And shout among the shouting crew.

The accents which I scarce could form  
Beneath your frown’s controlling check,  
Must give the word, above the storm,  
To cut the mast, and clear the wreck.

The timid eye I dared not raise,  
The hand, that shook when press’d to thine,  
Must point the guns upon the chase—  
Must bid the deadly cutlass shine.

To all I love, or hope, or fear,  
Honour, or own, a long adieu!  
To all that life has soft and dear,  
Farewell! save memory of you!

But deal not vengeance for the deed;  
And deal not for the crime;  
The body to its place, and the soul to  
Heaven’s grace,  
And the rest in God’s own time.

Saint Magnus control thee, that martyr of treason;  
Saint Ronan rebuke thee, with rhyme and with reason;  
By the mass of Saint Martin, the might of Saint Mary,  
Be thou gone, or thy weird shall be worse if thou tarry!  
If of good, go hence and hallow thee;—  
If of ill, let the earth swallow thee;—  
If thou’rt of air, let the gray mist fold thee;—  
If of earth, let the swart mine hold thee;—
If a Pixie, seek thy ring;—  
If a Nixie, seek thy spring;—  
If on middle earth thou’st been Slave of sorrow, shame, and sin,  
Hast eat the bread of toil and strife,  
And dree’d the lot which men call life;  
Begone to thy stone! for thy coffin is scant of thee,  
The worm, thy play-fellow, wails for the want of thee:  
Hence, houseless ghost! let the earth hide thee,  
Till Michael shall blow the blast, see that there thou bide thee!—  
Phantom, fly hence! take the Cross for a token,  
Hence pass till Hallowmass!—my spell is spoken.

Where corpse-light  
Dances bright,  
Be it by day or night,  
Be it by light or dark,  
There shall corpse lie stiff and stark.

Menseful maiden ne’er should rise,  
Till the first beam tinge the skies;
SONGS AND VERSES.

Silk-fringed eyelids still should close,  
Till the sun has kiss'd the rose;  
Maiden's foot we should not view,  
Mark'd with tiny print on dew,  
Till the opening flowerets spread  
Carpet meet for beauty's tread.  
Chap. xxiii.

NORNA'S INCANTATIONS.

Champion, famed for warlike toil,  
Art thou silent, Ribolt Troil?  
Sand, and dust, and pebbly stones,  
Are leaving bare thy giant bones.  
Who dared touch the wild bear's skin  
Ye slumber'd on, while life was in?  
A woman now, or babe, may come  
And cast the covering from thy tomb.

Yet be not wrathful, Chief, nor blight  
Mine eyes or ears with sound or sight!  
I come not, with unhallow'd tread,  
To wake the slumberers of the dead,  
Or lay thy giant reliques bare;  
But what I seek thou well canst spare.  
Be it to my hand allow'd  
To shear a merk's weight from thy shroud;  
Yet leave thee sheeted lead enough  
To shield thy bones from weather rough.

See, I draw my magic knife:  
Never, while thou wert in life,  
Lay'st thou still for sloth or fear,  
When point and edge were glittering near;  
See, the cerements now I sever—  
Waken now, or sleep for ever!  
Thou wilt not wake—the deed is done!  
The prize I sought is fairly won.

Thanks, Ribolt, thanks; for this the sea  
Shall smooth its ruffled crest for thee,  
And while afar its billows foam,  
Subside to peace near Ribolt's tomb.

Thanks, Ribolt, thanks; for this the might  
Of wild winds raging at their height,  
When to thy place of slumber high,  
Shall soften to a lullaby.

She, the dame of doubt and dread,  
Norna of the Fitful-head,  
Mighty in her own despite,  
Miserable in her might,  
In despair and frenzy great,  
In her greatness desolate,  
Wisest, wickedest who lives,—  
Well can keep the word she gives.

Chap. xxv.

AT INTERVIEW WITH MINNA.

Thou, so needful, yet so dread,  
With cloudy crest, and wing of red;  
Thou, without whose genial breath  
The North would sleep the sleep of death;  
Who deign'st to warm the cottage hearth,  
Yet hurls proud palaces to earth,—  
Brightest, keenest of the Powers,  
Which form and rule this world of ours,  
With my rhyme of Runic, I  
Thank thee for thy agency.

Old Reimkennar, to thy art  
Mother Hertha sends her part;  
She, whose gracious bounty gives  
Needful food for all that lives.  
From the deep mine of the North  
Came the mystic metal forth;  
Doom'd amidst disjointed stones,  
Long to cere a champion's bones,  
Disinhumed my charms to aid—  
Mother Earth, my thanks are paid.

Girdle of our islands dear,  
Element of Water, hear!  
Thou whose power can overwhelm  
Broken mounds and ruin'd realm  
On the lowly Belgian strand;  
All thy fiercest rage can never  
Of our soil a furlong sever  
From our rock-defended land.
Play then gently thou thy part,  
To assist old Norna’s art.

Elements, each other greeting,  
Gifts and power attend your meeting.

Thou, that over billows dark  
Safely send’st the fisher’s bark,  
Giving him a path and motion  
Through the wilderness of ocean;  
Thou, that when the billows brave ye,  
O’er the shelves canst drive the navy, —
Didst thou chafe as one neglected,  
While thy brethren were respected?  
To appease thee, see, I tear  
This full grasp of grizzled hair;  
Oft thy breath hath through it sung,  
Softening to my magic tongue;  
Now, ’tis thine to bid it fly  
Through the wide expanse of sky,  
’Mid the countless swarms to sail  
Of wild-fowl wheeling on thy gale;  
Take thy portion and rejoice,—  
Spirit, thou hast heard my voice!

She who sits by haunted well,  
Is subject to the Nixie’s spell;  
She who walks on lonely beach,  
To the Mermaid’s charmed speech;  
She who walks round ring of green,  
Offends the peevish Fairy Queen;  
And she who takes rest in the Dwarfie’s cave,  
A weary weird of woe shall have.

By ring, by spring, by cave, by shore,  
Minna Troil has braved all this and more;  
And yet hath the root of her sorrow and ill,  
A source that’s more deep and more mystical still.

Thou art within a demon’s hold,  
More wise than Heims, more strong than Trolld;  
No siren sings so sweet as he,  
No fae springs lighter on the lea;  
No elfin power hath half the art  
To soothe, to move, to wring the heart,—

Life-blood from the cheek to drain,  
Drench the eye, and dry the vein.  
Maiden, ere we farther go,  
Dost thou note me, ay or no!

MINNA.

I mark thee, my mother, both word,  
look, and sign;  
Speak on with thy riddle—to read it be mine.

NORNA.

Mark me! for the word I speak  
Shall bring the colour to thy cheek.  
This leaden heart, so light of cost,  
The symbol of a treasure lost,  
Thou shalt wear in hope and in peace,  
That the cause of thy sickness and sorrow may cease,

When crimson foot meets crimson hand  
In the Martyr’s Aisle, and in Orkney land,

Be patient, be patient; for Patience hath power  
To ward us in danger, like mantle in shower;  
A fairy gift you best may hold  
In a chain of fairy gold;  
The chain and the gift are each a true token,  
That not without warrant old Norna hath spoken;  
But thy nearest and dearest must never behold them,  
Till time shall accomplish the truths I have told them.  
Chap. xxviii.

BRYCE SNAILSFOOT’S ADVERTISEMENT.

Poor sinners whom the snake deceives,  
Are fain to cover them with leaves.  
Zetland hath no leaves, ’tis true,  
Because that trees are none, or few,  
But we have flax and taits of woo’,  
For linen cloth and wadmaal blue;
SONGS AND VERSES.

And we have many foreign knacks
Of finer waft, than woo' or flax.
Ye gallant Lambmas lads appear,
And bring your Lambmas sisters here,
Bryce Snailsfoot spares not cost or care,
To pleasure every gentle pair.
Chap. xxxii.

MOTTOES.

'Tis not alone the scene; the man,
Anselmo,
The man finds sympathies in these
wild wastes,
And roughly tumbling seas, which
fainter views
And smoother waves deny him.
Chap. ii.

This is no pilgrim's morning: yon
gray mist
Lies upon hill and dale, and field and forest,
Like the dun wimple of a new-made widow.
And, by my faith, although my heart
be soft,
I'd rather hear that widow weep and sigh,
And tell the virtues of the dear departed,
Than, when the tempest sends his
voice abroad,
Be subject to its fury.
Chap. iv.

She does no work by halves, yon
raving ocean;
Engulphing those she strangles, her
wild womb
Affords the mariners whom she hath
dealt on,
Their death at once, and sepulchre.
Chap. vii.

This is a gentle trader, and a prudent.
He's no Autolycus, to blear your eye,
With quips of worldly gauds and gamesomeness;
But seasons all his glittering mer-
chandise
With wholesome doctrine suited to the
use,
As men sauce goose with sage and rosemary.
Old Play.

Chap. ix.

All your ancient customs,
And long-descended usages, I'll change.
Ye shall not eat, nor drink, nor speak, nor move,
Think, look, or walk, as ye were wont to do;
Even your marriage-beds shall know
mutation;
The bride shall have the stock, the
 groom the wall;
For all old practice will I turn and
change,
And call it reformation — marry, will I!
'Tis Even that we're at Odds.
Chap. xi.

We'll keep our customs—what is
law itself,
But old establish'd custom! What
religion,
(I mean, with one-half of the men that
use it,)
Save the good use and wont that carries them
To worship how and where their
fathers worship'd?
All things resolve in custom—we'll keep ours.
Old Play.

Chap. xiv.

See yonder woman, whom our swains
revere,
And dread in secret, while they take
her counsel
When sweetheart shall be kind, or
when cross dame shall die;
SONGS AND VERSES.

Where lurks the thief who stole the silver tankard,
And how the pestilent murrain may be cured;—
This sage adviser's mad, stark mad, my friend;
Yet, in her madness, hath the art and cunning
To wring fools' secrets from their inmost bosoms,
And pay inquirers with the coin they gave her.

Old Play.

Chap. xxix.

I strive like to the vessel in the tide-way,
Which, lacking favouring breeze, hath not the power
To stem the powerful current. Even so,
Resolving daily to forsake my vices,
Habit, strong circumstance, renew'd temptation,
Sweep me to sea again. O heavenly breath,
Fill thou my sails, and aid the feeble vessel,
Which ne'er can reach the blessed port without thee!
'Tis Odds when Evens meet.

Chap. xxxii.

Parental love, my friend, has power o'er wisdom,
And is the charm, which, like the fa'coner's lure,
Can bring from heaven the highest soaring spirits.
So, when famed Prosper doff'd his magic robe,
It was Miranda pluck'd it from his shoulders.

Old Play.

Chap. xxxiii.

Hark to the insult loud, the bitter sneer,
The fierce threat answering to the brutal jeer;
Oaths fly like pistol-shots, and vengeful words
Clash with each other like conflicting swords.
The robber's quarrel by such sounds is shown,
And true men have some chance to gain their own.

Captivity, a Poem.

Chap. xxxiv.

FROM THE FORTUNES OF NIGEL.

MOTTOES.

Now Scot and English are agreed,
And Saunders hastes to cross the Tweed,
Where, such the splendours that attend him,
His very mother scarce had ken'd him,
His metamorphosis behold,
From Glasgow frieze to cloth of gold;
His back-sword, with the iron hilt,
To rapier, fairly hatch'd and gilt;
Was ever seen a gallant braver!
His very bonnet's grown a beaver.

The Reformation.

Chap. i.

This, sir, is one among the Seignory,
Has wealth at will, and will to use his wealth,
SONGS AND VERSES.

And wit to increase it. Marry, his worst folly
Lies in a thriftless sort of charity,
That goes a-gadding sometimes after objects,
Which wise men will not see when thrust upon them.
   *The Old Couple.*

Chap. ii.  

Ay, sir, the clouted shoe hath oft times craft in't,
As says the rustic proverb; and your citizen,
In's grogram suit, gold chain, and well-black'd shoes,
Bears under his flat cap oft times a brain
Wiser than burns beneath the cap and feather,
Or seethes within the statesman's velvet nightcap.
   *Read me my Riddle.*

Chap. iv.  

WHEREFORE come ye not to court?
Certain 'tis the rarest sport;
There are silks and jewels glistening,
Prattling fools and wise men listening,
Bullies among brave men justling,
Beggars amongst nobles bustling;
Low-breath'd talkers, minion lispers,
Cutting honest throats by whispers;
Wherefore come ye not to court?
Skelton swears 'tis glorious sport.
   *Skelton Skeltonizeth.*

Chap. v.  

O, I do know him; 'tis the mouldy lemon
Which our court wits will wet their lips withal,
When they would sauce their honied conversation
With somewhat sharper flavour. Marry, sir,
That virtue's wellnigh left him; all the juice
That was so sharp and poignant, is squeezed out;
While the poor rind, although as sour as ever,
Must season soon the draf we give our grunters,
For two-legg'd things are weary on't.
   *The Chamberlain—A Comedy.*

Chap. vi.

THINGS needful we have thought on; but the thing
Of all most needful—that which Scripture terms,
As if alone it merited regard,
The one thing needful—that's yet unconsider'd.
   *The Chamberlain.*

Chap. vii.

Ah! mark the matron well—and laugh not, Harry,
At her old steeple-hat and velvet guard—
I've call'd her like the ear of Dionysius;
I mean that ear-form'd vault, built o'er the dungeon,
To catch the groans and discontented murmurs
Of his poor bondsmen. Even so doth Martha
Drink up, for her own purpose, all that passes,
Or is supposed to pass, in this wide city;
She can retail it too, if that her profit
Shall call on her to do so; and retail it
For your advantage, so that you can make
Your profit jump with hers.
   *The Conspiracy.*

Chap. viii.

BID not thy fortune troll upon the whirls
Of yonder dancing cubes of mottled bone;
And drown it not, like Egypt's royal harlot,
Dissolving her rich pearl in the brimm'd wine-cup.
These are the arts, Lothario, which shrink acres
Into brief yards—bring sterling pounds to farthings,
SONGS AND VERSES.

Credit to infamy; and the poor gull,
Who might have lived an honour'd, easy life,
To ruin, and an unregarded grave.

The Changes.

Chap. x.

This is the very barn-yard,
Where muster daily the prime cocks o' the game,
Ruffle their pinions, crow till they are hoarse,
And spar about a barleycorn. Here, too, chickens,
The callow, unfledged brood of forward folly,
Learn first to rear the crest, and aim the spur,
And tune their note like full-plumed Chanticleer.

The Bear Garden.

Chap. xii.

Let the proud salmon gorge the feather'd hook,
Then strike, and then you have him.
He will wince;
Spin out your line that it shall whistle from you
Some twenty yards or so, yet you shall have him.
Marry! you must have patience; the stout rock
Which is his trust, hath edges something sharp;
And the deep pool hath ooze and sludge enough
To mar your fishing—'less you are more careful.

Albion or the Double Kings.

Chap. xiii.

Give way! give way! I must and will have justice;
And tell me not of privilege and place;
Where I am injured, there I'll sue redress.
Look to it, every one who bars my access;
I have a heart to feel the injury,

A hand to right myself, and, by my honour,
That hand shall grasp what gray-beard Law denies me.

The Chamberlain.

Chap. xvi.

Come hither, young one. Mark me! Thou art now
'Mongst men o' the sword, that live by reputation
More than by constant income.
They are, I grant you; yet each single suit
Maintains, on the rough guess, a thousand followers;
And they be men, who, hazarding their all,
Needful apparel, necessary income,
And human body, and immortal soul,
Do in the very deed but hazard nothing—
So strictly is that all bound in reversion;
Clothes to the broker, income to the usurer,
And body to disease, and soul to the foul fiend;
Who laughs to see Soldadoes and fooladoes,
Play better than himself his game on earth.

The Mohocks.

Chap. xvii.

Mother. What! dazzled by a flash of Cupid's mirror
With which the boy, as mortal urchins wont,
Flings back the sunbeam in the eye of passengers,
Then laughs to see them stumble!

Daughter. Mother! no; It was a lightning-flash which dazzled me,
And never shall these eyes see true again.

Beef and Pudding,

An Old English Comedy.

Chap. xviii.
By this good light, a wench of matchless mettle!
This were a leaguer-lass to love a soldier,
To bind his wounds, and kiss his bloody brow,
And sing a roundel as she help'd to arm him,
Though the rough foeman's drums were beat so nigh,
They seem'd to bear the burden.  

Chap. xix.

CREDIT me, friend, it hath been ever thus,
Since the ark rested on Mount Ararat.
False man hath sworn, and woman hath believed—
Repented and reproach'd, and then believed once more.

The New World.

Chap. xx.

ROVE not from pole to pole—the man lives here
Whose razor's only equall'd by his beer;
And where, in either sense, the cockney-put
May, if he pleases, get confounded cut.

For the Sign of an Alehouse kept by a Barber.

Chap. xxi.

CHANCE will not do the work, Chance sends the breeze;
But if the pilot slumber at the helm,
The very wind that wafts us towards the port
May dash us on the shelves. The steersman's part is vigilance,
Blow it or rough or smooth.

Old Play.

Chap. xxii.

THIS is the time: Heaven's maiden-sentinel
Hath quitted her high watch; the lesser spangles
Are paling one by one; give me the ladder
And the short lever; bid Antony
Keep with his carabine the wicket-gate;
And do thou bare thy knife and follow me,
For we will in and do it. Darkness like this
Is dawning of our fortunes.

Old Play.

Chap. xxiv.

DEATH finds us 'mid our playthings—snatches us,
As a cross nurse might do a wayward child,
From all our toys and baubles. His rough call
Unlooses all our favourite ties on earth;
And well if they are such as may be answer'd
In yonder world, where all is judged of truly.

Old Play.

Chap. xxv.

GIVE us good voyage, gentle stream; we stun not
Thy sober ear with sounds of revelry,
Wake not the slumbering echoes of thy banks
With voice of flute and horn; we do but seek
On the broad pathway of thy swelling bosom
To glide in silent safety.

The Double Bridal.

Chap. xxvi.

THIS way lie safety and a sure retreat;
Yonder lie danger, shame, and punishment.
Most welcome danger then—nay, let me say,
Though spoke with swelling heart—welcome e'en shame;
SONGS AND VERSES.

FROM PEVERIL OF THE PEAK.

MOTTOES.

Why then, we will have bellowing of beeves,
Broaching of barrels, brandishing of spigots;
Blood shall flow freely, but it shall be gore
Of herds and flocks, and venison and poultry,
Join’d to the brave heart’s-blood of John-a-Barleycorn!

Chap. ii.

Here’s neither want of appetites nor mouths;
Pray Heaven we be not scant of meat or mirth!

Chap. iii.

No, sir, I will not pledge: I’m one of those
Who think good wine needs neither bush nor preface
To make it welcome. If you doubt my word,
Fill the quart-cup, and see if I will choke on’t.

Chap. iv.

Ascasto. Can she not speak?
Oswald. If speech be only in accented sounds,
Framed by the tongue and lips, the maiden’s dumb;
But if by quick and apprehensive look,
By motion, sign, and glance, to give each meaning,
Express as clothed in language, be term’d speech,
She hath that wondrous faculty: for her eyes,
SONGS AND VERSES.

Like the bright stars of heaven, can hold discourse,
Though it be mute and soundless.  
*Old Play.*

Chap. xvi.

*This is a love meeting!* See the maiden mourns,
And the sad suitor bends his looks on earth.
There's more hath pass'd between them than beongs
To Love's sweet sorrows.  
*Old Play.*

Chap. xvii.

Now, hoist the anchor, mates; and let the sails
Give their broad bosom to the buxom wind,
Like lass that wooes a lover.  
*Anonymous.*

Chap. xix.

He was a fellow in a peasant's garb;
Yet one could censure you a woodcock's carving,
Like any courtier at the ordinary.  
*The Ordinary.*

Chap. xxii.

We meet, as men see phantoms in a dream,
Which glide and sigh, and sign, and move their lips,
But make no sound; or, if they utter voice,
'Tis but a low and undistinguish'd moaning,
Which has nor word nor sense of utter'd sound.  
*The Chieftain.*

Chap. xxiv.

The course of human life is changeful still
As is the fickle wind and wandering rill;
Or, like the light dance which the wild breeze weaves
Amidst the faded race of fallen leaves;
Which now its breath bears down, now tosses high,
Beats to the earth, or wafts to middle sky.
Such, and so varied, the precarious play
Of fate with man, frail tenant of a day!  
*Anonymous.*

Chap. xxv.

Necessity, thou best of peacemakers,
As well as surest prompter of invention—
Help us to composition!  
*Anonymous.*

Chap. xxvi.

*This is some creature of the elements
Most like your sea-gull. He can wheel and whistle
His screaming song, e'en when the storm is loudest;
Take for his sheeted couch the restless foam
Of the wild wave-crest; slumber in the calm,
And daily with the storm. Yet 'tis a gull,
An arrant gull, with all this.  
*The Chieftain.*

Chap. xxvii.

*I fear the devil worst when gown and cassock,
Or, in the lack of them, old Calvin's cloak,
Conceals his cloven hoof.  
*Anonymous.*

Chap. xxxi.

'Tis the black ban-dog of our jail.
Pray look on him,
But at a wary distance; rouse him not—
He bays not till he worries.  
*The Black Dog of Newgate.*

Chap. xxxiii.
"Speak not of niceness, when there's chance of wreck,"
The captain said, as ladies writhed their neck
To see the dying dolphin flap the deck:
"If we go down, on us these gentry sup;
We dine upon them, if we haul them up.
Wise men applaud us when we eat the eaters,
As the devil laughs when keen folks cheat the cheaters."

The Sea Voyage,
Chap. xxxviii.

Contentions fierce,
Ardent, and dire, spring from no petty cause.

Albion.

Chap. xl.

He came amongst them like a new-raised spirit,
To speak of dreadful judgments that impart,
And of the wrath to come.

The Reformer.

Chap. xliii.

And some for safety took the dreadful leap;
Some for the voice of Heaven seem'd calling them;
Some for advancement, or for lucre's sake—
I leap'd in frolic.

The Dream.

Chap. xlv.

High feasting was there there; the gilded roofs
Rung to the wassail-health; the dancer's step
Sprung to the chord responsive; the gay gamester
To fate's disposal flung his heap of gold,
And laughed alike when it increased or lessen'd:

Such virtue hath court-air to teach us patience
Which schoolmen preach in vain.

Why come ye not to Court?

Chap. xlv.

Here stand I tight and trim,
Quick of eye, though little of limb;
He who denieth the word I have spoken,
Betwixt him and me shall lances be broken.

Lay of the Little John de Saintré.
Chap. xlvii.

FROM QUENTIN DURWARD.

COUNTY GUY.

Ah! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who thrill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,
But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to wear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know,
But where is County Guy?

Chap. iv.

MOTTOES.

Full in the midst a mighty pile arose
Where iron-grated gates their strength oppose
To each invading step; and strong and steep
The 'battled walls rose up, the fosse sunk deep.
Slow round the fortress rolled the sluggish stream,
And high in middle air the warder's turrets gleam.

Anonymous.

Chap. iii.

Painters show Cupid blind. Hath Hymen eyes?
Or is his sight warp'd by those spectacles
Which parents, guardians, and advisers lend him,
That he may look through them on lands and mansions,
On jewels, gold, and all such rich donations,
And see their value ten times magnified?
Methinks 'twill brook a question.
The Miseries of Enforced Marriage.
Chap. xi.

This is a lecturer so skill'd in policy,
That (no disparagement to Satan's cunning)
He well might read a lesson to the devil,
And teach the old seducer new temptations.

Old Play.

Chap. xii.

Talk not of kings—I scorn the poor comparison:
I am a sage, and can command the elements;
At least men think I can; and on that thought
I found unbounded empire.

Albumazar.

Chap. xiii.

I see thee yet, fair France—thou favour'd land
Of art and nature—thou art still before me;
Thy sons, to whom their labour is a sport,
So well thy grateful soil returns its tribute;
Thy sun-burnt daughters, with their laughing eyes
And glossy raven-locks. But, favour'd France,
Thou hast had many a tale of woe to tell,
In ancient times as now.

Anonymous.

Chap. xiv.

He was a son of Egypt, as he told me,
And one descended from those dread magicians,
Who waged rash war, when Israel dwelt in Goshen,
With Israel and her Prophet—matching rod
With his the sons of Levi's—and encountering
Jehovah's miracles with incantations,
Till upon Egypt came the avenging Angel,
And those proud sages wept for their first-born,
As wept the unletter'd peasant.

Anonymous.

Chap. xv.

Rescue or none, Sir Knight, I am your captive;
Deal with me what your nobleness suggests—
Thinking the chance of war may one day place you
Where I must now be reckon'd—i' the roll
Of melancholy prisoners.

Anonymous.

Chap. xxiv.

No human quality is so well wove
In warp and woof, but there's some flaw in it;
I've known a brave man fly a shepherd's cur,
SONGS AND VERSES.

A wise man so demean him, drivel-
ing idiocy
Had wellnigh been ashamed on't.
For your crafty,
Your worldly-wise man, he, above
the rest,
Weaves his own snares so fine, he's
often caught in them.

Old Play.

Chap. xxv.

When princes meet, astrologers may
mark it
An ominous conjunction, full of
boding,
Like that of Mars with Saturn.

Old Play.

Chap. xxvi.

THY time is not yet out—the devil
thou servest
Has not as yet deserted thee. He aids
The friends who drudge for him, as
the blind man
Was aided by the guide, who lent his
shoulder
O'er rough and smooth, until he
reach'd the brink
Of the fell precipice—then hurl'd him
downward.

Old Play.

Chap. xxix.

OUR counsels waver like the unsteady
bark,
That reels amid the strife of meeting
currents.

Old Play.

Chap. xxx.

HOLD fast thy truth, young soldier.—
Gentle maiden,
Keep you your promise plighted—leave
age its subtleties,
And gray-hair'd policy its maze of
falsehood;
But be you candid as the morning
sky,
Ere the high sun sucks vapours up to
stain it.

The Trial.

Chap. xxxi.

'Tis brave for Beauty when the best
blade wins her.

The Count Palatine.

Chap. xxxv.

FROM ST. RONAN'S WELL.

MOTTOES.

Quis novus hic hospes?

Ch'm-maid!—The Gemman in the
front parlour!

Boots's free Translation
of the Aeneid.

Chap. ii.

THERE must
Be government in all society;
Bees have their Queen, and stag-
herds have their leader;
Rome had her Consuls, Athens had
her Archons,
And we, sir, have our Managing
Committee.

The Album of St. Ronan's.

Chap. iii.

COME, let me have thy counsel, for
I need it;
Thou art of those, who better help
their friends
With sage advice, than usurers with
gold,
Or brawlers with their swords. I'll
trust to thee,
For I ask only from thee words, not
deeds.

The Devil hath met his Match.

Chap. x.

NEAREST of blood should still be next
in love;
And when I see these happy children
playing,
While William gathers flowers for
Ellen's ringlets,
And Ellen dresses flies for William's
angle,
I scarce can think, that in advancing
life,
Coldness, unkindness, interest, or suspicion,  
Will e'er divide that unity so sacred  
Which Nature bound at birth.

Anonymous.

Chap. xi.

Oh! you would be a vestal maid, I warrant,  
The bride of Heaven? Come! we may shake your purpose:  
For here I bring in hand a jolly suitor  
Hath ta'en degrees in the seven sciences  
That ladies love best—he is young and noble,  
Handsome and valiant, gay and rich, and liberal.

The Nun.

Chap. xxiii.

Thou bear'st a precious burden, gentle post,—  
Nitre and sulphur; see that it explode not.

Old Play.

Chap. xxvii.

It comes—it wrings me in my parting hour,  
The long-hid crime, the well-disguised guilt.  
Bring me some holy priest to lay the spectre!

Old Play.

Chap. xxxii.

On the lee-beam lies the land, boys,  
See all clear to reel each course;  
Let the fore-sheet go—don't mind, boys,  
Tho' the weather should be worse,

The Storm.

Chap. xxxiii.

Sedet post equitem atra cura.  
Still though the headlong cavalier,  
O'er rough and smooth, in wild career,  
Seems racing with the wind,

His sad companion, ghastly pale,  
And darksome as a widow's veil,  
Care—keeps her seat behind.

Horace.

Chap. xxxv.

What sheeted ghost is wandering through the storm?  
For never did a maid of middle earth  
Choose such a time or spot to vent her sorrows.

Old Play.

Chap. xxxviii.

Here come we to our close,—for that which follows  
Is but the tale of dull, unvaried misery.  
Steep crags and headlong linns may court the pencil,  
Like sudden haps, dark plots, and strange adventures;  
But who would paint the dull and fog-wrapt moor,  
In its long tract of sterile desolation?

Old Play.

Chap. xxxix.

FROM REDGAUNTLET.

HOPE.

As lords their labourers' hire delay,  
Fate quits our toil with hopes to come,  
Which, if far short of present pay,  
Still owns a debt and names a sum.

Quit not the pledge, frail sufferer, then,  
Although a distant date be given;  
Despair is treason towards men,  
And blasphemy to Heaven.

Chap. x.

FROM THE BETROTHED.

SOLDIER WAKE.

SOLDIER, wake! the day is peeping;  
Honour ne'er was won in sleeping;  
Never when the sunbeams still  
Lay unreflected on the hill:
'Tis when they are glinted back
From axe and armour, spear and jack,
That they promise future story,
Many a page of deathless glory.
Shields that are the foeman's terror,
Ever are the morning's mirror.

Arm and up! the morning beam
Hath call'd the rustic to his teem,
Hath call'd the falconer to the lake,
Hath call'd the huntsman to the brake;
The early student ponders o'er
His dusty tomes of ancient lore.
Soldier, wake! thy harvest, fame;
Thy study, conquest; war, thy game.
Shield, that would be foeman's terror,
Still should gleam the morning's mirror.

Poor hire repays the rustic's pain;
More paltry still the sportsman's gain;
Vainest of all, the student's theme
Ends in some metaphysic dream:
Yet each is up, and each has toil'd
Since first the peep of dawn has smiled;
And each is eagerer in his aim
Than he who barter's life for fame.
Up, up, and arm thee, son of terror!
Be thy bright shield the morning's mirror.

Chap. xix.

THE TRUTH OF WOMAN.

Woman's faith, and woman's trust—
Write the characters in dust;
Stamp them on the running stream,
Print them on the moon's pale beam,
And each evanescent letter
Shall be clearer, firmer, better,
And more permanent, I ween,
Than the thing those letters mean.

I have strain'd the spider's thread
'Gainst the promise of a maid;
I have weigh'd a grain of sand
'Gainst her plight of heart and hand;
I told my true love or the token,
How her faith proved light, and her word was broken:
Again her word and truth she plighted,
And I believed them again ere night.

Chap. xx.

I ASK'D OF MY HARPS.

I ask'd of my harp, "Who hath injured thy chords?"
And she replied, "The crooked finger, which I mocked in my tune."
A blade of silver may be bended—a blade of steel abideth:
Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.

The sweet taste of mead passeth from the lips,
But they are long corroded by the juice of wormwood;
The lamb is brought to the shambles, but the wolf rangeth the mountain;
Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.

I asked the red-hot iron, when it glimmer'd on the anvil,
"Wherefore glowest thou longer than the firebrand?"
"I was born in the dark mine, and the brand in the pleasant greenwood."
Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.

I ask'd the green oak of the assembly wherefore its boughs were dry and sear'd like the horns of the stag:
And it show'd me that a small worm had gnaw'd its roots.
The boy who remembered the scourge undid the wicket of the castle at midnight.
Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.

Lightning destroyeth temples, though their spires pierce the clouds;
Storms destroy armadas, though their sails intercept the gale.
He that is in his glory falleth, and
Kindness fadeth away, but vengeance endureth.
Chap. xxxi.

**MOTTOES.**

In Madoc's tent the clarion sounds,
With rapid clangour hurried far;
Each hill and daile the note rebounds,
But when return the sons of war?
Thou, born of stern Necessity,
Dull Peace! the valley yields to thee,
And owns thy melancholy sway.

*Welsh Poem.*

Chap. ii.

O, sadly shines the morning sun
On leaguer'd castle wall,
When bastion, tower, and battlement,
Seem nodding to their fall.

*Old Ballad.*

Chap. vii.

Now all ye ladies of fair Scotland,
And ladies of England that happy would prove,
Marry never for houses, nor marry for land,
Nor marry for nothing but only love.

*Family Quarrels.*

Chap. xii.

Too much rest is rust,
There's ever cheer in changing;
We tyne by too much trust,
So we'll be up and ranging.

*Old Song.*

Chap. xiii.

Ring out the merry bells, the bride approaches,
The blush upon her cheek has shamed the morning,
For that is dawning palely. Grant, good saints,
These clouds betoken nought of evil omen!

*Old Play.*

Chap. xvii.

Julia.
You are our captive,—but we'll use you so,
That you shall think your prison joys may match
Whate'er your liberty hath known of pleasure.
*Roderick.* No, fairest, we have trifled here too long;
And, lingering to see your roses blossom,
I've let my laurels wither.

*Old Play.*

Chap. xxvii.

**FROM THE TALISMAN.**

**AHRIMAN.**

Dark Ahriman, whom Irak still
Holds origin of woe and ill!
When, bending at thy shrine,
We view the world with troubled eye
Where see we 'neath the extended sky,
An empire matching thine?

If the Benigner Power can yield
A fountain in the desert field,
Where weary pilgrims drink;
Thine are the waves that lash the rock,
Thine the tornado's deadly shock,
Where countless navies sink!

Or if He bid the soil dispense
Balsams to cheer the sinking sense,
How few can they deliver
From lingering pains, or pang intense,
Red Fever, spotted Pestilence,
The arrows of thy quiver!

Chief in Man's bosom sits thy sway,
And frequent, while in words we pray
Before another throne,
Whate'er of specious form be there,
The secret meaning of the prayer
Is, Ahriman, thine own.
Say, hast thou feeling, sense, and form,  
Thunder thy voice, thy garments storm,  
As Eastern Magi say;  
With sentient soul of hate and wrath,  
And wings to sweep thy deadly path,  
And fangs to tear thy prey?

Or art thou mix'd in Nature's source,  
An ever-operating force,  
Converting good to ill;  
An evil principle innate,  
Contending with our better fate,  
And oh! victorious still?

How'er it be, dispute is vain,  
On all without thou hold'st thy reign,  
Nor less on all within;  
Each mortal passion's fierce career,  
Love, hate, ambition, joy, and fear,  
Thou goatest into sin.

Whene'er a sunny gleam appears,  
To brighten up our vale of tears,  
Thou art not distant far;  
'Mid such brief solace of our lives,  
Thou whett'st our very banquet-knives,  
To tools of death and war.

Thus, from the moment of our birth,  
Long as we linger on the earth,  
Thou rul'st the fate of men;  
Thine are the pangs of life's last hour,  
And—who dare answer?—is thy power,  
Dark Spirit! ended Then?

Chap. iii.

**A MINSTREL'S SONG.**

What brave chief shall head the forces  
Where the red-cross legions gather?  
Best of horsemen, best of horses,  
Highest head and fairest feather.

Ask not Austria, why 'mid princes  
Still her banner rises highest;  
Ask as well the strong-wing'd eagle  
Why to heaven he soars the highest.

Chap. xi.

**THE BLOODY VEST.**

**Blondel sings:**—  

**Fyttle first.**  
'Twas near the fair city of Benevent,  
When the sun was setting on bough and bent,  
And knights were preparing in bower and tent,  
On the eve of the Baptist's tournament;  
When in Lincoln green a stripling went,  
Well seeming a page by a princess sent,  
Wander'd the camp, and, still as he went,  
Enquired for the Englishman, Thomas a Kent.

Far hath he fared, and farther must fare,  
Till he finds his pavilion nor stately nor rare,—  
Little save iron and steel was there;  
And, as lacking the coin to pay armourer's care,  
With his sinewy arms to the shoulders bare,  
The good knight with hammer and file did repair  
The mail that to-morrow must see him wear,  
For the honour of Saint John and his lady fair.

"Thus speaks my lady," the page said he,  
And the knight bent lowly both head and knee,  
"She is Benevent's Princess so high in degree,  
And thou art as lowly as knight may well be—  
He that would climb so lofty a tree,  
Or spring such a gulf as divides her from thee,  
Must dare some high deed, by which all men may see  
His ambition is back'd by his high chivalrie."
"Therefore thus speaks my lady,"
the fair page he said,
And the knight lowly louted with
hand and with head,
"Fling aside the good armour in
which thou art clad,
And don thou this weed of her night-
gear instead,
For a hauberk of steel, a kirtle of
thread:
And charge, thus attired, in the
tournament dread,
And fight as thy wont is where most
blood is shed,
And bring honour away, or remain
with the dead."

Untroubled in his look, and un-
troubled in his breast,
The knight the weed hath taken,
and reverently hath kiss'd:
"Now bless'd be the moment, the
messenger be blest!
Much honour'd do I hold me in my
lady's high behest;
And say unto my lady, in this dear
night-weed dress'd,
To the best arm'd champion I will
not veil my crest;
But if I live and bear me well 'tis
her turn to take the test."
Here, gentles, ends the foremost fytte
of the Lay of the Bloody Vest.

FYTTE SECOND.

The Baptist's fair morrow beheld
gallant feats—
There was winning of honour, and
losing of seats—
There was hewing with falchions,
and splintering of staves,
The victors won glory, the vanquish'd
won graves.
O, many a knight there fought
bravely and well,
Yet one was accounted his peers to
excel,
And 'twas he whose sole armour on
body and breast,
Seem'd the weed of a damsel when
bouned for her rest.

There were some dealt him wounds
that were bloody and sore,
But others respected his plight, and
forebore.
"It is some oath of honour," they
said, "and I trow
'Twere unknighthly to slay him
achieving his vow."
Then the Prince, for his sake, bade
the tournament cease,
He flung down his warder, the
trumpets sung peace;
And the judges declare, and com-
petitors yield,
That the Knight of the Night-gear,
was first in the field.

The feast it was nigh, and the mass
it was nigher,
When before the fair Princess low
louted a squire,
And deliver'd a garment unseemly to
view,
With sword-cut and spear-thrust, all
hack'd and pierc'd through;
All rent and all tatter'd, all clotted
with blood,
With foam of the horses, with dust,
and with mud.
Not the point of that lady's small
finger, I ween,
Could have rested on spot was un-
sullied and clean.

"This token my master, Sir Thomas
a Kent,
Restores to the Princess of fair
Benevent;
He that climbs the tall tree has won
right to the fruit,
He that leaps the wide gulf should
prevail in his suit;
Through life's utmost peril the prize
I have won,
And now must the faith of my
mistress be shown:
For she who prompts knights on
such danger to run,
Must avouch his true service in front
of the sun.
"'I restore,' says my master, 'the garment I've worn,
And I claim of the Princess to don it in turn;
For its stains and its rents she should prize it the more,
Since by shame 'tis unsullied, though crimson'd with gore,'"
Then deep blush'd the Princess—yet kiss'd she and press'd
The blood-spotted robes to her lips and her breast.
"Go tell my true knight, church and chamber shall show,
If I value the blood on this garment or no."

And when it was time for the nobles to pass,
In solemn procession to minster and mass,
The first walk'd the Princess in purple and pall,
But the blood-besmear'd night-robe she wore over all;
And eke, in the hall, where they all sat at dine,
When she knelt to her father and proffer'd the wine,
Over all her rich robes and state jewels, she wore
That wimple unseemly bedabbled with gore.

Then lords whisper'd ladies, as well you may think,
And ladies replied, with nod, titter, and wink;
And the Prince who in anger and shame had look'd down,
Turn'd at length to his daughter, and spoke with a frown:
"Now since thou hast publish'd thy folly and guilt,
E'en atone with thy hand for the blood thou hast spilt;
Yet sore for your boldness you both will repent,
When you wander as exiles from fair Benevent."

Then out spoke stout Thomas, in hall where he stood,
Exhausted and feeble, but dauntless of mood:
"The blood that I lost for this daughter of thine,
I pour'd forth as freely as flask gives its wine;
And if for my sake she brooks penance and blame,
Do not doubt I will save her from suffering and shame;
And light will she reck of thy principedom and rent,
When I hail her, in England, the Countess of Kent."
Chap. xxvi.

MOTTOES.

Now change the scene—and let the trumpets sound,
For we must rouse the lion in his lair.
Chap. vi.

This is the Prince of Leeches; fever, plague,
Cold rheum, and hot podagra do but look on him,
And quit their grasp upon the tortured sinews.
Anonymous.

One thing is certain in our Northern land:
Allow that birth, or valour, wealth, or wit,
Give each precedence to their possessor,
Envy, that follows on such eminence,
As comes the lyme-hound on the roebuck's trace,
Shall pull them down each one.
Sir David Lindsay.
Chap. xi.
SONGS AND VERSES.

You talk of Gaiety and Innocence!
The moment when the fatal fruit was eaten,
They parted ne'er to meet again;
and Malice
Has ever since been playmate to light Gaiety,
From the first moment when the smiling infant
Destroys the flower or butterfly he toys with,
To the last chuckle of the dying miser,
Who on his deathbed laughs his last to hear
His wealthy neighbour has become a bankrupt.
Chap. xiii. Old Play.

'Tis not her sense—for sure, in that
There's nothing more than common;
And all her wit is only chat,
Like any other woman.
Chap. xvi. Song.

Were every hair upon his head a life,
And every life were to be supplicated
By numbers equal to those hairs quadrupled,
Life after life should out like waning stars
Before the daybreak—or as festive lamps,
Which have lent lustre to the midnight revel,
Each after each are quench'd when guests depart!
Chap. xvii. Old Play.

This work desires a planet'y intell'gence
Of Jupiter and Sol; and those great spirits
Are proud, fantastical. It asks great charges
To entice them from the guiding of their spheres
To wait on mortals.
Chap. xviii. Albumazar.

Must we then sheathe our still victorious sword;
Turn back our forward step, which ever trode
O'er foemen's necks the onward path of glory;
Unclasped the mail, which with a solemn vow,
In God's own house we hung upon our shoulders;
That vow, as unaccomplish'd as the promise
Which village nurses make to still their children,
And after think no more of?

The Crusade, a Tragedy.
Chap. xix.

When beauty leads the lion in her toils,
Such are her charms, he dare not raise his mane,
Far less expand the terror of his fangs,
So great Alcides made his club a distaff,
And spun to please fair Omphale.
Anonymous.

'Mid these wild scenes Enchantment waves her wand.
To change the face of the mysterious land;
Till the bewildering scenes around us seem
The vain productions of a feverish dream.
Astolpho, a Romance.
Chap. xxiii.

A grain of dust
Soiling our cup, will make our sense reject
Fastidiously the draught which we did thirst for;
A rusted nail, placed near the faithful compass,
Will sway it from the truth, and wreck the argosy.
Even this small cause of anger and disgust
SONGS AND VERSES.

Will break the bonds of amity ’mongst princes, And wreck their noblest purposes. The Crusade.

Chap. xxiv.

The tears I shed must ever fall! I weep not for an absent swain, For time may happier hours recall, And parted lovers meet again.

I weep not for the silent dead, Their pains are past, their sorrows o’er, And those that loved their steps must tread, When death shall join to part no more.

But worse than absence, worse than death, She wept her lover’s sullied fame, And, fired with all the pride of birth, She wept a soldier’s injured name.¹ Ballad.

Chap. xxvi.

We heard the tecbir,—so the Arabs call Their shout of onset, when with loud acclaim They challenge Heaven to give them victory. Siege of Damascus.

Chap. xxvii.

FROM WOODSTOCK.

AN HOUR WITH THEE.

An hour with thee! When earliest day Dapples with gold the eastern gray, Oh, what can frame my mind to bear The toil and turmoil, care and care, New griefs, which coming hours unfold, And sad remembrance of the old? One hour with thee.

¹ Only the last stanza is Scott’s.

One hour with thee! When burning June Waves his red flag at pitch of noon; What shall repay the faithful swain, His labour on the sultry plain; And, more than cave or sheltering bough, Cool feverish blood and throbbing brow? One hour with thee.

One hour with thee! When sun is set, Oh, what can teach me to forget The thankless labours of the day; The hopes, the wishes, flung away; The increasing wants, and lessening gains, The master’s pride, who scorns my pains? One hour with thee.

Chap. xxvi.

MOTTOES.

Come forth, old man! Thy daughter’s side Is now the fitting place for thee: When Time hath quell’d the oak’s bold pride, The youthful tendril yet may hide The ruins of the parent tree. Chap. ii.

Now, ye wild blades, that make loose inns your stage, To vapour forth the acts of this sad age, Stout Edgehill fight, the Newberys and the West, And northern clashes, where you still fought best: Your strange escapes, your dangers void of fear, When bullets flew between the head and ear, Whether you fought by Damme or the Spirit, Of you I speak. Legend of Captain Jones. Chap. iii.
SONGS AND VERSES.

Yon path of greensward
Winds round by sparry grot and gay pavilion;
There is no flint to gall thy tender foot,
There's ready shelter from each breeze, or shower.
But Duty guides not that way: see her stand,
With wand entwined with amaranth, near yon cliffs.
Oft where she leads thy blood must mark thy footsteps,
Oft where she leads thy head must bear the storm,
And thy shrunk form endure heat, cold, and hunger;
But she will guide thee up to noble heights,
While earthly things lie stretch'd beneath his feet,
Diminish'd, shrunk, and valueless.

Chap. iv.

My tongue pads slowly under this new language,
And starts and stumbles at these uncouth phrases.
They may be great in worth and weight, but hang
Upon the native glibness of my language
Like Saul's plate-armour on the shepherd boy,
Encumbering and not arming him.

Chap. v.

Here we have one head
Upon two bodies: your two-headed bullock
Is but an ass to such a prodigy.
These two have but one meaning, thought, and counsel;
And when the single noodle has spoke out,
The four legs scrape assent to it.

Chap. x.

Deeds are done on earth,
Which have their punishment ere the earth closes
Upon the perpetrators. Be it the working
Of the remorse-stirr'd fancy, or the vision,
Distinct and real, of unearthly being;
All ages witness that beside the couch
Of the fell homicide oft stalks the ghost
Of him he slew, and shows the shadowy wound.

Chap. xiv.

We do that in our zeal,
Our calmer moments are afraid to answer.

Chap. xvii.

The deadliest snakes are those which,
twined 'mongst flowers,
Blend their bright colouring with the varied blossoms,
Their fierce eyes glittering like the spangled dew-drop;
In all so like what nature has most harmless,
That sportive innocence, which dreads no danger,
Is poison'd unawares.

Chap. xxiv.

FROM CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE.

MOTTOES.

(From The Two Drovers.)

Were ever such two loving friends!—
How could they disagree?
O thus it was he loved him dear,
And thought how to requite him,
And having no friend left but he,
He did resolve to fight him.

Chap. ii.

Old Play.

J. B.

Anonymous.

Anonymous.

Old Play.

Old Play.

Anonymous.

Duke upon Duke.

Old Play.
"Down reeling steeds and riders went,
Corslets were pierced, and pennons rent."
(From My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror.)

There are times
When Fancy plays her gambols, in despite
Even of our watchful senses, when in sooth
Substance seems shadow, shadow substance seems,
Twixt that which is and is not, seems dissolved,
As if the mental eye gain’d power to gaze
Beyond the limits of the existing world.
Such hours of shadowy dreams I better love
Than all the gross realities of life.
Anonymous.

FROM THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH.

THE LAY OF POOR LOUISE.

Ah, poor Louise! the livelong day
She roams from cot to castle gay;
And still her voice and viol say,
Ah, maids, beware the woodland way,
Think on Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! The sun was high,
It smirch’d her cheek, it dimm’d her eye,
The woodland walk was cool and nigh,
Where birds with chiming streamlets vie
To cheer Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! The savage bear
Made ne’er that lovely grove his lair;
The wolves molest not paths so fair—
But better far had such been there
For poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! In woody wold
She met a huntsman fair and bold;
His baldric was of silk and gold,
And many a witching tale he told
To poor Louise.

Ah, poor Louise! Small cause to pine
Hadst thou for treasures of the mine;
For peace of mind that gift divine,
And spotless innocence, were thine,
Ah, poor Louise!

Ah, poor Louise! Thy treasure’s reft!
I know not if by force or theft,
Or part by violence, part by gift;
But misery is all that’s left
To poor Louise.

Let poor Louise some succour have!
She will not long your bounty crave,
Or tire the gay with warning stave—
For Heaven has grace, and earth a grave
For poor Louise.

Chap. x.

DEATH CHANT.

VIEWLESS Essence, thin and bare,
Wellnigh melt’d into air;
Still with fondness hovering near
The earthly form thou once didst wear;

Pause upon thy pinion’s flight,
Be thy course to left or right;
Be thou doom’d to soar or sink,
Pause upon the awful brink.

To avenge the deed expelling
Thee untimely from thy dwelling,
Mystic force thou shalt retain
O’er the blood and o’er the brain.

When the form thou shalt espy
That darken’d on thy closing eye;
When the footstep thou shalt hear,
That thrill’d upon thy dying ear;

Then strange sympathies shall wake,
The flesh shall thrill, the nerves shall quake;
The wounds renew their clotter’d flood,
And every drop cry blood for blood.

Chap. xxii.
SONG OF THE GLEE-MAIDEN.

Yes, thou mayst sigh,
And look once more at all around,
At stream and bank, and sky and ground.
Thy life its final course has found,
And thou must die.

Yes, lay thee down,
And while thy struggling pulses flutter,
Bid the gray monk his soul-mass mutter,
And the deep bell its death-tone utter—
Thy life is gone.

Be not afraid.
'Tis but a pang, and then a thrill,
A fever fit, and then a chill;
And then an end of human ill,
For thou art dead.

Chap. xxx.

BOLD AND TRUE.

Oh, bold and true,
In bonnet blue,
That fear or falsehood never knew;
Whose heart was loyal to his word,
Whose hand was faithful to his sword:
Seek Europe wide from sea to sea,
But bonnie Blue-cap still for me!

I've seen Almayn's proud champions prance;
I've seen the gallant knights of France,
Unrivalled with the sword and lance;
I've seen the sons of England true
Wield the brown bill and bend the yew;
Search France the fair and England free—
But bonnie Blue-cap still for me!
Chap xxxii.

MOTTOES.

The ashes here of murder'd Kings
Beneath my footsteps sleep;
And yonder lies the scene of death,
Where Mary learn'd to weep.

Captain Marioribanks.

INTRODUCTORY.

"Behold the Tiber!" the vain Roman cried,
Viewing the ample Tay from Baiglie's side;
But where's the Scot that would the vaunt repay,
And hail the puny Tiber for the Tay?

Anonymous.

Chap. i.

FAIR is the damsel, passing fair,
Sunny at distance gleams her smile!
Approach—the cloud of woeful care
Hangs trembling in her eye the while.

Lucinda, a Ballad.

Chap. xi.

THEN up and spak the auld gudewife,
And, wow! but she was grim,—
"Had e'er your father done the like,
It had been ill for him."

Lucky Trumbull.

Chap. xii.

O FOR a draught of power to steep
The soul of agony in sleep!

Bertha.

Chap. xv.

A WOMAN wails for justice at the gate,
A widow'd woman, wan and desolate.

Bertha.

Chap xx.

LO! where he lies embalm'd in gore,
His wound to Heaven cries;
The floodgates of his blood implore
For vengeance from the skies.

Uranus and Psyche.

Chap. xxiii.
SONGS AND VERSES.

The hour is nigh; now hearts beat high;
Each sword is sharpen'd well;
And who dares die, who stoops to fly,
To-morrow's light shall tell.
         *Sir Edward.*

Chap. xxxiii.

FROM ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN.

THE SECRET TRIBUNAL.

"Measurers of good and evil,
Bring the square, the line, the level,—
Rear the altar, dig the trench,
Blood both stone and ditch shall drench;
Cubits six, from end to end,
Must the fatal bench extend,
Cubits six, from side to side,
Judge and culprit must divide.
On the east the Court assembles,
On the west the Accused trembles:
Answer, brethren, all and one,
Is the ritual rightly done?"

"On life and soul, on blood and bone,
One for all, and all for one,
We warrant this is rightly done."

"How wears the night? Doth morning shine,
In early radiance on the Rhine?
What music floats upon his tide?
Do birds the tardy morning chide?
Brethren, look out from hill and height,
And answer true, how wears the night?"

"The night is old; on Rhine's broad breast
Glance drowsy stars which long to rest,
No beams are twinkling in the east.
There is a voice upon the flood,
The stern still call of blood for blood;
'Tis time we listen the behest."

"Up, then, up! When day's at rest,
'Tis time that such as we are watchers;
Rise to judgment, brethren, rise!
Vengeance knows not sleepy eyes,
He and night are matchers."

Chap. xx.

MOTTOES.

*Cursed be the gold and silver, which persuade
Weak men to follow far fatiguing trade,
The lily, peace, outshines the silver store,
And life is dearer than the golden ore.
Yet money tempts us o'er the desert brown,
To every distant mart and wealthy town.
          *Hassan, or the Camel-driver.*

Chap. iii.

I was one
Who loved the greenwood bank and lowing herd,
The russet guise, the lowly peasant's life,
Season'd with sweet content, more than the halls
Where revellers feast to fever-height.
Believe me,
There ne'er was poison mix'd in maple bowl.
          *Anonymous.*

Chap. v.

When we two meet, we meet like rushing torrents;
Like warring winds, like flames from various points,
That mate each other's fury. There is nought
Of elemental strife, were fiends to guide it,
Can match the wrath of man.
          *Freiaud.*

Chap. vi.
SONGS AND VERSES.

They saw that city, welcoming the Rhine,
As from his mountain heritage he bursts,
As purposed proud Orgetorix of yore, Leaving the desert region of the hills
To lord it o'er the fertile plains of Gaul.

_Heveltia._

Chap. viii.

We know not when we sleep nor when we wake,
Visions distinct and perfect cross our eye,
Which to the slumberer seem realities;
And while they waked, some men have seen such sights,
As set at nought the evidence of sense,
And left them well persuaded they were dreaming.

_Anonymous._

Chap. x.

These be the adept's doctrines—every element
Is peopled with its separate race of spirits:
The airy Sylphs on the blue ether float:
Deep in the earthy cavern skulks the Gnome;
The sea-green Naiad skims the ocean-billow;
And the fierce fire is yet a friendly home
To its peculiar sprite, the Salamander.

_Anonymous._

Chap. xi.

Tell me not of it: I could ne'er abide
The mummerly of all that forced civility.
"Pray, seat yourself, my lord,"—with cringing hams
The speech is spoken; and with bended knee,
Heard by the smiling courtier.—"Before you, sir?"

It must be on the earth then." Hang it all!
The pride which cloaks itself in such poor fashion
Is scarcely fit to swell a beggar's bosom.

_Old Play._

Chap. xxii.

A mirthful man he was; the snows of age
Fell, but they did not chill him. Gaiety,
Even in life's closing, touch'd his teeming brain
With such wild visions as the setting sun
Raises in front of some hoar glacier,
Painting the bleak ice with a thousand hues.

Chap. xxix.

Ay, this is he who wears the wreath of bays
Wove by Apollo and the Sisters Nine,
Which Jove's dread lightning scathes not. He hath doft
The cumbrous helm of steel, and flung aside
The yet more galling diadem of gold;
And, with a leafy circlet round his brows,
He reigns the King of lovers and of poets.

Chap. xxx.

Want you a man
Experienced in the world and its affairs?
Here he is for your purpose. He's a monk:
He hath forsworn the world and all its work,
The rather that he knows it passing well,—
'Special the worst of it, for he's a monk.

_Old Play._

Chap. xxxi.
SONGS AND VERSES.

Toll, toll the bell!
Greatness is o'er;
The heart has broke,
To ache no more;
An unsubstantial pageant all—
Drop o'er the scene the funeral pall.

Chap. xxxii.

HERE'S a weapon now,
Shall shake a conquering general in his tent,
A monarch on his throne, or reach a prelate,
However holy be his offices,
E'en while he serves the altar.

Chap. xxxv.

FROM COUNT ROBERT OF PARIS.

MOTTOES.

Othus. This superb successor
Of the earth's mistress, as thou vainly speakest,
Stands 'midst these ages as, on the wide ocean,
The last spared fragment of a spacious land
That in some grand and awful ministration
Of mighty nature has engulfed been,
Doth lift aloft its dark and rocky cliffs
O'er the wild waste around, and sadly frowns
In lonely majesty.

Constantine Paleologus, Scene I.

Chap. ii.

Here, youth, thy foot unbrace,
Here, youth, thy brow unbraid;
Each tribute that may grace
The threshold here be paid.
Walk with the stealthy pace
Which Nature teaches deer,
When, echoing in the chase,
The hunter's horn they hear.

Chap. iii.

The storm increases: 'tis no sunny shower,
Foster'd in the moist breast of March or April,
Or such as parched Summer cools his lip with;
Heaven's windows are flung wide; the inmost deeps
Call in hoarse greeting one upon another;
On comes the flood in all its roaming horrors,
And where's the dike shall stop it!

Chap. v.

VAIN man! thou mayst esteem thy love as fair
As fond hyperboles suffice to raise.
She may be all that's matchless in her person,
And all-divine in soul to match her body;
But take this from me—thou shalt never call her
Superior to her sex while one survives,
And I am her true votary.

Chap. vi.

Between the foaming jaws of the white torrent
The skilful artist draws a sudden mound;
By level long he subdivides their strength,
Stealing the waters from their rocky bed,
First to diminish what he means to conquer;
Then, for the residue he forms a road,
Easy to keep, and painful to desert,
And guiding to the end the planner aim'd at.

Chap. ix.

Those were wild times—the antipodes of ours:
Ladies were then who oftener saw themselves
SONGS AND VERSES.

In the broad lustre of a foeman's shield
Than in a mirror, and who rather sought
To match themselves in battle, than in dalliance
To meet a lover's onset. But though
Nature
Was outraged thus she was not over- come.

Feudal Times.

Chap. x.

'\textit{Tis strange that, in the dark sulphureous mine,}
Where wild ambition piles its ripening stores
Of slumbering thunder, Love will interpose
His tiny torch, and cause the stern explosion
To burst, when the deviser's least aware.

Anonymous.

Chap. xvii.

All is prepared—the chambers of the mine
Are cram'md with the combustible, which, harmless
While yet unkindled as the sable sand,
Needs but a spark to change its nature so
That he who wakes it from its slumbrous mood,
Dreads scarce the explosion less than he who knows
That 'tis his towers which meet its fury.

Anonymous.

Chap. xxiv.

Heaven knows its time; the bullet has its billet,
Arrow and javelin each its destined purpose;
The fated beasts of Nature's lower strain
Have each their separate task.

Chap. xxv. Old Play.

FROM CASTLE DANGEROUS.

MOTTOES.

A tale of sorrow, for your eyes may weep;
A tale of horror, for your flesh may tingle;
A tale of wonder, for the eyebrows arch
And the blood curdles if you read it rightly.

Chap. v. Old Play.
SONGS AND VERSES.

Where is he? Has the deep earth swallow'd him?
Or hath he melted like some airy phantom
That shuns the approach of morn and the young sun?
Or hath he wrapt him in Cimmerian darkness,
And pass'd beyond the circuit of the sight
With things of the night's shadows?

Chap. xi.

The way is long, my children, long and rough,
The moors are dreary, and the woods are dark;
But he that creeps from cradle on to grave,
Unskill'd save in the velvet course of fortune,
Hath miss'd the discipline of noble hearts.

Chap. xiv.

His talk was of another world; his bodeaments
Strange, doubtful, and mysterious: those who heard him

Listen'd as to a man in feverish dreams,
Who speaks of other objects than the present,
And mutters like to him who sees a vision.

Old Play.

Chap. xviii.

Cry the wild war-note, let the champions pass;
Do bravely each, and God defend the right.

Upon Saint Andrew thrice can they thus cry,
And thrice they shout on height,
And then match'd them on the Englishmen,
As I have told you right.

Saint George the bright, our ladies' knight,
To name they were full fain;
Our Englishmen they cried on height,
And thrice they shout again.

Old Ballad.

Chap. xx.
LYRICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

ARRANGED IN THE ORDER OF THEIR COMPOSITION.

JUVENILE LINES.
FROM VIRGIL.

[1782.—ÆSTAT. 11.]
In awful ruins Ætna thunders nigh,
And sends in pitchy whirlwinds to the sky
Black clouds of smoke, which, still as they aspire,
From their dark sides there bursts the glowing fire;
At other times huge balls of fire are toss'd,
That lick the stars, and in the smoke are lost:
Sometimes the mount, with vast convulsions torn,
Emits huge rocks, which instantly are borne
With loud explosions to the starry skies,
The stones made liquid as the huge mass flies,
Then back again with greater weight recoils,
While Ætna thundering from the bottom boils.

ON A THUNDERSTORM.

[1783.—ÆT. 12.]
Loud o'er my head though awful thunders roll,
And vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole,
Yet 'tis thy voice, my God, that bids them fly,
Thy arm directs those lightnings through the sky.
Then let the good thy mighty name revere,
And harden'd sinners thy just vengeance fear.

ON THE SETTING SUN.

[1783.]

Those evening clouds, that setting ray,
And beauteous tints, serve to display
Their great Creator's praise;
Then let the short-lived thing call'd man,
Whose life's comprised within a span,
To him his homage raise.

We often praise the evening clouds,
And tints so gay and bold,
But seldom think upon our God,
Who tinged these clouds with gold!

THE VIOLET.

[1797.]
The violet in her green-wood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen, or copse, or forest dingle.

Though fair her gems of azure hue,
Beneath the dew-drop's weight reclining;
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue,
More sweet through wat'ry lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry,
Ere yet the day be past its Morrow;
Nor longer in my false love's eye
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow.
LYRICAL PIECES.

TO A LADY.
WITH FLOWERS FROM A ROMAN WALL.

[1797.]

Take these flowers which, purple waving,
On the ruin'd rampart grew,
Where, the sons of freedom braving,
Rome's imperial standards flew.

Warriors from the breach of danger
Pluck no longer laurels there;
They but yield the passing stranger
Wild-flower wreaths for Beauty's hair.

BOTHWELL CASTLE.
A FRAGMENT.

[1799.]

When fruitful Clydesdale's apple-bowers
Are mellowing in the noon;
When sighs round Pembroke's ruin'd towers
The sultry breath of June;

When Clyde, despite his sheltering wood,
Must leave his channel dry;
And vainly o'er the limpid flood
The angler guides his fly;

If chance by Bothwell's lovely braes
A wanderer thou hast been,
Or hid thee from the summer's blaze
In Blantyre's bowers of green,

Full where the copsewood opens wild
Thy pilgrim step hath staid,
Where Bothwell's towers, in ruin piled,
O'erlook the verdant glade;

And many a tale of love and fear
Hath mingled with the scene—

Of Bothwell's banks that bloom'd so dear,
And Bothwell's bonny Jean.

O, if with rugged minstrel lays
Unsated be thy ear,
And thou of deeds of other days
Another tale wilt hear.—

Then all beneath the spreading beech,
Flung careless on the lea,
The Gothic muse the tale shall teach
Of Bothwell's sisters three.

Wight Wallace stood on Deckmont head,
He blew his bugle round,
Till the wild bull in Cadyow wood
Has started at the sound.

St. George's cross, o'er Bothwell hung,
Was waving far and wide,
And from the lofty turret flung
Its crimson blaze on Clyde;

And rising at the bugle blast
That marked the Scottish foe,
Old England's yeomen muster'd fast,
And bent the Norman bow.

Tall in the midst Sir Aylmer rose,
Proud Pembroke's Earl was he
While—""

THE SHEPHERD'S TALE.

[1799.]

And ne'er but once, my son, he says,
Was yon sad cavern trod,
In persecution's iron days,
When the land was left by God.

From Bewlie bog, with slaughter red,
A wanderer hither drew,
And oft he stopt and turn'd his head,
As by fits the night wind blew;
For trampling round by Cheviot edge
  We're heard the troopers keen,
And frequent from the Whitelaw ridge
  The death-shot flash'd between.

The moonbeams through the misty shower
  On yon dark cavern fell;
Through the cloudy night the snow gleam'd white,
  Which sunbeam ne'er could quell.

"You cavern dark is rough and rude,
  And cold its jaws of snow;
But more rough and rude are the men of blood,
  That hunt my life below!

"You spell-bound den, as the aged tell,
  Was hewn by demon's hands;
But I had lourd melle with the fiends of hell,
  Than with Clavers and his band."

He heard the deep-mouth'd bloodhound bark,
  He heard the horses neigh,
He plunged him in the cavern dark,
  And downward sped his way.

Now faintly down the winding path
  Came the cry of the faulting hound,
And the mutter'd oath of baulked wrath
  Was lost in hollow sound.

He threw him on the flinted floor,
  And held his breath for fear;
He rose and bitter cursed his foes,
  As the sounds died on his ear.

"O bare thine arm, thou battling Lord,
  For Scotland's wandering band;
Dash from the oppressor's grasp the sword,
  And sweep him from the land!

"Forget not thou thy people's groans
  From dark Dunnottter's tower,
Mix'd with the seafowl's shrilly moans,
  And ocean's bursting roar!

"O, in fell Clavers' hour of pride,
  Even in his mightiest day,
As bold he strides through conquest's tide,
  O stretch him on the clay!

"His widow and his little ones,
  O may their tower of trust
Remove its strong foundation stones,
  And crush them in the dust!"—

"Sweet prayers to me," a voice replied.
  "Thrice welcome, guest of mine!"
And glimmering on the cavern side,
  A light was seen to shine.

An aged man, in amice brown,
  Stood by the wanderer's side,
By powerful charm, a dead man's arm
  The torch's light supplied.

From each stiff finger, stretch'd upright,
  Arose a ghastly flame.
That waved not in the blast of night
  Which through the cavern came.

O, deadly blue was that taper's hue,
  That flamed the cavern o'er,
But more deadly blue was the ghastly hue
  Of his eyes who the taper bore.

He laid on his head a hand like lead,
  As heavy, pale, and cold—
"Vengeance be thine, thou guest of mine,
  If thy heart be firm and bold.

"But if faint thy heart, and caitiff fear
  Thy recreant sinews know,
The mountain erny thy heart shall tear,
Thy nerves the hooded crow."

The wanderer raised him undismay'd:
"My soul, by dangers steel'd,
Is stubborn as my border blade,
Which never knew to yield.

"And if thy power can speed the hour
Of vengeance on my foes,
Their be the fate, from bridge and gate,
To feed the hooded crows."

The Brownie look'd him in the face,
And his colour fled with speed—
"I fear me," quoth he, "neath it will be
To match thy word and deed.

"In ancient days when English bands
Sore ravaged Scotland fair,
The sword and shield of Scottish land
Was valiant Halbert Kerr.

"A warlock loved the warrior well,
Sir Michael Scott by name,
And he sought for his sake a spell to make,
Should the Southern foemen tame.

"Look thou," he said, 'from Cessford head,
As the July sun sinks low,
And when glimmering white on Cheviot's height
Thou shalt spy a wreath of snow,
The spell is complete which shall bring to thy feet
The haughty Saxon foe.

"For many a year wrought the wizard here,
In Cheviot's bosom low,
Till the spell was complete, and in July's heat
Appear'd December's snow;
But Cessford's Halbert never came
The wondrous cause to know.

"For years before in Bowden aisle
The warrior's bones had lain,
And after short while, by female guile,
Sir Michael Scott was slain.

"But me and my brethren in this cell
His mighty charms retain,—
And he that can quell the powerful spell
Shall o'er broad Scotland reign."

He led him through an iron door
And up a winding stair,
And in wild amaze did the wanderer gaze
On the sight which open'd there.

Through the gloomy night flash'd ruddy light,—
A thousand torches glow;
The cave rose high, like the vaulted sky,
O' er stalls in double row.

In every stall of that endless hall
Stood a steed in barbing bright;
At the foot of each steed, all arm'd save the head,
Lay stretch'd a stalwart knight.

In each mail'd hand was a naked brand;
As they lay on the black bull's hide,
Each visage stern did upwards turn,
With eyeballs fix'd and wide.

A launcegay strong, full twelve ells long,
By every warrior hung;
At each pommel there, for battle yare,
A Jedwood axe was slung.

The casque hung near each cavalier;
The plumes waved mournfully
At every tread which the wanderer made
Through the hall of gramarye.
LYRICAL PIECES.

The ruddy beam of the torches' gleam
That glared the warriors on,
Reflected light from armour bright,
In noontide splendour shone.

And onward seen in lustre sheen,
Still lengthening on the sight,
Through the boundless hall stood steeds in stall,
And by each lay a sable knight.

Still as the dead lay each horseman dread,
And moved nor limb nor tongue;
Each steed stood stiff as an earthfast cliff,
Nor hoof nor bridle rung.

No sounds through all the spacious hall
The deadly still divide,
Save where echoes aloof from the vaulted roof
To the wanderer's step replied.

At length before his wondering eyes,
On an iron column borne,
Of ancient shape, and giant size,
Appeared a sword and horn.

"Now choose thee here," quoth his leader,
"Thy venturous fortune try;
Thy woe and weal, thy boot and bale,
In yon brand and bugle lie."

To the fatal brand he mounted his hand,
But his soul did quiver and quail;
The life-blood did start to his shuddering heart,
And left him wan and pale.

The brand he forsook, and the horn he took
To say a gentle sound;
But so wild a blast from the bugle brast,
That the Cheviot rock'd around.

From Forth to Tees, from seas to seas,
The awful bugle rung;
On Carlisle wall, and Berwick withal,
To arms the warders sprung.

With clank and clang the cavern rang,
The steeds did stamp and neigh;
And loud was the yell as each warrior fell
Sterte up with hoop and cry.

"Woe, woe," they cried, "thou caitiff coward,
That ever thou wert born!
Why drew ye not the knightly sword
Before ye blew the horn?"

The morning on the mountain shone,
And on the bloody ground
Hurl'd from the cave with shiver'd bone,
The mangled wretch was found.

And still beneath the cavern dread,
Among the gliders gray,
A shapeless stone with lichens spread
Marks where the wanderer lay.

CHEVIOT.

A FRAGMENT.

[1799.]

Go sit old Cheviot's crest below,
And pensive mark the lingering snow
In all his scars abide,
And slow dissolving from the hill
In many a sightless, soundless rill,
Feed sparkling Bowmont's tide.

Fair shines the stream by bank and lea,
As wimpling to the eastern sea
She seeks Till's sullen bed,
Indenting deep the tatal plain,
Where Scotland's noblest, brave in vain,
Around their monarch bled.

And westward hills on hills you see,
Even as old Ocean's mightiest sea
Heaves high her waves of foam,
Dark and snow-ridged from Cutsfeld's wold
To the proud foot of Cheviot roll'd,
Earth's mountain billows come.

JOY TO THE VICTORS!
FROM "THE HOUSE OF ASPEN."

[About 1800.]

Joy to the victors! the sons of old Aspen!
Joy to the race of the battle and scar!
Glory's proud garland triumphantly grasping;
Generous in peace, and victorious in war.
Honour acquiring,
Valour inspiring,
Bursting, resistless, through foes
War-axes wielding,
Broken ranks yielding,
Till from the battle proud Roderic retiring,
Yields in wild rout the fair palm to his foe.

Joy to each warrior, true follower of Aspen!
Joy to the heroes that gain'd the bold day!
Health to our wounded, in agony gasping;
Peace to our brethren that fell in the fray!
Boldly this morning,
Roderic's power scorning,
Well for their chieftain their blades did they wield:
Joy blest them dying,
As Maltingen flying,
Low laid his banners, our conquest adorning,
Their death-clouded eyeballs descried on the field!

Now to our home, the proud mansion of Aspen,
Bend we, gay victors, triumphant away;
There each fond damsel, her gallant youth clasping,
Shall wipe from his forehead the stains of the fray.
Listening the prancing
Of horses advancing;
E'en now on the turrets our maidens appear.

Love our hearts warming,
Songs the night charming,
Round goes the grape in the goblet gay dancing;

Love, wine, and song, our blithe evening shall cheer!

RHEIN-WEIN LIED.
FROM "THE HOUSE OF ASPEN."

[About 1800.]

What makes the troopers' frozen courage muster?
The grapes of juice divine.
Upon the Rhine, upon the Rhine they cluster:
Oh, blessed be the Rhine!

Let fringe and furs, and many a rabbit-skin, sirs,
Bedeck your Saracen:
He'll freeze without warms our hearts within, sirs,
When the night-frost crusts the fen.
LYRICAL PIECES.

But on the Rhine, but on the Rhine
They cluster,
The grapes of juice divine
That make our troopers' frozen
courage muster:
Oh, blessed be the Rhine!

THE REIVER'S WEDDING.

[1802.]

O will ye hear a mirthful bourd?
Or will ye hear of courtesie?
Or will hear how a gallant lord
Was wedded to a gay ladye?

"Ca' out the kye," quo' the village
herd,
As he stood on the knowe,
"Ca' this ane's nine and that ane's
ten,
And bauld Lord William's cow."—

"Ah! by my sooth," quoth William
then,
"And stands it that way now,
When knave and churl have nine and
ten,
That the Lord has but his cow?"

"I swear by the light of the Michael-
mas moon,
And the might of Mary high,
And by the edge of my braidsword
brown,
They shall soon say Harden's kye."

He took a bugle frae his side,
With names carved o' er and o' er—
Full many a chief of meikle pride
That Border bugle bore—

He blew a note baith sharp and hie,
Till rock and water rang around—
Three score of moss-troopers and three
Have mounted at that bugle sound.

The Michaelmas moon had enter'd
then,
And ere she wan the full,

Ye might see by her light in Harden
glen
A bow o' kye and a bassen'd bull.

And loud and loud in Harden tower
The quaigh gaed round wi' meikle
glee;
For the English beef was brought in
bower
And the English ale flow'd merrilie.

And mony a guest from Teviotside
And Yarrow's Braes was there;
Was never a lord in Scotland wide
That made more dainty fare.

They ate, they laugh'd, they sang
and quaff'd,
Till nought on board was seen,
When knight and squire were bouned
to dine,
But a spur of silver sheen.

Lord William has ta'en his berry
brown steed—
A sore shent man was he;
"Wait ye, my guests, a little speed—
Weel feasted ye shall be."

He rode him down by Falsehope
burn,
His cousin dear to see,
With him to take a riding turn—
Wat-draw-the-sword was he.

And when he came to Falsehope
glen,
Beneath the trysting-tree,
On the smooth green was carved
plain,
"To Lochwood bound are we."

"O if they be gane to dark Loch-
wood
To drive the Warden's gear,
Betwixt our names, I ween, there's
feud;
I'll go and have my share:

"For little reck I for Johnstone's
feud,
The Warden though he be."
So Lord William is away to dark Lochwood,  
With riders barely three.

The Warden’s daughters in Lochwood sate,  
Were all both fair and gay,  
All save the Lady Margaret,  
And she was wan and wae.

The sister, Jean, had a full fair skin,  
And Grace was bauld and braw;  
But the leal-fast heart her breast within  
It weel was worth them a’.

Her father’s prank’d her sisters twa  
With meikle joy and pride;  
But Margaret maun seek Dundrennan’s wa’—  
She ne’er can be a bride.

On spear and casque by gallants gent  
Her sisters’ scarfs were borne,  
But never at tilt or tournament  
Were Margaret’s colours worn.

Her sisters rode to Thirlstane bower,  
But she was left at hame  
To wander round the gloomy tower,  
And sigh young Harden’s name.

"Of all the knights, the knight most fair,  
From Yarrow to the Tyne,"  
Soft sigh’d the maid, "is Harden’s heir,  
But ne’er can he be mine;"

"Of all the maids, the foulest maid  
From Teviot to the Dee,  
Ah!" sighing sad, that lady said,  "Can ne’er young Harden’s be."—

She looked up the briery glen,  
And up the mossy brae,  
And she saw a score of her father’s men,  
Yclad in the Johnstone gray.

O fast and fast they downwards sped  
The moss and briers among,  
And in the midst the troopers led  
A shackled knight along.

THE BARD’S INCANTATION.

WRITTEN UNDER THE THREAT OF INVASION IN THE AUTUMN OF 1804.

The forest of Glenmore is drear,  
It is all of blackmore and the dark oak-tree;  
And the midnight wind, to the mountain deer,  
Is whistling the forest lullaby:
The moon looks through the drifting storm,  
But the troubled lake reflects not her form,  
For the waves roll whitening to the land,  
And dash against the shelvy strand.
There is a voice among the trees,  
That mingles with the groaning oak—
That mingles with the stormy breeze,  
And the lake—waves dashing against the rock;—
There is a voice within the wood,  
The voice of the bard in fitful mood;
His song was louder than the blast,  
As the bard of Glenmore through the forest past.

"Wake ye from your sleep of death,  
Minstrels and bards of other days!  
For the midnight wind is on the heath,  
And the midnight meteors dimly blaze:  
The Spectre with his Bloody Hand,  
Is wandering through the wild woodland;  
The owl and the raven are mute for dread,  
And the time is meet to awake the dead!"
"Souls of the mighty, wake and say,
To what high strain your harps were strung,
When Lochlin plow'd her billowy way,
And on your shores her Norsemen flung?
Her Norsemen train'd to spoil and blood,
Skill'd to prepare the Raven's food,
All, by your harpings, doom'd to die
On bloody Largs and Loncarty.

"Mute are ye all? No murmurs strange
Upon the midnight breeze sail by;
Nor through the pines, with whistling change
Mimic the harp's wild harmony!
Mute are ye now?—Ye ne'er were mute,
When Murder with his bloody foot,
And Rapine with his iron hand,
Were hovering near you mountain strand.

"O yet awake the strain to tell,
By every deed in song enroll'd,
By every chief who fought or fell,
For Albion's weal in battle bold:—
From Coigach, first who roll'd his car
Through the deep ranks of Roman war,
To him, of veteran memory dear,
Who victor died on Aboukir.

"By all their swords, by all their scars,
By all their names, a mighty spell!
By all their wounds, by all their wars,
Arise, the mighty strain to tell!
For fiercer than fierce Hengist's strain,
More impious than the heathen Dane,
More grasping than all-grasping Rome,
Gaul's ravening legions hither come!"

The wind is hush'd, and still the lake—
Strange murmurs fill my tinkling ears,
Bristles my hair, my sinews quake,
At the dread voice of other years—
"When targets clash'd, and bugles rung,
And blades round warriors' heads were flung,
The foremost of the band were we,
And hymn'd the joys of Liberty!"

HELLVELLYN.

[1805.]

In the spring of 1805, a young gentleman of talents, and of a most amiable disposition, perished by losing his way on the mountain Hellvellyn. His remains were not discovered till three months afterwards, when they were found guarded by a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent solitary rambles through the wilds of Cumberland and Westmoreland.

I CLIMB'D the dark brow of the mighty Hellvellyn,
Lakes and mountains beneath me gleam'd misty and wide;
All was still, save by fits, when the eagle was yelling,
And starting around me the echoes replied,
On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-tarn was bending,
And Catchedicam its left verge was defending,
One huge nameless rock in the front was ascending,
When I mark'd the sad spot where the wanderer had died.

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain-heather,
Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretch'd in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandon'd to weather,
Till the mountain winds wasted the tenantless clay.
Lyric Pieces.

Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
For, faithful in death, his mute favourite attended,
The much-loved remains of her master defended,
And chased the hill-fox and the raven away.

How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou start?
How many long days and long weeks didst thou number,
Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart?
And, oh, was it meet, that—no requiem read o'er him—
No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
And thou, little guardian, alone stretch'd before him—
Unhonour'd the Pilgrim from life should depart?

When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has yielded,
The tapestry waves dark round the dim-lighted hall;
With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,
And pages stand mute by the canopied pall:
Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches are gleaming;
In the proudly-arch'd chapel the banners are beaming,
Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,
Lamenting a Chief of the people should fall.

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
To lay down thy head like the meek mountain lamb,
When, wilder'd, he drops from some cliff huge in stature,
And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.

And more stately thy couch by this desert lake lying,
Thy obsequies sung by the gray plover flying,
With one faithful friend but to witness thy dying,
In the arms of Hellvellyn and Catchedicam.

The Dying Bard.

[1806.]

The Welsh tradition bears, that a Bard, on his death-bed, demanded his harp, and played the air to which these verses are adapted; requesting that it might be performed at his funeral.

I.

Dinas Emlyn, lament; for the moment is nigh,
When mute in the woodlands thine echoes shall die:
No more by sweet Teivi Cadwallon shall rave,
And mix his wild notes with the wild dashing wave.

II.

In spring and in autumn thy glories of shade
Unhonour'd shall flourish, unhonour'd shall fade;
For soon shall be lifeless the eye and the tongue,
That view'd them with rapture, with rapture that sung.

III.

Thy sons, Dinas Emlyn, may march in their pride,
And chase the proud Saxon from Prestatyn's side;
But where is the harp shall give life to their name?
And where is the bard shall give heroes their fame?
IV.
And oh, Dinas Emlinn! thy
daughters so fair,
Who heave the white bosom, and
wave the dark hair;
What tuneful enthusiast shall
worship their eye,
When half of their charms with
Cadwallon shall die?

V.
Then adieu, silver Teivi! I quit
thy loved scene,
To join the dim choir of the bards
who have been;
With Lewarch, and Meilor, and
Merlin the Old,
And sage Taliesin, high harping
to hold.

VI.
And adieu, Dinas Emlinn! still
green be thy shades,
Unconquer'd thy warriors, and
matchless thy maids!
And thou, whose faint warblings
my weakness can tell,
Farewell, my loved Harp! my last
treasure, farewell!

THE NORMAN HORSE-
SHOE.
[1806.]
The Welsh, inhabiting a mountainous
country, and possessing only an in-
ferior breed of horses, were usually
unable to encounter the shock of the
Anglo-Norman cavalry. Occasionally,
however, they were successful in re-
pelling the invaders; and the follow-
ing verses are supposed to celebrate
a defeat of CLARE, Earl of Striguil
and Pembroke, and of NEVILLE, Baron
of Chepstow, Lords-Marchers of Mon-
mouthshire. Rymny is a stream which
divides the counties of Monmouth and
Glamorgan: Caerphili, the scene of
the supposed battle, is a vale upon its
banks, dignified by the ruins of a very
ancient castle.

I.
Red glows the forge in Striguil's
bounds,
And hammers din, and anvil sounds,
And armourers, with iron toil,
Barb many a steed for battle's toil.
Foul fall the hand which bends the
steel
Around the courser's thundering heel,
That e'er shall dint a sable wound
On fair Glamorgan's velvet ground!

II.
From Chepstow's towers, ere dawn
of morn,
Was heard afar the bugle-horn;
And forth, in banded pomp and pride,
Stout Clare and fiery Neville ride.
They swore, their banners broad
should gleam,
In crimson light, on Rymny's stream;
They vow'd, Caerphili's sod should
feel
The Norman charger's spurring heel.

III.
And sooth they swore—the sun arose,
And Rymny's wave with crimson
glows;
For Clare's red banner, floating wide,
Roll'd down the stream to Severn's
tide!
And sooth they vow'd—the trampled
green
Show'd where hot Neville's charge
had been:
In every sable hoof-tramp stood
A Norman horseman's curdling blood!

IV.
Old Chepstow's brides may curse the
toll,
That arm'd stout Clare for Cambrian
broil;
Their orphans long the art may rue,
For Neville's war-horse forged the
shoe.
No more the stamp of armed steed
Shall dint Glamorgan's velvet mead;
Nor trace be there, in early spring,
Save of the Fairies' emerald ring.
THE MAID OF TORO.

[1806.]

O, low shone the sun on the fair
Lake of Toro,
And weak were the whispers that
Waved the dark wood,
All as a fair maiden, bewilder'd in
Sorrow,
Sorely sigh'd to the breezes, and
Wept to the flood.
"O saints! from the mansions of
Bliss lowly bending;
Sweet Virgin! who hearest the
Suppliant's cry,
Now grant my petition, in anguish
Ascending,
My Henry restore, or let Eleanor
die!"

All distant and faint were the sounds
Of the battle,
With the breezes they rise, with
The breezes they fail,
Till the shout, and the groan, and
The conflict's dread rattle,
And the chase's wild clamour, came
Loading the gale.
Breathless she gazed on the wood-
lands so dreary;
Slowly approaching a warrior was
Seen;
Life's ebbing tide mark'd his footsteps
So weary;
Cleft was his helmet, and woe was
His mien.

"O save thee, fair maid, for our
Armies are flying!
O save thee, fair maid, for thy
Guardian is low!
Deadly cold on yon heath thy brave
Henry is lying,
And fast through the woodland
Approaches the foe."
Scarce could he falter the tidings of
Sorrow,
And scarce could she hear them,
Benumb'd with despair:
And when the sun sank on the sweet
Lake of Toro,
For ever he set to the Brave and
The Fair.

THE PALMER.

[1806.]

"O open the door, some pity to
Show,
Keen blows the northern wind!
The glen is white with the drifted
Snow,
And the path is hard to find.

"No outlaw seeks your castle gate,
From chasing the King's deer,
Though even an outlaw's wretched
State
Might claim compassion here.

"A weary Palmer, worn and weak,
I wander for my sin;
O open, for Our Lady's sake!
A pilgrim's blessing win!

"I'll give you pardons from the Pope,
And relics from o'er the sea;
Or if for these you will not ope,
Yet open for charity.

"The hare is crouching in her form,
The hart beside the hind;
An aged man, amid the storm,
No shelter can I find.

"You hear the Ettrick's sullen roar,
Dark, deep, and strong is he,
And I must ford the Ettrick o'er,
Unless you pity me.

"The iron gate is bolted hard,
At which I knock in vain;
The owner's heart is closer barr'd,
Who hears me thus complain.

"Farewell, farewell! and Mary
Grant,
When old and frail you be,
You never may the shelter want,
That's now denied to me."

The Ranger on his couch lay warm,
And heard him plead in vain;
But oft amid December's storm,
He'll hear that voice again:
LYRICAL PIECES.

For lo, when through the vapours dank,
   Morn shone on Ettrick fair,
A corpse amid the alders rank,
   The Palmer welter'd there.

THE MAID OF NEIDPATH.

[1806.]

There is a tradition in Tweeddale, that,
when Neidpath Castle, near Peebles, was inhabited by the Earls of March, a mutual passion subsisted between a daughter of that noble family, and a son of the Laird of Tushielaw, in Ettrick Forest. As the alliance was thought unsuitable by her parents, the young man went abroad. During his absence, the lady fell into a consumption; and at length, as the only means of saving her life, her father consented that her lover should be called on. On the day when he was expected to pass through Peebles, on the road to Tushielaw, the young lady, though much exhausted, caused herself to be carried to the balcony of a house in Peebles, belonging to the family, that she might see him as he rode past. Her anxiety and eagerness gave such force to her organs, that she is said to have distinguished his horse's footsteps at an incredible distance. But Tushielaw, unprepared for the change in her appearance, and not expecting to see her in that place, rode on without recognising her, or even slackening his pace. The lady was unable to support the shock; and, after a short struggle, died in the arms of her attendants. There is an incident similar to this traditional tale in Count Hamilton's "Fleur d'Epine."

O lovers' eyes are sharp to see,
   And lovers' ears in hearing;
And love, in life's extremity,
   Can lend an hour of cheering.
Disease had been in Mary's bower,
   And slow decay from mourning,
Though now she sits on Neidpath's tower,
   To watch her love's returning.

All sunk and dim her eyes so bright,
   Her form decay'd by pining,
Till through her wasted hand, at night,
   You saw the taper shining;
By fits, a sultry hectic hue
   Across her cheek was flying;
By fits, so ashy pale she grew,
   Her maidens thought her dying.

Yet keenest powers to see and hear,
   Seem'd in her frame residing;
Before the watch-dog prickt'd his ear,
   She heard her lover's riding;
Ere scarce a distant form was ken'd,
   She knew, and waved to greet him;
And o'er the battlement did bend,
   As on the wing to meet him.

He came—he pass'd—an heedless gaze,
   As o'er some stranger glancing;
Her welcome, spoke in faltering phrase,
   Lost in her courser's prancing—
The castle arch, whose hollow tone
   Returns each whisper spoken,
Could scarcely catch the feeble moan,
   Which told her heart was broken.

WANDERING WILLIE.

[1806.]

All joy was bereft me the day that you left me,
   And climb'd the tall vessel to sail yon wide sea;
O weary betide it! I wander'd beside it,
   And bann'd it for parting my Willie and me.

Far o'er the wave hast thou follow'd thy fortune,
   Oft fought the squadrons of France and of Spain;
Ae kiss of welcome's worth twenty at parting,
   Now I hae gotten my Willie again.
When the sky it was mirk, and the winds they were wailing,
I sat on the beach wi' the tear in my ee,
And thought o' the bark where my Willie was sailing,
And wish'd that the tempest could a' blow on me.

Now that thy gallant ship rides at her mooring,
Now that my wanderer's in safety at hame,
Music to me were the wildest winds' roaring,
That e'er o'er Inch-Keith drove the dark ocean faem.

When the lights they did blaze, and the guns they did rattle,
And blithe was each heart for the great victory,
In secret I wept for the dangers of battle,
And thy glory itself was scarce comfort to me.

But now shalt thou tell, while I eagerly listen,
Of each bold adventure, and every brave scar;
And trust me, I'll smile, though my een they may glisten;
For sweet after danger's the tale of the war.

And oh, how we doubt when there's distance 'tween lovers,
When there's naething to speak to the heart thro' the ee;
How often the kindest and warmest prove rovers,
And the love of the faithfulest ebbs like the sea.

Till, at times—could I help it?—I pined and I ponder'd,
If love could change notes like the bird on the tree—
Now I'll ne'er ask if thine eyes may hae wander'd,
Enough, thy leal heart has been constant to me.

Welcome, from sweeping o'er sea and through channel,
Hardships and danger despising for fame,
Furnishing story for glory's bright annal,
Welcome, my wanderer, to Jeanie and hame!

Enough, now thy story in annals of glory
Has humbled the pride of France,
Holland, and Spain;
No more shalt thou grieve me, no more shalt thou leave me,
I never will part with my Willie again.

HEALTH TO LORD MELVILLE.

[1806.]

"The impeachment of Lord Melville was among the first measures of the new (Whig) Government; and personal affection and gratitude graced as well as heightened the zeal with which Scott watched the issue of this, in his eyes, vindictive proceeding; but, though the ex-minister's ultimate acquittal was, as to all the charges involving his personal honour, complete, it must now be allowed that the investigation brought out many circumstances by no means creditable to his discretion; and the rejoicings of his friends ought not, therefore, to have been scornfully jubilant. Such they were, however—at least in Edinburgh; and Scott took his share in them by inditing a song, which was sung by James Ballantyne, and received with clamorous applauses, at a public dinner given in honour of the event, on the 27th of June 1806."


Since here we are set in array round the table,
Five hundred good fellows well met in a hall,
Come listen, brave boys, and I'll sing
as I'm able
How innocence triumph'd and pride
get a fall,
But push round the claret—
Come, stewards, don't spare it—
With rapture you'll drink to the toast
that I give:
Here, boys,
Off with it merrily—
MELVILLE for ever, and long may he live!

What were the Whigs doing, when
boldly pursuing,
PITT banish'd Rebellion, gave
Treason a string?
Why, they swore on their honour, for
ARTHUR O'CONNOR,
And fought hard for DESPARD
against country and king;
Well, then, we knew, boys,
PITT and MELVILLE were true boys,
And the tempest was raised by the
friends of Reform.
Ah, woe!
Weep to his memory;
Low lies the pilot that weather'd the storm!

And pray, don't you mind when the
Blues first were raising,
And we scarcely could think the
house safe o'er our heads?
When villains and coxcombs, French
politics praising,
Drove peace from our tables and
sleep from our beds?
Our hearts they grew bolder
When, musket on shoulder,
Stepp'd forth our old Statesmen
example to give.
Come, boys, never fear,
Drink the Blue grenadier—
Here's to old HARRY, and long may he live!

They would turn us adrift; though
rely, sir, upon it—
Our own faithful chronicles warrant
us that

The free mountaineer and his bonny
blue bonnet
Have oft gone as far as the regular's
hat.
We laugh at their taunting,
For all we are wanting
Is licence our life for our country to
give.
Off with it merrily,
Horse, foot, and artillery,
Each loyal Volunteer, long may he live!

'Tis not us alone, boys—the Army
and Navy
Have each got a slap 'mid their
politic pranks;
CORNWALLIS cashier'd, that watch'd
winters to save ye,
And the Cape call'd a bauble, un-
worthy of thanks.
But vain is their taunt,
No soldier shall want
The thanks that his country to valour
can give:
Come, boys,
Drink it off merrily,—
SIR DAVID and POPHAM, and long
may they live!

And then our revenue—Lord knows
how they view'd it,
While each petty statesman talk'd
lofty and big;
But the beer-tax was weak, as if
Whitbread had brew'd it,
And the pig-iron duty a shame to
a pig.
In vain is their vaunting,
Too surely there's wanting
What judgment, experience, and
steadiness give:
Come, boys,
Drink about merrily,—
Health to sage MELVILLE, and long
may he live!

Our King, too—our Princess—I dare
not say more, sir,—
May Providence watch them with
mercy and might!
While there's one Scottish hand that
   can wag a claymore, sir,
They shall ne'er want a friend to stand up for their right.
   Be damn'd he that dare not,—
For my part, I'll spare not
To beauty afflicted a tribute to give:
   Fill it up steadily,
   Drink it off readily—
Here's to the Princess, and long may she live!
And since we must not set Auld Reekie in glory,
   And make her brown visage as light as her heart;
Till each man illumine his own upper story,
   Nor law-book nor lawyer shall force us to part.
In Grenville and Spencer,
   And some few good men, sir,
High talents we honour, slight difference forgive;
   But the Brewer we'll hoax,
Tallyho to the Fox,
   And drink Melville for ever, as long as we live!"

HUNTING SONG.
[1808.]
Waken, lords and ladies gay,
On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear!
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."
Waken, lords and ladies gay,
The mist has left the mountain gray,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming;
And foresters have busy been,
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay,
To the green-wood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers fray'd;
You shall see him brought to bay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,
Stanch as hound, and fleet as hawk;
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

THE RESOLVE.

IN IMITATION OF AN OLD ENGLISH POEM.

[1808.]
My wayward fate I needs must plain.
   Though bootless be the theme;
I loved, and was beloved again,
   Yet all was but a dream:
For, as her love was quickly got,
   So it was quickly gone;
No more I'll bask in flame so hot,
   But coldly dwell alone.

Not maid more bright than maid was e'er
   My fancy shall beguile,
By flattering word, or feigned tear,
   By gesture, look, or smile:
No more I'll call the shaft fair shot,
   Till it has fairly flown,
Nor scorch me at a flame so hot;—
   I'll rather freeze alone.

Each ambush'd Cupid I'll defy,
   In cheek, or chin, or brow,
And deem the glance of woman's eye
   As weak as woman's vow:
I'll lightly hold the lady's heart,  
That is but lightly won;  
I'll steel my breast to beauty's art,  
And learn to live alone.

The flaunting torch soon blazes out,  
The diamond's ray abides;  
The flame its glory hurls about,  
The gem its lustre hides;  
Such gem I fondly deem'd was mine,  
And glow'd a diamond stone,  
But, since each eye may see it shine,  
I'll darkling dwell alone.

No waking dream shall tinge my thought  
With dyes so bright and vain,  
No silken net, so slightly wrought,  
Shall tangle me again;  
No more I'll pay so dear for wit,  
I'll live upon mine own,  
Nor shall wild passion trouble it,—  
I'll rather dwell alone.

And thus I'll hush my heart to rest,—  
"Thy loving labour's lost;  
Thou shalt no more be wildly blest,  
To be so strangely crost;  
The widow'd turtles mateless die,  
The phoenix is but one;  
They seek no loves—no more will I—  
I'll rather dwell alone."

EPITAPH,

designed for a monument in lichfield cathedral, at the burial-place of the family of miss seward

[1808.]

amid these aisles, where once his precepts show'd  
the heavenward pathway which in life he trod,  
this simple tablet marks a father's bier,  
and those he loved in life, in death are near;  
for him, for them, a daughter bade it rise,

memorial of domestic charities.  
still wouldst thou know why o'er the marble spread,  
in female grace the willow droops her head;  
why on her branches, silent and unstrung,  
the minstrel harp is emblematic hung;  
what poet's voice is smother'd here in dust  
till waked to join the chorus of the just,—  
lo! one brief line an answer sad supplies,  
honour'd, beloved, and mourn'd, here seward lies.  
her worth, her warmth of heart, let friendship say,—  
go seek her genius in her living lay.

prologue,

to miss bailie's play of the family legend.

[1809.]

'tis sweet to hear expiring summer's sigh,  
through forests tinged with russet, wail and die;  
'tis sweet and sad the latest notes to hear  
of distant music, dying on the ear;  
but far more sadly sweet, on foreign strand,  
we list the legends of our native land,  
link'd as they come with every tender tie,  
memorials dear of youth and infancy.

chief, thy wild tales, romantic caledon,  
wake keen remembrance in each hardy son.  
whether on india's burning coasts he toil,  
or till acadia's winter-fetter'd soil,  
he hears with throbbing heart and moisten'd eyes,
And, as he hears, what dear illusions rise!
It opens on his soul his native dell,
The woods wild waving, and the water's swell;
Tradition's theme, the tower that threats the plain,
The mossy cairn that hides the hero slain;
The cot, beneath whose simple porch were told,
By gray-hair'd patriarch, the tales of old,
The infant group, that hush'd their sports the while,
And the dear maid who listen'd with a smile.
The wanderer, while the vision warms his brain,
Is denizen of Scotland once again.

Are such keen feelings to the crowd confined,
And sleep they in the Poet's gifted mind?
Oh no! For She, within whose mighty page
Each tyrant Passion shows his woe and rage,
Has felt the wizard influence they inspire,
And to your own traditions tuned her lyre.
Yourselves shall judge—who'er has raised the sail
By Mull's dark coast, has heard this evening's tale.
The plaided boatman, resting on his oar,
Points to the fatal rock amid the roar
Of whitening waves, and tells whate'er to-night
Our humble stage shall offer to your sight;
Proudly preferr'd that first our efforts give
Scenes glowing from her pen to breathe and live;
More proudly yet, should Caledon approve
The filial token of a Daughter's love.

LYRICAL PIECES.

THE POACHER.

WRITTEN IN IMITATION OF CRABBE.

[1809.]

Welcome, grave Stranger, to our green retreats,
Where health with exercise and freedom meets!
Thrice welcome, Sage, whose philosophic plan
By nature's limits metes the rights of man;
Generous as he, who now for freedom bawls,
Now gives full value for true Indian shawls:
O'er court, o'er customhouse, his shoe who flings,
Now bilks excisemen, and now bullies kings.
Like his, I ween, thy comprehensive mind
Holds laws as mouse-traps baited for mankind:
Thine eye, applusive, each sly vermin sees,
That baulks the snare, yet battens on the cheese;
Thine ear has heard, with scorn instead of awe.
Our buckskinn'd justices expound the law,
Wire-draw the acts that fix for wires the pain,
And for the netted partridge noose the swain;
And thy vindictive arm would fain have broke
The last light fetter of the feudal yoke,
To give the denizens of wood and wild,
Nature's free race, to each her free-born child.
Hence hast thou mark'd, with grief, fair London's race,
Mock'd with the boon of one poor Easter chase,
And long'd to send them forth as free as when
Pour'd o'er Chantilly the Parisian train,
When musket, pistol, blunderbuss, combined,
And scarce the field-pieces were left behind!
A squadron's charge each leveret's heart dismay'd
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
On every covey fired a bold brigade;
La Douce Humanity approved the sport,
For great the alarm indeed, yet small the hurt;
Shouts patriotic solemnised the day,
The fish-spear barb'd, the sweeping net are there,
Doe-hides, and pheasant plumes, and skins of hare,
Cordage for toils, and wiring for the snare.
Barter'd for game from chase or warren won,
Yon cask holds moonlight, run when moon was none;
And late-snatch'd spoils lie stow'd in hutch apart,
To wait the associate higgler's evening cart.

Look on his pallet foul, and mark his rest:
What scenes perturb'd are acting in his breast!
His sable brow is wet and wrung with pain,
And his dilated nostril toils in vain;
For short and scant the breath each effort draws,
And 'twixt each effort Nature claims a pause.
Beyond the loose and sable neckcloth stretch'd,
His sinewy throat seems by convulsion twitch'd,
While the tongue falters, as to utterance loth,
Sounds of dire import—watchword, threat, and oath.
Though stupified by toil, and drugg'd with gin,
The body sleep, the restless guest within
Now plies on wood and wold his lawless trade,
Now in the fangs of justice wakes dismay'd.—

"Was that wild start of terror and despair,
Those bursting eyeballs, and that wilder'd air,
Signs of compunction for a murder'd hare?
Do the locks bristle and the eyebrows arch,

For grouse or partridge massacred in March?"—

No, scoffer, no! Attend, and mark with awe,
There is no wicket in the gate of law!
He, that would e'er so lightly set ajar
That awful portal, must undo each bar:
Tempting occasion, habit, passion, pride,
Will join to storm the breach, and force the barrier wide.

That ruffian, whom true men avoid and dread,
Whom bruisers, poachers, smugglers, call Black Ned,
Was Edward Mansell once;—the lightest heart,
That ever play'd on holiday his part!
The leader he in every Christmas game,
The harvest-feast grew blither when he came,
And liveliest on the chords the bow did glance,
When Edward named the tune and led the dance.
Kind was his heart, his passions quick and strong,
Hearty his laugh, and jovial was his song;
And if he loved a gun, his father swore,
"'Twas but a trick of youth would soon be o'er,
Himself had done the same some thirty years before."

But he whose humours spurn law's awful yoke,
Must herd with those by whom law's bonds are broke,
The common dread of justice soon allies
The clown, who robs the warren, or excise,
With sterner felons train'd to act more dread,
Even with the wretch by whom his fellow bled,
Then, as in plagues the foul contagions pass,
Leavening and festering the corrupted mass,—
Guilt leagues with guilt, while mutual motives draw,
Their hope impunity, their fear the law;
Their foes, their friends, their rendezvous the same,
Till the revenue baulk'd, or pilfer'd game,
Flesh the young culprit, and example leads
To darker villany, and direr deeds.

Wild howl'd the wind the forest glades along,
And oft the owl renew'd her dismal song;
Around the spot where erst he felt the wound,
Red William's spectre walk'd his midnight round.
When o'er the swamp he cast his blighting look,
From the green marshes of the stagnant brook
The bittern's sullen shout the sedges shook!
The waning moon, with storm-presaging gleam,
Now gave and now withheld her doubtful beam;
The old Oak stoop'd his arms, then flung them high,
Bellowing and groaning to the troubled sky—
'Twas then, that, couch'd amid the brushwood sere,
In Malwood-walk young Mansell watch'd the deer;
The fattest buck received his deadly shot—
The watchful keeper heard, and sought the spot.
Stout were their hearts, and stubborn was their strife
O'erpower'd at length the Outlaw drew his knife.
Next morn a corpse was found upon the fell—
The rest his waking agony may tell!

OH, SAY NOT, MY LOVE.

[1812.]

Oh, say not, my love, with that mortified air,
That your spring-time of pleasure is flown,
Nor bid me to maids that are younger repair,
For those raptures that still are thine own.

Though April his temples may wreathe with the vine,
Its tendrils in infancy curl'd,
'Tis the ardour of August matures us the wine,
Whose life-blood enlivens the world.

Though thy form, that was fashion'd as light as a fay's,
Has assumed a proportion more round,
And thy glance, that was bright as a falcon's at gaze
Looks soberly now on the ground,—

Enough, after absence to meet me again,
Thy steps still with ecstasy move;
Enough, that those dear sober glances retain
For me the kind language of love.

THE BOLD DRAGOON.

OR

THE PLAIN OF BADAJOS.

[1812.]

'Twas a Maréchal of France, and he fain would honour gain,
And he long'd to take a passing glance at Portugal from Spain;
LYRICAL PIECES.

With his flying guns this gallant gay,
And boasted corps d'armée—
O he fear'd not our dragoons, with their long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, etc.

To Campo Mayor come, he had quietly sat down,
Just a fricassee to pick, while his soldiers sack'd the town,
When, 'twas peste! morbleu! mon General,
Hear the English bugle-call!
And behold the light dragoons, with their long swords, boldly riding.
Whack, fal de ral, etc.

Right about went horse and foot, artillery and all,
And, as the devil leaves a house, they tumbled through the wall;
They took no time to seek the door,
But, best foot set before—
O they ran from our dragoons, with their long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, etc.

Those valiant men of France they had scarcely fled a mile,
When on their flank there sous'd at once the British rank and file;
For Long, De Grey, and Otway, then
Ne'er minded one to ten,
But came on like light dragoons, with their long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, tal de ral, etc.

Three hundred British lads they made three thousand reel,
Their hearts were made of English oak, their swords of Sheffield steel,
Their horses were in Yorkshire bred,
And Beresford them led;
So huzza for brave dragoons, with their long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, etc.

Then here's a health to Wellington, to Beresford, to Long,
And a single word of Bonaparte before I close my song:
The eagles that to fight he brings
Should serve his men with wings,
When they meet the bold dragoons, with their long swords, boldly riding,
Whack, fal de ral, etc.

ON THE MASSACRE OF GLENCOE.

[1814.]

"O TELL me, Harper, wherefore flow
Thy wayward notes of wail and woe,
Far down the desert of Glencoe,
Where none may list their melody?
Say, harp'st thou to the mists that fly,
Or to the dun-deer glancing by,
Or to the eagle, that from high
Screams chorus to thy minstrelsy?"

"No, not to these, for they have rest,—
The mist-wreath has the mountain-crest,
The stag his lair, the erne her nest,
Abode of lone security.
But those for whom I pour the lay,
Not wild-wood deep, nor mountain gray,
Not this deep dell, that shrouds from day,
Could screen from treach'rous cruelty.

"Their flag was furl'd, and mute their drum,
The very household dogs were dumb,
Unwont to bay at guests that come
In guise of hospitality."
LYRICAL PIECES.

His blithest notes the piper plied,
Her gayest snood the maiden tied,
The dame her distaff flung aside,
To tend her kindly housewifery.

"The hand that mingled in the meal,
At midnight drew the felon steel,
And gave the host's kind breast to feel
Mead for his hospitality!
The friendly hearth which warm'd that hand,
At midnight arm'd it with the brand,
That bade destruction's flames expand
Their red and fearful blazonry.

"Then woman's shriek was heard in vain,
Nor infancy's unpitied plain,
More than the warrior's groan, could gain
Respite from ruthless butchery!
The winter wind that whistled shrill,
The snows that night that cloaked the hill,
Though wild and pitiless, had still
Far more than Southern clemency.

"Long have my harp's best notes been gone,
Few are its strings, and faint their tone,
They can but sound in desert lone
Their gray-hair'd master's misery.
Were each gray hair a minstrel string,
Each chord should imprecations fling,
Till startled Scotland loud should ring,
"Revenge for blood and treachery!"

FOR A' THAT AN' A' THAT.

A NEW SONG TO AN OLD TUNE.

1814.

Though right be aft put down by strength,
As mony a day we saw that,
The true and leilfu' cause at length
Shall bear the grie for a' that.

For a' that an' a' that,
Guns, guillotines, and a' that,
The Fleur-de-lis, that lost her right,
Is queen again for a' that!

We'll twine her in a friendly knot
With England's Rose, and a' that;
The Shamrock shall not be forgot,
For Wellington made braw that.
The Thistle, though her leaf be rude,
Yet faith we'll no misca' that,
She shelter'd in her solitude
The Fleur-de-lis, for a' that.

The Austrian Vine, the Prussian Pine
(For Blucher's sake, hurra that,) The Spanish Olive, too, shall join,
And bloom in peace for a' that.
Stout Russia's Hemp, so surely twined
Around our wreath we'll draw that,
And he that would the cord unbind,
Shall have it for his gra-vat!

Or, if to choke sae puir a sot,
Your pity scorn to throw that,
The Devil's elbow be his lot,
Where he may sit and claw that.
In spite of slight, in spite of might,
In spite of brags, an' a' that,
The lads that battled for the right,
Have won the day, an' a' that!

There's ae bit spot I had forgot,
America they ca' that!
A coward plot her rats had got
Their father's flag to gnaw that:
Now see it fly top-gallant high,
Atlantic winds shall blow that,
And Yankee loon, beware your croun,
There's kames in hand to claw that!

For on the land, or on the sea,
Where'er the breezes blaw that,
The British Flag shall bear the grie,
And win the day for a' that!
SONG,

FOR THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF
THE PITT CLUB OF SCOTLAND.

[1814.]

O, DREAD was the time, and more
dreadful the omen,
When the brave on Marengo lay
slaughter’d in vain,
And beholding broad Europe bow’d
down by her foes,
PITT closed in his anguish the map
of her reign!
Not the fate of broad Europe could
bend his brave spirit
To take for his country the safety
of shame;
O, then in her triumph remember
his merit,
And hallow the goblet that flows
to his name.

Round the husbandman’s head, while
he traces the furrow,
The mists of the winter may mingle
with rain,
He may plough it with labour, and
sow it in sorrow,
And sigh while he fears he has
sow’d it in vain;
He may die ere his children shall
reap in their gladness,
But the blithe harvest-home shall
remember his claim;
And their jubilee-shout shall be
soften’d with sadness,
While they hallow the goblet that
flows to his name.

Though anxious and timeless his life
was expended,
In toils for our country preserved
by his care,
Though he died ere one ray o’er the
nations ascended,
To light the long darkness of doubt
and despair;
The storms he endured in our
Britain’s December,
The perils his wisdom foresaw and
o’ercame,
In her glory’s rich harvest shall
Britain remember,
And hallow the goblet that flows
to his name.

Nor forget His gray head, who, all
dark in affliction,
Is deaf to the tale of our victories
won,
And to sounds the most dear to
paternal affection,
The shout of his people applauding
his Son;
By his firmness unmoved in success
and disaster,
By his long reign of virtue, re-
member his claim!
With our tribute to PITT join the
praise of his Master,
Though a tear stain the goblet
that flows to his name.

Yet again fill the wine-cup, and
change the sad measure,
The rites of our grief and our
gratitude paid,
To our Prince, to our Heroes, devote
the bright treasure,
The wisdom that plann’d, and the
zeal that obey’d
Fill WELLINGTON’s cup till it beam
like his glory,
Forget not our own brave
DALHOUSSIE and GRÆNE;
A thousand years hence hearts shall
bound at their story,
And hallow the goblet that flows
to their fame.

PHAROS LOQUITUR.

[1814.]

Far in the bosom of the deep,
O’er these wild shelves my watch I
keep;
A ruddy gem of changeful light,
Bound on the dusky brow of night,
The seaman bids my lustre hail,
And scorns to strike his timorous
sail.
LYRICAL PIECES.

LINES,
ADDRESSED TO RANALD MACDONALD, ESQ., OF STAFFA.

[1814.]

Staffa, sprung from high Macdonald, Worthy branch of old Clan-Ranald! Staffa! king of all kind fellows! Well befall thy hills and valleys, Lakes and inlets, deeps and shallows— Cliffs of darkness, caves of wonder, Echoing the Atlantic thunder; Mountains which the gray mist covers, Where the Chieftain spirit hovers, Pausing while his pinions quiver, Stretch'd to quit our land for ever! Each kind influence reign above thee! Warmer heart, 'twixt this and Staffa Beats not, than in heart of Staffa!

LETTER IN VERSE.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH,

etc. etc. etc.

Lighthouse Yacht in the Sound of Lerwick, Zetland, 8th August 1814.

Health to the chieftain from his clansman true! From her true minstrel, health to fair Buccleuch! Health from the isles, where dewy Morning weaves Her chaplet with the tints that Twilight leaves; Where late the sun scarce vanish'd from the sight, And his bright pathway graced the short-lived night, Though darker now as autumn's shades extend, The north winds whistle and the mists ascend!

Health from the land where eddying whirlwinds The storm-rock'd cradle of the Cape of Noss; On outstretch'd cords the giddy engine slides, His own strong arm the bold adventurer guides, And he that lists such desperate feat to try, May, like the sea-mew, skim 'twixt surf and sky, And feel the mid-air gales around him blow, And see the billows rage five hundred feet below.

Here, by each stormy peak and desert shore, The hardy islesman tugs the daring oar, Practised alike his venturous course to keep, Through the white breakers or the pathless deep, By ceaseless peril and by toil to gain A wretched pittance from the niggard main. And when the worn-out drudge old ocean leaves, What comfort greets him, and what hut receives? Lady! the worst your presence ere has cheer'd (When want and sorrow fled as you appear'd) Were to a Zetlander as the high dome Of proud Drumlanrig to my humble home. Here rise no groves, and here no gardens blow, Here even the hardy heath scarce dares to grow; But rocks on rocks, in mist and storm array'd, Stretch far to sea their giant colonnade, With many a cavern seam'd, the dreary haunt Of the dun seal and swarthy cormorant.
"Lancer and guard and cuirassier."
Wild round their rifted brows, with frequent cry
As of lament, the gulls and gannets fly,
And from their sable base, with sullen sound,
In sheets of whitening foam the waves rebound.

Yet even these coasts a touch of envy gain
From those whose land has known oppression’s chain;
For here the industrious Dutchman comes once more
To moor his fishing craft by Bressay’s shore;
Greets every former mate and brother tar,
Marvels how Lerwick ’scape the rage of war,
Tells many a tale of Gallic outrage done,
And ends by blessing God and Wellington.
Here too the Greenland tar, a fiercer guest,
Claims a brief hour of riot, not of rest;
Proves each wild frolic that in wine has birth,
And wakes the land with brawls and boisterous mirth.
A sadder sight on yon poor vessel’s prow
The captive Norseman sits in silent woe,
And eyes the flags of Britain as they flow.
Hard fate of war, which bade her terrors sway
His destined course, and seize so mean a prey;
A bark with planks so warp’d and seams so riven,
She scarce might face the gentlest airs of heaven:
Pensive he sits, and questions oft if none
Can list his speech, and understand his moan;
In vain—no Islesman now can use the tongue
Of the bold Norse, from whom their lineage sprung.
Not thus of old the Norsemen hither came,
Won by the love of danger or of fame;
On every storm-beat cape a shapeless tower
Tells of their wars, their conquests, and their power;
For ne’er for Grecia’s vales, nor Latian land,
Was fiercer strife than for this barren strand;
A race severe—the isle and ocean lords,
Loved for its own delight the strife of swords;
With scornful laugh the mortal pang defied,
And blest their gods that they in battle died.

Such were the sires of Zetland’s simple race,
And still the eye may faint resemblance trace
In the blue eye, tall form, proportion fair,
The limbs athletic, and the long light hair—
(Such was the mien, as Scald and Minstrel sings,
Of fair-hair’d Harold, first of Norway’s Kings;)
But their high deeds to scale these crags confined,
Their only warfare is with waves and wind.

Why should I talk of Mousa’s castled coast?
Why of the horrors of the Sumburgh Rost?
May not these bald disjointed lines suffice,
Penn’d while my comrades whirl the rattling dice—
While down the cabin skylight lessening shine
LYRICAL PIECES.

The rays, and eve is chased with mirth and wine?
Imagined, while down Mousa's desert bay
Our well-trimm'd vessel urged her nimble way,
While to the freshening breeze she lean'd her side,
And bade her bowsprit kiss the foamy tide?

Such are the lays that Zetland Isles supply;
Drench'd with the drizzly spray and dropping sky,
Weary and wet, a sea-sick minstrel I.—W. SCOTT.

POSTSCRIPTUM.

Kirkwall, Orkney, Aug. 13, 1814.

In respect that your Grace has commission'd a Kraken,
You will please be inform'd that they seldom are taken;
It is January two years, the Zetland folks say,
Since they saw the last Kraken in Scalloway bay;
He lay in the offing a fortnight or more,
But the devil a Zetlander put from the shore,
Though bold in the seas of the North to assail
The morse and the sea-horse, the grampus and whale.
If your Grace thinks I'm writing the thing that is not,
You may ask at a namesake of ours, Mr. Scott—
(He's not from our clan, though his merits deserve it,
But springs, I'm inform'd, from the Scotts of Scotstarvet ;)¹
He question'd the folks who beheld it with eyes,
But they differ'd confoundedly as to its size.

¹ The Scotts of Scotstarvet, and other families of the name in Fife and elsewhere, claim no kindred with the great clan of the Border,—and their armorial bearings are different.

For instance, the modest and diffident swore
That it seem'd like the keel of a ship, and no more—
Those of eyesight more clear, or of fancy more high,
Said it rose like an island 'twixt ocean and sky—
But all of the hulk had a steady opinion
That 'twas sure a live subject of Neptune's dominion—
And I think, my Lord Duke, your Grace hardly would wish,
To cumber your house, such a kettle of fish.
Had your order related to night-caps or hose,
Or mittens of worsted, there's plenty of those.
Or would you be pleased but to fancy a whale?
And direct me to send it—by sea or by mail?
The season, I'm told, is nigh over, but still
I could get you one fit for the lake at Bowhill.
Indeed, as to whales, there's no need to be thrifty,
Since one day last fortnight two hundred and fifty,
Pursued by seven Orkney men's boats and no more,
Betwixt Truffness and Luffness were drawn on the shore!
You'll ask if I saw this same wonderful sight;
I own that I did not, but easily might—
For this mighty shoal of leviathans lay
On our lee-beam a mile, in the loop of the bay,
And the islesmen of Sanda were all at the spoil,
And flinching (so term it) the blubber to boil;
(Ye spirits of lavender, drown the reflection
That awakes at the thoughts of this odorous dissection).
Lyrical Pieces.

To see this huge marvel full fain would we go,
But Wilson, the wind, and the current, said no.
We have now got to Kirkwall, and needs I must stare
When I think that in verse I have once call'd it fair;
'Tis a base little borough, both dirty and mean—
There is nothing to hear, and there's nought to be seen,
Save a church, where, of old times, a prelate harangued,
And a palace that's built by an earl that was hang'd.
But, farewell to Kirkwall—aboard we are going,
The anchor's a-peak, and the breezes are blowing;
Our commodore calls all his band to their places,
And 'tis time to release you—good night to your Graces!

The Author of Waverley?

"No, John, I will not own the book—
I won't, you Piccaroon,
When next I try St. Grubby's brook,
The A. of Wa—shall bait the hook—
And flat-fish bite as soon,
As if before them they had got
The worn-out wriggler,
Walter Scott."

Farewell to Mackenzie, Great Earl of the North,
The Lord of Lochcarron, Glenshiel, and Seaforth;
To the Chieftain this morning his course who began,
Launching forth on the billows his bark like a swan.
For a far foreign land he has hoisted his sail,
Farewell to Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail!
O swift be the galley, and hardy her crew,
May her captain be skilful, her mariners true,
In danger undaunted, unwearied by toil,
Though the whirlwind should rise, and the ocean should boil:
On the brave vessel's gunnel I drank his bonail,
And farewell to Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail!
Awake in thy chamber, thou sweet southland gale!
Like the sighs of his people, breathe soft on his sail;
Be prolong'd as regret, that his vassals must know,
Be fair as their faith, and sincere as their woe:
Be so soft, and so fair, and so faithful, sweet gale,
Wafting onward Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail!
Be his pilot experienced, and trusty, and wise,
To measure the seas and to study the skies:
May he hoist all his canvass from streamer to deck,
But O! crowd it higher when wafting him back—
Till the cliffs of Skooroora, and Conan's glad vale,
Shall welcome Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail!

So sung the old Bard, in the grief of his heart,
When he saw his loved Lord from his people depart.
Now mute on thy mountains, O Albyn, are heard
Nor the voice of the song, nor the harp of the bard;
Or its strings are but waked by the stern winter gale,
As they mourn for Mackenzie, last Chief of Kintail.

From the far Southland Border a Minstrel came forth,
And he waited the hour that some Bard of the north
His hand on the harp of the ancient should cast,
And bid its wild numbers mix high with the blast;
But no bard was there left in the land of the Gael,
To lament for Mackenzie, last Chief of Kintail.

And shalt thou then sleep, did the Minstrel exclaim,
Like the son of the lowly, unnoticed by fame?
No, son of Fitzgerald! in accents of woe,
The song thou hast loved o'er thy coffin shall flow,
And teach thy wild mountains to join in the wail
That laments for Mackenzie, last Chief of Kintail.

In vain, the bright course of thy talents to wrong,
Fate deaden'd thine ear and imprison'd thy tongue;
For brighter o'er all her obstructions arose
The glow of the genius they could not oppose;
And who in the land of the Saxon or Gael,
Might match with Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail?

Thy sons rose around thee in light and in love,
All a father could hope, all a friend could approve;
What 'vails it the tale of thy sorrows to tell,—
In the spring-time of youth and of promise they fell!
Of the line of Fitzgerald remains not a male,
To bear the proud name of the Chief of Kintail.

And thou, gentle Dame, who must bear, to thy grief,
For thy clan and thy country the cares of a Chief,
Whom brief rolling moons in six changes have left,
Of thy husband, and father, and brethren bereft,
To thine ear of affection, how sad is the hail;
That salutes thee the Heir of the line of Kintail!

WAR-SONG OF LACHLAN,
HIGH CHIEF OF MACLEAN.

FROM THE GAELIC.

[1815.]

A weary month has wander'd o'er
Since last we parted on the shore;
Heaven! that I saw thee, Love,
Once more,
Safe on that shore again!—
'Twas valiant Lachlan gave the word:
Lachlan, of many a galley lord:
He call'd his kindred bands on board,
And launch'd them on the main.
Clan-Gillian is to ocean gone
Clan-Gillian, fierce in foray known;
Rejoicing in the glory won
In many a bloody broil:
For wide is heard the thundering fray,
The rout, the ruin, the dismay,
When from the twilight glens away
Clan-Gillian drives the spoil.

Woe to the hills that shall rebound
Our banner'd bag-pipes' maddening sound;
Clan-Gillian's onset echoing round,
Shall shake their inmost cell.
Woe to the bark whose crew shall gaze,
Where Lachlan's silken streamer plays!
The fools might face the lightning's blaze
As wisely and as well!

SAINT CLOUD.

[Paris, 5th September, 1815.]

Soft spread the southern summer night
Her veil of darksome blue;
Ten thousand stars combined to light
The terrace of Saint Cloud.

The evening breezes gently sigh'd,
Like breath of lover true,
Bewailing the deserted pride
And wreck of sweet Saint Cloud.

The drum's deep roll was heard afar,
The bugle wildly blew
Good-night to Hulan and Hussar,
That garrison Saint Cloud.

The startled Naiads from the shade
With broken urns withdrew,
And silenced was that proud cascade,
The glory of Saint Cloud.

We sate upon its steps of stone,
Nor could its silence rue,
When waked, to music of our own,
The echoes of Saint Cloud.

Slow Seine might hear each lovely note
Fall light as summer dew,
While through the moonless air they float,
Prolong'd from fair Saint Cloud.

And sure a melody more sweet
His waters never knew,
Though music's self was wont to meet
With Princes at Saint Cloud.

Nor then, with more delighted ear,
The circle round her drew,
Than ours, when gather'd round to hear
Our songstress at Saint Cloud.

Few happy hours poor mortals pass,—
Then give those hours their due,
And rank among the foremost class
Our evenings at Saint Cloud.

THE DANCE OF DEATH.

[1815.]

I.

Night and morning were at meeting
Over Waterloo;
Cocks had sung their earliest greeting;
Faint and low they crew,
For no paly beam yet shone
On the heights of Mount Saint John;
Tempest-clouds prolong'd the sway
Of timeless darkness over day;
Whirlwind, thunder-clap, and shower,
Mark'd it a predestined hour.
Broad and frequent through the night
Flash'd the sheets of Levin-light;
Muskets, glancing lightning's back,
Show'd the dreary bivouac
Where the soldier lay,
Chill and stiff, and drench'd with rain,
Wishing dawn of morn again,
Though death should come with day.
II.

'Tis at such a tide and hour,
Wizard, witch, and fiend have power,
And ghastly forms through mist and shower
Gleam on the gifted ken;
And then the affrighted prophet's ear
Drinks whispers strange of fate and fear
Presaging death and ruin near
Among the sons of men;—
Apart from Albyn's war-array,
'Twas then gray Allan sleepless lay;
Gray Allan, who, for many a day,
Had follow'd stout and stern,
Where, through battle's rout and reel,
Storm of shot and hedge of steel,
Led the grandson of Lochiel,
Valiant Fassiefern.
Through steel and shot he leads no more.
Low laid 'mid friends' and foemen's gore—
But long his native lake's wild shore,
And Sunart rough, and high Ardgover,
And Morven long shall tell,
And proud Bennevis hear with awe,
How, upon bloody Quatre-Bras,
Brave Cameron heard the wild hurra
Of conquest as he fell.

III.

'Loné on the outskirts of the host,
The weary sentinel held post,
And heard, through darkness far aloof,
The frequent clang of courser's hoof,
Where held the cloak'd patrol their course,
And spurr'd 'gainst storm the swerving horse.
But there are sounds in Allan's ear,
Patrol nor sentinel may hear,
And sights before his eye aghast
Invisible to them have pass'd,
When down the destined plain,
'Twixt Britain and the bands of France,
Wild as marsh-borne meteor's glance,
Strange phantoms wheel'd a revel dance,
And doom'd the future slain.—
Such forms were seen, such sounds were heard
When Scotland's James his march prepared
For Flodden's fatal plain;
Such, when he drew his ruthless sword,
As Choosers of the Slain, adored
The yet unchristen'd Dane.
An indistinct and phantom band,
They wheel'd their ring-dance hand in hand,
With gestures wild and dread;
The Seer, who watch'd them ride the storm,
Saw through their faint and shadowy form
The lightning's flash more red;
And still their ghastly roundelay Was of the coming battle-fray,
And of the destined dead.

IV.

Song.

"Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Our airy feet,
So light and fleet,
They do not bend the rye
That sinks its head when whirlwinds rave,
And swells again in eddying wave,
As each wild gust blows by;
But still the corn,
At dawn of morn,
Our fatal steps that bore,
At eve lies waste,
A trampled paste
Of blackening mud and gore."
LYRICAL PIECES.

V.
"Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Wheel the wild dance!
Brave sons of France,
For you our ring makes room;
Make space full wide
For martial pride,
For banner, spear, and plume.
Approach, draw near,
Proud cuirassier!
Room for the men of steel!
Through crest and plate
The broadsword's weight
Both head and heart shall feel.

VI.
"Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Sons of the spear!
You feel us near
In many a ghastly dream;
With fancy's eye
Our forms you spy,
And hear our fatal scream.
With clearer sight
Ere falls the night,
Just when to weal or woe
Your disembodied souls take flight
On trembling wing—each startled sprite
Our choir of death shall know.

VII.
"Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

Burst, ye clouds, in tempest showers,
Redder rain shall soon be ours—
See the east grows wan—
Yield we place to sterner game,
Ere deadlier bolts and direr flame
Shall the welkin's thunders shame
Elemental rage is tame
To the wrath of man."

VIII.
At morn, gray Allan's mates with awe
Heard of the vision'd sights he saw,
The legend heard him say;
But the Seer's gifted eye was dim,
Deafen'd his ear, and stark his limb,
Ere closed that bloody day—
He sleeps far from his Highland heath,—
But often of the Dance of Death
His comrades tell the tale,
On picquet-post, when ebbs the night,
And waning watch-fires glow less bright,
And dawn is glimmering pale.

ROMANCE OF DUNOIS.
FROM THE FRENCH OF HORTENSE BEAUCHARRAIS, EX-QUEEN OF HOLLAND.

[1815.]
It was Dunois, the young and brave,
was bound for Palestine,
But first he made his orisons before
St. Mary's shrine:
"And grant, immortal Queen of Heaven," was still the Soldier's prayer,
"That I may prove the bravest knight, and love the fairest fair."

His oath of honour on the shrine he graved it with his sword,
And follow'd to the Holy Land the banner of his Lord;
Where, faithful to his noble vow, his war-cry fill'd the air,
"Be honour'd aye the bravest knight, beloved the fairest fair."
LYRICAL PIECES.

They owed the conquest to his arm,
and then his Liege-Lord said,
"The heart that has for honour beat
by bliss must be repaid.—"
My daughter Isabel and thou shall
be a wedded pair,
For thou art bravest of the brave, she
fairest of the fair."

And then they bound the holy knot
before Saint Mary's shrine,
That makes a paradise on earth, if
hearts and hands combine;
And every lord and lady bright, that
were in chapel there,
Cried, "Honour'd be the bravest
knight, beloved the fairest fair!"

THE TROUBADOUR.
FROM THE FRENCH OF HORTENSE BEAUIJHARNAIS.

[1815.]

Glowing with love, on fire for fame,
A Troubadour that hated sorrow,
Beneath his Lady's window came,
And thus he sung his last good-
morrow:
"My arm it is my country's right,
My heart is in my true-love's bower;
Gaily for love and fame to fight
Befits the gallant Troubadour."

And while he march'd with helm on
head
And harp in hand, the descant rung,
As, faithful to his favourite maid,
The minstrel-burden still he sung:
"My arm it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
Resolved for love and fame to fight,
I come, a gallant Troubadour."

Even when the battle-roar was deep,
With dauntless heart he hew'd his
way,
'Mid splintering lance and falchion-
sweep,
And still was heard his warrior-lay:

"My life it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
For love to die, for fame to fight,
Becomes the valiant Troubadour."

Alas! upon the bloody field
He fell beneath the foeman's glaive,
But still reclining on his shield,
Expiring sung the exulting stave:
"My life it is my country's right,
My heart is in my lady's bower;
For love and fame to fall in fight
Becomes the valiant Troubadour."

FROM THE FRENCH.

[1815.]

It chanced that Cupid on a season,
By Fancy urged, resolved to wed,
But could not settle whether Reason
Or Folly should partake his bed.

What does he then?—Upon my life,
'Twas bad example for a deity—
He takes me Reason for a wife,
And Folly for his hours of gaiety.

Though thus he dealt in petty treason,
He loved them both in equal
measure;
Fidelity was born of Reason,
And Folly brought to bed of Pleasure.

SONG.

ON THE LIFTING OF THE BANNER OF
THE HOUSE OF BUCCLEUCH, AT A
GREAT FOOT-BALL MATCH ON
CARTERHAUGH.

[1815.]

From the brown crest of Newark its
summons extending,
Our signal is waving in smoke and
in flame;
And each forester blithe, from his mountain descending,
Bounds light o'er the heather to join in the game.

CHORUS.

*Then up with the Banner, let forest winds fan her,*
*She has blazed over Ettrick eight ages and more;*
*In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,*
*With heart and with hand, like our fathers before.*

When the Southern invader spread waste and disorder,
At the glance of her crescents he paused and withdrew,
For around them were marshall'd the pride of the Border,
The Flowers of the Forest, the Bands of Buccleuch.
*Then up with the Banner, etc.*

A Stripling's weak hand to our revel has borne her,
No mail-glove has grasp'd her, no spearmen surround;
But ere a bold foeman should scathe or should scorn her,
A thousand true hearts would be cold on the ground.
*Then up with the Banner, etc.*

We forget each contention of civil dissension,
And hail, like our brethren, Home, Douglas, and Car:
And Elliot and Pringle in pastime shall mingle,
As welcome in peace as their fathers in war.
*Then up with the Banner, etc.*

Then strip, lads, and to it, though sharp be the weather,
And if, by mischance, you should happen to fall,

There are worse things in life than a tumble on heather,
And life is itself but a game at football.
*Then up with the Banner, etc.*

And when it is over, we'll drink a blithe measure
To each Laird and each Lady that witness'd our fun,
And to every blithe heart that took part in our pleasure,
To the lads that have lost and the lads that have won.
*Then up with the Banner, etc.*

May the Forest still flourish, both Borough and Landward,
From the hall of the Peer to the Herd's ingle-nook;
And huzza! my brave hearts, for Buccleuch and his standard,
For the King and the Country, the Clan, and the Duke!
*Then up with the Banner, let forest winds fan her,*
*She has blazed over Ettrick eight ages and more;*
*In sport we'll attend her, in battle defend her,*
*With heart and with hand, like our fathers before.*

**LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF.**

*[1815.]*

I.

O, hush thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo,
O ho ro, i ri ri, etc.
II.
O, fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,
Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.
   O ho ro, i ri ri, etc.

III.
O, hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come,
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.
   O ho ro, i ri ri, etc.

THE RETURN TO ULSTER.
[1816.]
Once again,—but how changed since my wand’rings began—
I have heard the deep voice of the Lagan and Bann,
And the pines of Clanbrassil resound to the roar
That wearies the echoes of fair Tullamore.
Alas! my poor bosom, and why shouldst thou burn?
With the scenes of my youth can its raptures return?
Can I live the dear life of delusion again,
That flow’d when these echoes first mix’d with my strain?

It was then that around me, though poor and unknown,
High spells of mysterious enchantment were thrown;
The streams were of silver, of diamond the dew,

The land was an Eden, for fancy was new.
I had heard of our bards, and my soul was on fire
At the rush of their verse, and the sweep of their lyre:
To me ’twas not legend, nor tale to the ear,
But a vision of noontide, distinguish’d and clear.

Ultonia’s old heroes awoke at the call,
And renew’d the wild pomp of the chase and the hall;
And the standard of Fion flash’d fierce from on high,
Like a burst of the sun when the tempest is nigh.
It seem’d that the harp of green Erin once more
Could renew all the glories she boasted of yore.—
Yet why at remembrance, fond heart, shouldst thou burn?
They were days of delusion, and cannot return.

But was she, too, a phantom, the Maid who stood by,
And listed my lay, while she turn’d from mine eye?
Was she, too, a vision, just glancing to view,
Then dispersed in the sunbeam, or melted to dew?
Oh! would it had been so,—Oh! would that her eye
Had been but a star-glance that shot through the sky,
And her voice that was moulded to melody’s thrill,
Had been but a zephyr, that sigh’d and was still!

Oh! would it had been so,—not then this poor heart
Had learn’d the sad lesson, to love and to part;
To bear, unassisted, its burthen of care,
While I toil'd for the wealth I had no one to share.
Not then had I said, when life's summer was done,
And the hours of her autumn were fast speeding on,
"Take the fame and the riches ye brought in your train,
And restore me the dream of my spring-tide again."

JOCK OF HAZELDEAN.

[1816.]

"Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa' 
For Jock of Hazeldean.

"Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa' 
For Jock of Hazeldean.

"A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa' 
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She's o'er the Border and awa,
Wi' Jock of Hazeldean.

PIBROCH OF DONALD DHU.

[1816.]

PIBROCH of Donuil Dhu,
PIBROCH of Donuil,
Wake thy wild voice anew,
Summon Clan-Conuil.
Come away, come away,
Hark to the summons!
Come in your war array,
Gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen, and
From mountain so rocky,
The war-pipe and pennon
Are at Inverlocky.
Come every hill-plaid, and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade, and
Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untented the herd,
The flock without shelter;
Leave the corpse uninterr'd,
The bride at the altar;
Leave the deer, leave the steer,
Leave nets and barges:
Come with your fighting gear,
Broadswords and targies.

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended;
Come as the waves come, when
Nayies are stranded:
Faster come, faster come,
Faster and faster,
Chief, vassal, page and groom,
Tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come;
See how they gather!
Wide waves the eagle plume,
Blended with heather.
Cast your plaids, draw your blades,
Forward each man set!
PIBROCH of Donuil Dhu,
Knell for the onset!
NORA'S VOW.

[1816.]

Hear what Highland Nora said,—
"The Earlie's son I will not wed,
Should all the race of nature die,
And none be left but he and I.
For all the gold, for all the gear,
And all the lands both far and near,
That ever valour lost or won,
I would not wed the Earlie's son."—

"A maiden's vows," old Callum spoke,
"Are lightly made and lightly broke;
The heather on the mountain's height
Begins to bloom in purple light;
The frost-wind soon shall sweep away
That lustre deep from glen and brae;
Yet Nora, ere its bloom be gone,
May blithely wed the Earlie's son."—

"The swan," she said, "the lake's clear breast
May barter for the eagle's nest;
The Awe's fierce stream may backward turn,
Ben-Cruaichan fall, and crush Kilchurn;
Our kilted clans, when blood is high,
Before their foes may turn and fly;
But I, were all these marvels done,
Would never wed the Earlie's son."

Still in the water-lily's shade
Her wonted nest the wild-swan made;
Ben-Cruaichan stands as fast as ever,
Still downward foams the Awe's fierce river;
To shun the clash of foeman's steel,
No Highland brogue has turn'd the heel;
But Nora's heart is lost and won,
—She's wedded to the Earlie's son!

MACGREGOR'S GATHERING.

[1816.]

The moon's on the lake, and the mist's on the brae,
And the Clan has a name that is nameless by day;
Then gather, gather, gather,
Grigalach!
Gather, gather, gather, etc.

Our signal for fight, that from monarchs we drew,
Must be heard but by night in our vengeful haloo!
Then haloo, Grigalach! haloo,
Grigalach!
Haloo, haloo, haloo, Grigalach, etc.

Glen Orchy's proud mountains,
Coalchuirn and her towers,
Glenstrae and Glenlyon no longer are ours;
We're landless, landless, landless, Grigalach!
Landless, landless, landless, etc.

But doom'd and devoted by vassal and lord,
MacGregor has still both his heart and his sword!
Then courage, courage, courage, Grigalach!
Courage, courage, courage, etc.

If they rob us of name, and pursue us with beagles,
Give their roofs to the flame, and their flesh to the eagles!
Then vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, Grigalach!
Vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, etc.

While there's leaves in the forest, and foam on the river,
MacGregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever!
Come then, Grigalach, come then, Grigalach.
Come then, come then, come then, etc.

Through the depths of Loch Katrine
the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben-Lomond the galley shall steer,
And the rocks of Craig-Royston like icicles melt,
Ere our wrongs be forgot, or our vengeance unfelt!
Then gather, gather, gather,
Grigalach!
Gather, gather, gather, etc.

VERSEs,

COMPOSED FOR THE OCCASION,
ADAPTED TO HAYDN'S AIR,
"God Save the Emperor Francis,"

AND SUNG BY A SELECT BAND AFTER
THE DINNER GIVEN BY THE LORD
PROVOST OF EDINBURGH TO THE
GRAND-DUKE NICHOLAS OF RUSSIA,
AND HIS SUITE, 19th DECEMBER, 1816.

GOD protect brave Alexander,
Heaven defend the noble Czar,
Mighty Russia's high Commander,
First in Europe's banded war;
For the realms he did deliver
From the tyrant overthrown,
Thou, of every good the Giver,
Grant him long to bless his own!
Bless him, 'mid his land's disaster,
For her rights who battled brave,
Of the land of foemen master,
Bless him who their wrongs forgave.

O'er his just resentment victor,
Victor over Europe's foes,
Late and long supreme director,
Grant in peace his reign may close.
Hail! then, hail! illustrious stranger!
Welcome to our mountain strand;

Mutual interests, hopes, and danger,
Link us with thy native land.
Freemen's force, or false beguiling,
Shall that union ne'er divide,
Hand in hand while peace is smiling,
And in battle side by side.

THE SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS;

OR,

THE QUEST OF SULTAUN SOLIMAUN.

[1817.]

I.
Oh for a glance of that gay Muse's eye,
That lighten'd on Bandello's laughing tale,
And twinkled with a lustre shrewd and sly,
When Giam Battista bade her vision hail!—
Yet fear not, ladies, the naïve detail
Given by the natives of that land canorous;
Italian license loves to leap the pale,
We Britons have the fear of shame before us,
And, if not wise in mirth, at least must be decorous.

II.
In the far eastern clime, no great while since,
Lived Sultaun Solimaun, a mighty prince,
Whose eyes, as oft as they perform'd their round,
Beheld all others fix'd upon the ground;
Whose ears received the same unvaried phrase,
"Sultaun! thy vassal hears, and he obeys!"
LYRICAL PIECES.

All have their tastes—this may the fancy strike
Of such grave folks as pomp and grandeur like:
For me, I love the honest heart and warm
Of Monarch who can amble round his farm,
Or, when the toil of state no more annoys,
In chimney corner seek domestic joys—
I love a prince will bid the bottle pass,
Exchanging with his subjects glance and glass;
In fitting time, can, gayest of the gay,
Keep up the jest, and mingle in the lay—
Such Monarchs best our free-born humours suit,
But Despots must be stately, stern, and mute.

III.

This Solimaun, Serendib had in sway—
And where's Serendib? may some critic say.—
Good lack, mine honest friend, consult the chart,
Scare not my Pegasus before I start!
If Rennell has it not, you'll find, mayhap,
The isle laid down in Captain Sindbad's map,—
Famed mariner! whose merciless narrations
Drove every friend and kinsman out of patience,
Till, fain to find a guest who thought them shorter
He deign'd to tell them over to a porter—
The last edition see, by Long, and Co.,
Rees, Hurst, and Orme, our fathers in the Row.

IV.

Serendib found, deem not my tale a fiction—
This Sultaun, whether lacking contradiction—
(A sort of stimulant which hath its uses,
To raise the spirits and reform the juices,
—Sovereign specific for all sorts of cures
In my wife's practice, and perhaps in yours,)
The Sultaun lacking this same wholesome bitter,
Or cordial smooth for prince's palate fitter—
Or if some Mollah had hag-rid his dreams
With Degial, Ginnistan, and such wild themes
Belonging to the Mollah's subtle craft,
I wot not—but the Sultaun never laugh'd,
Scarce ate or drank, and took a melancholy
That scorn'd all remedy—profane or holy;
In his long list of melancholies, mad,
Or mazed, or dumb, hath Burton none so bad.

V.

Physicians soon arrived, sage, ware, and tried,
As e'er scrawl'd jargon in a darken'd room;
With heedful glance the Sultaun's tongue they eyed,
Peep'd in his bath, and God knows where beside,
And then in solemn accent spoke their doom,
"His majesty is very far from well."
Then each to work with his specific fell:
The Hakim Ibrahim instanter brought
His unguent Mahazzim al Zerdük-kaut,
While Roompot, a practitioner more wily,
Relied on his Munaskif al fillfily.
More and yet more in deep array appear,
And some the front assail, and some the rear;
Their remedies to reinforce and vary,
Came surgeon eke, and eke apothecary;
Till the tired Monarch, though of words grown chary,
Yet dropt, to recompense their fruitless labour,
Some hint about a bowstring or a sabre.
There lack'd, I promise you, no longer speeches
To rid the palace of those learned leeches.

VI.

Then was the council call'd—by their advice,
(They deem'd the matter ticklish all, and nice,
And sought to shift it off from their own shoulders,)
Tartars and couriers in all speed were sent,
To call a sort of Eastern Parliament
Of feudatory chieftains and freeholders—
Such have the Persians at this very day,
My gallant Malcolm calls them couroulai:—
I'm not prepared to show in this slight song
That to Serendib the same forms belong,—
E'en let the learn'd go search, and tell me if I'm wrong.

VII.

The Omrahs, each with hand on scymitar,
Gave, like Sempronius, still their voice for war—

"The sabre of the Sultaun in its sheath
Too long has slept, nor own'd the work of death;
Let the Tambourgi bid his signal rattle,
Bang the loud gong, and raise the shout of battle!
This dreary cloud that dims our sovereign's day,
Shall from his kindled bosom flit away,
When the bold Lootie wheels his courser round,
And the arm'd elephant shall shake the ground,
Each noble pants to own the glorious summons—
And for the charges—Lo! your faithful Commons!"
The Riots who attended in their places
(Serendib language calls a farmer Riot)
Look'd ruefully in one another's faces,
From this oration auguring much disquiet,
Double assessment, forage, and free quarters;
And fearing these as China-men the Tartars,
Or as the whisker'd vermin fear the mousers,
Each fumbled in the pocket of his trowsers.

VIII.

And next came forth the reverend Convocation,
Bald heads, white beards, and many a turban green,
Imaum and Mollah there of every station,
Santon, Fakir, and Calendar were seen.
Their votes were various—some advised a Mosque
With fitting revenues should be erected,
With seemly gardens and with gay Kiosque,
To recreate a band o priests selected;
Others opined that through the realms a dole
Be made to holy men, whose prayers might profit
The Sultaun's weal in body and in soul.
But their long-headed chief, the Sheik Ul-Sofit,
More closely touch'd the point:—
"Thy studious mood," Quoth he, "O Prince! hath thicken'd all thy blood,
And dull'd thy brain with labour beyond measure;
Wherefore relax a space and take thy pleasure,
And toy with beauty, or tell o'er thy treasure;
From all the cares of state, my Liege, enlarge thee,
And leave the burden to thy faithful clergy."

IX.

These counsels sage availed not a whit,
And so the patient (as is not uncommon
Where grave physicians lose their time and wit)
Resolved to take advice of an old woman;
His mother she, a dame who once was beauteous,
And still was called so by each subject duteous.
Now, whether Fatima was witch in earnest,
Or only made believe, I cannot say—
But she profess'd to cure disease the sternest,
By dint of magic amulet or lay;
And, when all other skill in vain was shown,
She deem'd it fitting time to use her own.

X.

"Sympathia magica hath wonders done,"
(Thus did old Fatima bespeak her son,)
"It works upon the fibres and the pores,
And thus, insensibly, our health restores,
And it must help us here.—Thou must endure
The ill, my son, or travel for the cure.
Search land and sea, and get, where'er you can,
The inmost vesture of a happy man,
I mean his shirt, my son; which, taken warm
And fresh from off his back, shall chase your harm,
Bid every current of your veins rejoice,
And your dull heart leap light as shepherd-boy's."
Such was the counsel from his mother came;—
I know not if she had some under-game,
As Doctors have, who bid their patients roam
And live abroad, when sure to die at home;
Or if she thought, that, somehow or another,
Queen-Regent sounded better than Queen-Mother;
But, says the Chronicle (who will go look it,)
That such was her advice—the Sultaun took it.

XI.

All are on board—the Sultaun and his train,
In gilded galley prompt to plough the main.
The old Rais was the first who questioned, "Whither?"
They paused—"Arabia," thought the pensive Prince,
"Was call'd The Happy many ages since—
For Mokha, Rais."—And they came safely thither.
But not in Araby, with all her balm,
Not where Judea weeps beneath her palm,
Not in rich Egypt, not in Nubian waste,
Could there the step of happiness be traced.
One Copt alone profess'd to have seen her smile,
When Bruce his goblet fill'd at infant Nile;
She bless'd the dauntless traveller as he quaff'd,
But vanish'd from him with the ended draught.

XII.
"Enough of turbans," said the weary King,
"These dolimans of ours are not the thing;
Try we the Giaours, these men of coat and cap, I
Incline to think some of them must be happy;
At least, they have as fair a cause as any can,
They drink good wine and keep no Ramazan.
Then northward, ho!"—The vessel cuts the sea,
And fair Italia lies upon her lee.—
But fair Italia, she who once unfurl'd Her eagle banners o'er a conquer'd world,
Long from her throne of domination tumbled,
Lay, by her quondam vassals, sorely humbled;
The Pope himself look'd pensive, pale, and lean,
And was not half the man he once had been.
"While these the priest and those the noble fleeces,
Our poor old boot," they said, "is torn to pieces.
Its tops the vengeful claws of Austria feel,
And the Great Devil is rending toe and heel.
If happiness you seek, to tell you truly,
We think she dwells with one Giovanni Bulli;
A tramontane, a heretic,—the buck,
Possaredio! still has all the luck;
By land or ocean never strikes his flag—
And then—a perfect walking money-bag."
Off set our Prince to seek John Bull's abode,
But first took France—it lay upon the road.

XIII.
Monsieur Baboon, after much late commotion,
Was agitated like a settling ocean,
Quite out of sorts, and could not tell what ail'd him,
Only the glory of his house had fail'd him;
Besides, some tumours on his noodle biding,
Gave indication of a recent hiding.
Our Prince, though Sultauns of such things are heedless,
Thought it a thing indelicate and needless
To ask, if at that moment he was happy.
And Monsieur, seeing that he was comme il faut, a
Loud voice mustered up, for "Vive le Roi!"
Then whisper'd, "Ave you any news of Nappy?"
The Sultaun answer'd him with a cross question,—
"Pray, can you tell me aught of one John Bull,
That dwells somewhere beyond your herring-pool?"
The query seem'd of difficult digestion,
The party shrugg'd, and grinnd, and took his snuff,
And found his whole good-breeding scarce enough.

XIV.

Twitching his visage into as many puckers
As damsels wont to put into their tuckers,
(Ere liberal Fashion damn'd both lace and lawn,
And bade the veil of modesty be drawn,)
Replied the Frenchman, after a brief pause,
"Jean Bool! — I vas not know him —
Yes, I vas — I vas remember dat, von year or two,
I saw him at von place call'd Waterloo —
Ma foi! il s'est tres joliment battu,
Dat is for Englishman, — m'entendez-vous?
But den he had wit him one damn son-gun,
Rogue I no like — dey call him Wellington."
Monsieur's politeness could not hide his fret,
So Solimaun took leave, and cross'd the strait.

XV.

John Bull was in his very worst of moods,
Raving of sterile farms and unsold goods;
His sugar-loaves and bales about he threw,
And on his counter beat the devil's tattoo.
His wars were ended, and the victory won,
But then, 'twas reckoning-day with honest John;
And authors vouch, 'twas still this Worthy's way,
"Never to grumble till he came to pay;"

And then he always thinks, his temper's such,
The work too little, and the pay too much."
Yet, grumbler as he is, so kind and hearty,
That when his mortal foe was on the floor,
And past the power to harm his quiet more,
Poor John had wellnigh wept for Bonaparte!
Such was the wight whom Solimaun salam'd,—
"And who are you," John answer'd, "and be d—d?"

XVI.

"A stranger, come to see the happiest man,—
So, signior, all avouch,— in Frangistan."—
"Happy? my tenants breaking on my hand;
Unstock'd my pasvures, and untill'd my land;
Sugar and rum a drug, and mice and moths
The sole consumers of my good broadcloths—
Happy? — Why, cursed war and racketing tax
Have left us scarcely raiment to our backs."—
"In that case, signior, I may take my leave;
I came to ask a favour—but I grieve"—
"Favour?" said John, and eyed the Sultaun hard,
"It's my belief you come to break the yard!—
But, stay, you look like some poor foreign sinner,—
Take that to buy yourself a shirt and dinner."—
With that he chuck'd a guinea at his head;
But, with due dignity, the Sultaun said,
"Permit me, sir, your bounty to decline;
A shirt indeed I seek, but none of thine.
Signior, I kiss your hands, so fare you well."—
"Kiss and be d—d," quoth John, "and go to hell!"

XVIII.

The Sultaun enter'd, and he made his leg,
And with decorum curtsy'd sister Peg;
(She loved a book, and knew a thing or two,
And guess'd at once with whom she had to do.)
She bade him "Sit into the fire," and took
Her dram, her cake, her kebbuck from the nook;
Ask'd him "about the news from Eastern parts;
And of her absent bairns, puri Highland hearts!
If peace brought down the price of tea and pepper,
And if the nitmugs were grown ony cheaper;—
Were there nae speerings of our Mungo Park—
Ye'll be the gentleman that wants the sark?
If ye wad buy a web o' auld wife's spinnin',
I'll warrant ye it's a weel-wearing linen."

XIX.

Then up got Peg, and round the house 'gan scuttle
In search of goods her customer to nail,
Until the Sultaun strain'd his princely throttle,
And hollo'd.—"Ma'am that is not what I ail,
Pray, are you happy, ma'am, in this snug glen?"—
"Happy?" said Peg; "What for d'ye want to ken?"
Besides, just think upon this by-gane year,
Grain wadna pay the yoking of the pleugh."—
"What say you to the present?"—
"Meal's sae dear,
To mak' their brose my bairns have scarce aneugh."—
"The devil take the shirt," said Solimaun,
"I think my quest will end as it began.—
Farewell, ma'am; nay, no ceremony, I beg"
"Ye'll no be for the linen then?" said Peg.

XX.

Now, for the land of verdant Erin,
The Sultaun's royal bark is steering,
The Emerald Isle, where honest Paddy dwells,
The cousin of John Bull, as story tells.
For a long space had John, with words of thunder,
Hard looks, and harder knocks, kept Paddy under,
Till the poor lad, like boy that's flogg'd unduly,
Had gotten somewhat restive and unruly.
Hard was his lot and lodging, you'll allow,
A wigwam that would hardly serve a sow;
His landlord, and of middle-men two brace,
Had screw'd his rent up to the starving-place;
His garment was a top-coat, and an old one,
His meal was a potato, and a cold one;
But still for fun or frolic, and all that,
In the round world was not the match of Pat.

XXI.

The Sultaun saw him on a holiday,
Which is with Paddy still a jolly day:
When mass is ended, and his load of sins
Confess'd, and Mother Church hath from her binns
Dealt forth a bonus of imputed merit,
Then is Pat's time for fancy, whim, and spirit!

To jest, to sing, to caper fair and free,
And dance as light as leaf upon the tree.
"By Mahomet," said Sultaun Solimaun,
"That ragged fellow is our very man!
Rush in and seize him—do not do him hurt,
But, will he nill he, let me have his shirt."—

XXII.

Shilela their plan was wellnigh after baulking,
(Much less provocation will set it a-walking,)
But the odds that foil'd Hercules foil'd Paddy Whack;
They seized, and they floor'd, and they stripp'd him—Alack!
Up-bubboo! Paddy had not—a shirt to his back!!!
And the King, disappointed, with sorrow and shame,
Went back to Serendib as sad as he came.

MR. KEMBLE'S FAREWELL ADDRESS.

ON TAKING LEAVE OF THE EDINBURGH STAGE.

[1817.]

As the worn war-horse, at the trumpet's sound,
Erects his mane, and neighs, and paws the ground—
Disdains the ease his generous lord assigns,
And longs to rush on the embattled lines,
So I, your plaudits ringing on mine ear,
Can scarce sustain to think our parting near;
To think my scenic hour for ever past,
And that these valued plaudits are my last.
LYRICAL PIECES.

Why should we part, while still some powers remain,
That in your service strive not yet in vain?
Cannot high zeal the strength of youth supply,
And sense of duty fire the fading eye;
And all the wrongs of age remain subdued
Beneath the burning glow of gratitude?
Ah, no! the taper, wearing to its close,
Oft for a space in fitful lustre glows;
But all too soon the transient gleam is past,
It cannot be renew'd, and will not last;
Even duty, zeal, and gratitude, can wage
But short-lived conflict with the fros's of age.
Yes! It were poor, remembering what I was,
To live a pensioner on your applause,
To drain the dregs of your endurance dry,
And take, as alms, the praise I once could buy;
Till every sneering youth around inquires,
"Is this the man who once could please our sires?"
And scorn assumes compassion's doubtful mien,
To warn me off from the encumber'd scene.
This must not be;—and higher duties crave,
Some space between the theatre and the grave,
That, like the Roman in the Capitol,
I may adjust my mantle ere I fall:
My life's brief act in public service flown,
The last, the closing scene, must be my own.

Here, then, adieu! while yet some well-graced parts
May fix an ancient favourite in your hearts,
Not quite to be forgotten, even when
You look on better actors, younger men:
And if your bosoms own this kindly debt
Of old remembrance, how shall mine forget—
O, how forget!—how oft I hither came
In anxious hope, how oft return'd with fame!
How oft around your circle this weak hand
Has waved immortal Shakspeare's magic wand,
Till the full burst of inspiration came,
And I have felt, and you have fann'd the flame!
By mem'ry treasured, while her reign endures,
Those hours must live—and all their charms are yours.

O favour'd Land! renown'd for arts and arms,
For manly talent, and for female charms,
Could this full bosom prompt the sinking line,
What fervent benedictions now were thine!
But my last part is play'd, my knell is rung,
When e'en your praise falls faltering from my tongue;
And all that you can hear, or I can tell,
Is—Friends and Patrons, hail, and fare you well.

LINES.

WRITTEN FOR MISS SMITH.

[1817.]

When the lone pilgrim views afar
The shrine that is his guiding star,
With awe his footsteps print the road
Which the loved saint of yore has trod.
As near he draws, and yet more near,  
His dim eye sparkles with a tear;  
The Gothic fane's unwonted show,  
The choral hymn, the tapers' glow;  
Oppress his soul; while they delight  
And chasten rapture with affright.  
No longer dare he think his toil  
Can merit aught his patron's smile;  
Too light appears the distant way,  
The chilly eve, the sultry day—  
All these endued no favour claim,  
But murmuring forth the sainted name,  
He lays his little offering down,  
And only deprecates a frown.

We too, who ply the Thespian art,  
Oft feel such bodings of the heart,  
And, when our utmost powers are strain'd,  
Dare hardly hope your favour gain'd.  
She, who from sister climes has sought  
The ancient land where Wallace fought;—  
Land long renown'd for arms and arts,  
And conquering eyes and dauntless hearts;—  
She, as the flutterings here avow,  
Feels all the pilgrim's terrors now;  
Yet sure on Caledonian plain  
The stranger never sued in vain.  
'Tis yours the hospitable task  
To give the applause she dare not ask;  
And they who bid the pilgrim speed,  
The pilgrim's blessing be their meed.

**THE SUN UPON THE WEIRDLAW HILL.**

[1817.]

The sun upon the Weirdlaw Hill,  
In Ettrick's vale, is sinking sweet;  
The westland wind is hush and still,  
The lake lies sleeping at my feet,  
Yet not the landscape to mine eye  
Bears those bright hues that once it bore;  
Though evening, with her richest dye,  
Flames o'er the hills of Ettrick's shore.

With listless look along the plain,  
I see Tweed's silver current glide,  
And coldly mark the holy fane  
Of Melrose rise in ruin'd pride.  
The quiet lake, the balmy air,  
The hill, the stream, the tower, the tree,—  
Are they still such as once they were?  
Or is the dreary change in me?

Alas, the warp'd and broken board,  
How can it bear the painter's dye!  
The harp of strain'd and tuneless chord,  
How to the minstrel's skill reply!  
To aching eyes each landscape lowers,  
To feverish pulse each gale blows chill;  
And Araby's or Eden's bowers  
Were barren as this moorland hill.

**THE MONKS OF BANGOR'S MARCH.**

[1817.]

Ethelfrid or Olfrid, King of Northumberland, having besieged Chester in 613, and Brockmael, a British Prince, advancing to relieve it, the religious of the neighbouring Monastery of Bangor marched in procession, to pray for the success of their countrymen. But the British being totally defeated, the heathen victor put the monks to the sword, and destroyed their monastery. The tune to which these verses are adapted is called the Monks' March, and is supposed to have been played at their ill-omened procession.

When the heathen trumpet's clang  
Round beleaguer'd Chester rang,  
Veiled nun and friar gray  
March'd from Bangor's fair Abbaye;
LYRICAL PIECES.

727

High their holy anthem sounds,
Cestria’s vale the hymn rebounds,
Floating down the silvan Dee,
O miserere, Domine!

On the long procession goes,
Glory round their crosses glows,
And the Virgin-mother mild
In their peaceful banner smiled;
Who could think such saintly band
Doom’d to feel unhallow’d hand?
Such was the Divine decree,
O miserere, Domine!

Bands that masses only sung,
Hands that censers only swung,
Met the northern bow and bill,
Heard the war-cry wild and shrill:
Woe to Brockmael’s feeble hand,
Woe to Olfrid’s bloody brand,
Woe to Saxon cruelty,
O miserere, Domine!

Weltering amid warriors slain,
Spurn’d by steeds with bloody mane,
Slaughter’d down by heathen blade,
Bangor’s peaceful monks are laid:
Word of parting rest unspoke,
Mass unsung, and bread unbroke;
For their souls for charity,
Sing, O miserere, Domine!

Bangor! o’er the murder wail!
Long thy ruins told the tale,
Shatter’d towers and broken arch
Long recall’d the woeful march:
On thy shrine no tapers burn,
Never shall thy priests return;
The pilgrim sighs and sings for thee,
O miserere, Domine!

LETTER.

TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BUC-CLEUCH, DRUMLANRIG CASTLE.

Sanquhar, 2 o’clock, July 30, 1817.

FROM Ross, where the clouds on Benlomond are sleeping—
From Greenock, where Clyde to the Ocean is sweeping—

From Largs, where the Scotch gave the Northmen a drilling—
From Ardrossan, whose harbour cost many a shilling—
From Old Cumnock, where beds are as hard as a plank, sir—
From a chop and green pease, and a chicken in Sanquhar,
This eve, please the Fates, at Drumlanrig we anchor. W. S.

EPILOGUE TO THE

APPEAL.

SPOKEN BY MRS. HENRY SIDDONS.

[Feb. 16, 1818.]

A CAT of yore (or else old Æsop lied)
Was changed into a fair and blooming bride,
But spied a mouse upon her marriage day,
Forgot her spouse, and seized upon her prey;
Even thus my bridegroom lawyer, as you saw,
Threw off poor me, and pounced upon papa.
His neck from Hymen’s mystic knot made loose,
He twisted round my sire’s the literal noose.
Such are the fruits of our dramatic labour,
Since the New Jail became our next-door neighbour.

Yes, times are changed; for, in your fathers’ age,
The lawyers were the patrons of the stage;
However high advanced by future fate,
There stands the bench (points to the Pil) that first received their weight.
The future legal sage, ’twas ours to see,
Doom though unwigg’d, and plead without a fee.
But now, astounding each poor mimic elf,
Instead of lawyers comes the law herself;
Tremendous neighbour, on our right she dwells,
Builds high her towers and excavates her cells;
While on the left she agitates the town,
With the tempestuous question, Up or down?
Twixt Scylla and Charybdis thus stand we,
Law's final end, and law's uncertainty.

But, soft! who lives at Rome the Pope must flatter,
And jails and lawsuits are no jesting matter.
Then—just farewell! We wait with serious awe
Till your applause or censure gives the law.
Trusting our humble efforts may assure ye,
We hold you Court and Counsel, Judge and Jury.

"Farewell the bright clouds that on Quillan are sleeping;
Farewell the bright eyes in the Dun that are weeping;
To each minstrel delusion, farewell!—and for ever—

Mackrimmon departs, to return to you never!
The Banshee's wild voice sings the death-dirge before me,
The pall of the dead for a mantle hangs o'er me;
But my heart shall not flag, and my nerves shall not shiver,
Though devoted I go—to return again never!

"Too oft shall the notes of Mackrimmon's bewailing
Be heard when the Gael on their exile are sailing;
Dear land! to the shores, whence unwilling we sever,
Return—return—return shall we never!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille!
Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille, Cha till, cha till, cha till sin tuille,
Gea thillis Macleod, cha till Mackrimmon!"

DONALD CAIRD'S COME AGAIN.

[1818.]

CHORUS.

Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird can lilt and sing,
Blithely dance the Hieland fling,
Drink till the gudeman be blind,
Fleech till the gudewife be kind;
Hoop a leglin, clout a pan,
Or crack a pow wi' ony man;
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again.
Donald Caird's come again,
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird can wire a maukin,
Kens the wiles o' dun-deer staukin',
Leisters kipper, makes a shift
To shoot a muir-fowl in the drift;
Water-bailiffs, rangers, keepers,
He can wauk when they are sleepers;
Not for bountith or reward
Dare ye mell wi' Donald Caird.

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Gar the bagpipes hum amain,
Donald Caird's come again.

Donald Caird can drink a gill
Fast as hostler-wife can fill;
Ilka ane that sells gude liquor
Kens how Donald bends a bicker;
When he's fou he's stout and saucy,
Keeps the cantle o' the cawsey;
Hieland chief and Lawland laird
Maun gie room to Donald Caird!

Steek the amrie, lock the kist,
Else some gear may weel be mis't;
Donald Caird finds orra things
Where Allan Gregor fand the tings;
Dunts of kebbuck, taits o' woo,
Whiles a hen and whiles a sow,
Webs or duds frae hedge or yard—
'Ware the wuddie, Donald Caird!

Rings of airn, and bolts of steel,
Fell like ice frae hand and heel,
Watch the sheep in fauld and glen,
Donald Caird's come again!

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Dinna let the Justice ken,
Donald Caird's come again!

EPITAPH ON MRS. ERSKINE.
[1819.]

Plain, as her native dignity of mind,
Arise the tomb of her we have resign'd;
Unflaw'd and stainless be the marble scroll,
Emblem of lovely form and candid soul.—
But, oh! what symbol may avail, to tell
The kindness, wit, and sense, we loved so well!
What sculpture show the broken ties of life,
Here buried with the parent, friend, and wife!
Or on the tablet stamp each title dear,
By which thineurn, Euphemia, claims the tear!
Yet taught, by thy meek sufferance, to assume
Patience in anguish, hope beyond the tomb,
Resign'd, though sad, this votive verse shall flow,
And brief, alas! as thy brief span below.

ON ETTRICK FOREST'S MOUNTAINS DUN.
[1822.]

On Donald Caird the doom was stern,
Craig to tether, legs to airn;
But Donald Caird, wi' nickle study,
Caught the gift to cheat the wuddie;

On Ettrick Forest's mountains dun,
'Tis blithe to hear the sportsman's gun,
And seek the heath-frequenting brood
Far through the noonday solitude;
By many a cairn and trenched mound,
Where chiefs of yore sleep lone and sound,
And springs, where gray-hair'd shepherds tell,
That still the fairies love to dwell.

Along the silver streams of Tweed,
'Tis blithe the mimic fly to lead,
When to the hook the salmon springs,
And the line whistles through the rings;
The boiling eddy see him try,
Then dashing from the current high,
Till watchful eye and cautious hand
Have led his wasted strength to land.

'Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide;
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genii, arm'd with fiery spears.

'Tis blithe at eve to tell the tale,
How we succeed, and how we fail,
Whether at Alywn's lordly meal,
Or lowlier board at Ashestiel;
While the gay tapers cheerily shine,
Bickers the fire, and flows the wine—
Days free from thought, and nights from care,
My blessing on the Forest fair!

Farewell, and take with thee thy numbers wild speaking
The language alternate of rapture and woe:
Oh! none but some lover, whose heart-strings are breaking,
The pang that I feel at our parting can know.

Each joy thou couldst double, and when there came sorrow,
Or pale disappointment to darken my way,
What voice was like thine, that could sing of to-morrow,
Till forgot in the strain was the grief of to-day!
But when friends drop around us in life's weary waning,
The grief, Queen of Numbers, thou canst not assuage;
Nor the gradual estrangement of those yet remaining,
The languor of pain, and the chillness of age.

'Twas thou that once taught me, in accents bewailing,
To sing how a warrior lay stretch'd on the plain,
And a maiden hung o'er him with aid unavailing,
And held to his lips the cold goblet in vain;
As vain thy enchantments, O Queen of wild Numbers,
To a bard when the reign of his fancy is o'er,
And the quick pulse of feeling in apathy slumbers—
Farewell, then, Enchantress! I meet thee no more!

FAREWELL TO THE MUSE.

[1822.]

ENCHANTRESS, farewell, who so oft has decoy'd me,
At the close of the evening through woodlands to roam,
Where the forester, lated, with wonder espied me,
Explore the wild scenes he was quitting for home.

THE MAID OF ISLA.

[1822.]

Ou, Maid of Isla, from the cliff,
That looks on troubled wave and sky,
Dost thou not see yon little skiff
Contend with ocean gallantly?
Now beating 'gainst the breeze and surge,
And steep'd her leeward deck in foam,
Why does she war unequal urge?—
Oh, Isla's maid, she seeks her home.

Oh, Isla's maid, yon sea-bird mark,
Her white wing gleams through mist and spray,
Against the storm-cloud, lowering dark,
As to the rock she wheels away;—
Where clouds are dark and billows rave,
Why to the shelter should she come
Of cliff, exposed to wind and wave?—
Oh, maid of Isla, 'tis her home!

As breeze and tide to yonder skiff,
Thou'rt adverse to the suit 1 bring,
And cold as is yon wintry cliff,
Where sea-birds close their wearied wing.
Yet cold as rock, unkind as wave,
Still, Isla's maid, to thee I come;
For in thy love, or in his grave,
Must Allan Vourich find his home.

CARLE, NOW THE KING'S COME.

BEING NEW WORDS TO AN AULD SPRING.

[1822.]

The news has flown frae mouth to mouth,
The North for ance has bang'd the South;
The deil a Scotsman's die o' drouth,
Carle, now the King's come!

CHORUS.
Carle, now the King's come!
Carle, now the King's come!
Thou shalt dance, and I will sing,
Carle, now the King's come!

Auld England held him lang and fast;
And Ireland had a joyfu' cast;
But Scotland's turn is come at last—
Carle, now the King's come!

Auld Reekie, in her rokelay gray,
Thought never to have seen the day;
He's been a weary time away—
But, Carle, now the King's come!

She's skirling frae the Castle-hill;
The Carline's voice is grown sae shrill,
Ye'll hear her at the Canon-mill—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Up, bairns!" she cries, "baith grit and sma',
And busk ye for the weapon-shaw!
Stand by me, and we'll bang them a'—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come from Newbattle's ancient spires,
Bauld Lothian, with your knights and squires,
And match the mettle of your sires—
Carle, now the King's come!

"You're welcome hame, my Montagu!
Bring in your hand the young Buccleuch;
I'm missing some that I may rue—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, Haddington, the kind and gay,
You've graced my causeway mony a day;
I'll weep the cause if you should stay—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, premier Duke, and carry doun
Frac yonder craig his ancient croun;
It's had a lang sleep and a soun'—
But, Carle, now the King's come!
LYRICAL PIECES.

"Come, Athole, from the hill and wood,
Bring down your clansmen like a clud;
Come, Morton, show the Douglas' blood,—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, Tweeddale, true as sword to sheath;
Come, Hopetoun, fear'd on fields of death;
Come, Clerk, and give your bugle breath;
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, Wemyss, who modest merit aids;
Come, Rosebery, from Dalmeny shades;
Breadalbane, bring your belted plaid;
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come, stately Niddrie, auld and true,
Girt with the sword that Minden knew;
We have ower few such lairds as you—
Carle, now the King's come!

"King Arthur's grown a common crier,
He's heard in Fife and far Cantire,—
'T fie, lads, behold my crest of fire!'
Carle, now the King's come!

"Saint Abb roars out, 'I see him pass,
Between Tantallon and the Bass!'
Calton, get out your keeking-glass—
Carle, now the King's come!"

The Carline stopp'd; and, sure I am,
For very glee had ta'en a dram
But Oman help'd her to a dram.—
Cogie, now the King's come!

Cogie, now the King's come!
Cogie, now the King's come!
I'se be fou' and ye's be toom,
Cogie, now the King's come!

PART SECOND.

A Hawick gill of mountain dew,
Heised up Auld Reekie's heart, I trow,
It minded her of Waterloo—
Carle, now the King's come!

Again I heard her summons swell,
For, sic a dirdum and a yell,
It drown'd Saint Giles's jowing bell—
Carle, now the King's come!

"My trusty Provost, tried and tight,
Stand forward for the Good Town's right,
There's waur than you been made a knight—
Carle, now the King's come!

"My reverend Clergy, look ye say
The best of thanksgivings ye ha'e,
And warstle for a sunny day—
Carle, now the King's come!

"My Doctors, look that you agree,
Cure a' the town without a fee;
My Lawyers, dinna pike a plea—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come forth each sturdy Burgher's bairn,
That dints on wood or clanks on aird,
That fires the o'en, or winds the pirn—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Come forward with the Blanket Blue,
Your sires were loyal men and true,
As Scotland's foemen oft might rue—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Scot's downna loup, and rin, and rave,
We're steady folks and something grave,
We'll keep the causeway firm and brave—
Carle, now the King's come!
"Sir Thomas, thunder from your rock,
Till Pentland dinnae wi' the shock,
And lace wi' fire my snood o' smoke—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Melville, bring out your bands of blue,
A' Louden lads, baith stout and true,
With Elcho, Hope, and Cockburn, too—
Carle, now the King's come!

"And you, who on your bluidy braes
Compell'd the vanquish'd Despot's praise,
Rank out—rank out—my gallant Greys—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Cock o' the North, my Huntly bra',
Where are you with the Forty-twa?
Ah! wae's my heart that ye're awa'—
Carle, now the King's come!

"But yonder come my canty Celts,
With dark and pistols at their belts,
Thank God, we've still some plaids and kilts—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Lord, how the pibrochs groan and yell!
Macdondell's ta'en the field himself,
Macleod comes braniking o'er the fell—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Bend up your bow each Archer spark,
For you're to guard him light and dark;
Faith, lads, for ance ye've hit the mark—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Young Errol, take the sword of state,
The sceptre, Panie-Morarchate; Knight Mareschal, see ye clear the gate—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Kind cummer, Leith, ye've been mis-set,
But dinna be upon the fret—
Ye'se hae the handsel of him yet,
Carle, now the King's come!

"My daughters, come with een sae blue,
Your garlands weave, your blossoms strew;
He ne'er saw fairer flowers than you—
Carle, now the King's come!

"What shall we do for the propine—
We used to offer something fine,
But ne'er a groat's in pouch of mine—
Carle, now the King's come!

"Deil care—for that I se never start,
We'll welcome him with Highland heart;
Whate'er we have he's get a part—
Carle, now the King's come!

"I'll show him mason-work this day—
Nane of your bricks of Babel clay,
But towers shall stand till Time's away—
Carle, now the King's come!

"I'll show him wit, I'll show him lair,
And gallant lads and lassies fair,
And what wad kind heart wish for mair?
Carle, now the King's come!

"Step out, Sir John, of projects rife,
Come win the thanks of an auld wife,
And bring him health and length of life—
Carle, now the King's come!"

ONE VOLUME MORE.

WRITTEN FOR THE BANNATYNE CLUB.

[1823.]

I.

Assist me, ye friends of Old Books
and Old Wine,
To sing in the praises of Sage Bannatyne,
LYRICAL PIECES.

Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore
As enables each age to print one volume more.
One volume more, my friends, one volume more,
We'll ransack old Banny for one volume more.

II.
And first, Allan Ramsay, was eager to glean
From Bannatyne's Hortus his bright Evergreen;
Two light little volumes (intended for four)
Still leave us the task to print one volume more.
One volume more, etc.

III.
His ways were not ours, for he cared not a pin
How much he left out, or how much he put in;
The truth of the reading he thought was a bore,
So this accurate age calls for one volume more.
One volume more, etc.

IV.
Correct and sagacious, then came my Lord Hailes,
And weigh'd every letter in critical scales,
But left out some brief words, which the prudish abhor,
And castrated Banny in one volume more.
One volume more, my friends, one volume more;
We'll restore Banny's manhood in one volume more.

V.
John Pinkerton next, and I'm truly concern'd
I can't call that worthy so candid as learn'd;
He rail'd at the plaid and blasphemed the claymore,
And set Scots by the ears in his one volume more.
One volume more, my friends, one volume more,
Celt and Goth shall be pleased with one volume more.

VI.
As bitter as gall, and as sharp as a razor,
And feeding on herbs as a Nebuchadnezzar
His diet too acid, his temper too sour,
Little Ritson came out with his two volumes more.
But one volume, my friends, one volume more,
We'll dine on roast-beef and print one volume more.

VII.
The stout Gothic yeditur, next on the roll,
With his beard like a brush and as black as a coal;
And honest Greysteel that was true to the core,
Lent their hearts and their hands each to one volume more.
One volume more, etc.

VIII.
Since by these single champions what wonders were done,
What may not be achieved by our Thirty and One?
Law, Gospel, and Commerce, we count in our corps,
And the Trade and the Press join for one volume more.
One volume more, etc.

IX.
Ancient libels and contraband books, I assure ye,
We'll print as secure from Exchequer or Jury;
Then hear your Committee and let them count o'er
The Chieft they intend in their three volumes more.
Three volumes more, etc.

X.

They'll produce you King Jamie, the sapient and Sext
And the Rob of Dumblane and her Bishops come next
One tome miscellaneous they'll add to your store,
Resolving next year to print four volumes more.
Four volumes more, my friends, four volumes more;
Pay down your subscriptions for four volumes more.

TO J. C. LOCKHART, ESQ.

ON THE COMPOSITION OF MAIDA'S EPITAPH.

[1824.]

Maidæ Marmorea dormis sub imagine Maida!
Ad januam domini sit tibi terra levis."

"DEAR JOHN,—I some time ago wrote to inform his
Fat worship of jaces, misprinted for dormis;
But that several Southrons assured me the januam
Was a twitch to both ears of Ass Priscian's cranium.
You, perhaps, may observe that one Lionel Berguer,
In defence of our blunder appears a stout arguer:
But at length I have settled, I hope, all these clatters,
By a rout in the papers—fine place for such matters.
I have, therefore, to make it for once my command, sir,
That my gudeson shall leave the whole thing in my hand, sir,
And by no means accomplish what James says you threaten,
Some banter in Blackwood to claim your dog-Latin.
I have various reasons of weight, on my word, sir,
For pronouncing a step of this sort were absurd, sir.—
Firstly, erudite sir, 'twas against your advising
I adopted the lines this monstrosity lies in;
For you modestly hinted my English translation
Would become better far such a dignified station.
Second—how, in God's name, would my bacon be saved,
By not having writ what I clearly engraved?
On the contrary, I, on the whole, think it better
To be whipped as the thief, than his lousy resetter.
Thirdly—don't you perceive that I don't care a boddle
Although fifty false metres were flung at my noddle,
For my back is as broad and as hard as Benlomon's,
And I treat as I please both the Greeks and the Romans;
Whereas the said heathens might rather look serious
At a kick on their drum from the scribe of Valerius.
And, fourthly and lastly—it is my good pleasure
To remain the sole source of that murderous measure.
So stet pro ratione voluntas—be tractile,
Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl;
If you do, you'll occasion a breach in our intercourse
To-morrow will see me in town for the winter-course,
But not at your door, at the usual hour, sir,
My own pye-house daughter's good prog to devour, sir.
EPILOGUE

TO THE DRAMA FOUNDED ON "ST. RONAN'S WELL."

[1824.]

Enter Meg Dodds, encircled by a crowd of unruly boys, whom a town's officer is driving off.

That's right, friend—drive the gaitlings back,
And lend you muckle ane a whack;
Your Embro' bairns are grown a pack,
   Sae proud and saucy,
They scarce will let an auld wife walk
   Upon your causey.

I've seen the day they would been saur'd,
    Wi' the Tolbooth, or wi' the Guard,
Or maybe wud hae some regard
   For Jamie Laing—
The Water-hole was right weel wared
   On sic a gang.

But what's the gude Tolbooth gane now?
    Whar's the auld Claught, wi' red and blue?
What's Jamie Laing? and what's John Doo?
   And whar's the Weigh-house?
Deil hae't I see but what is new,
   Except the Playhouse!

Yoursells are changed frae head to heel,
There's some that gar the causeway reel
Their leaders fallin', their standards lost
With clashing hufe and rattling wheel,
And horses canterin',
Wha's fathers dauner'd hame as weel
Wi' lass and lantern.

Myself being in the public line,
I look for hows I kenn'd lang syne,
Whar gentles used to drink gude wine,
And eat cheap dinners;
But deil a soul gangs there to dine,
Of saints or sinners!

Fortune's and Hunter's gane, alas!
And Bayle's is lost in empty space;
And now if folk would splice a brace,
Or crack a bottle,
They gang to a new-fangled place
'They ca' a Hottle.

The deevil hottle them for Meg!
They are sae greedy and sae gleg,
That if ye're serv'd but wi' an egg,
(And that's puir pickin',)
In comes a chiel and makes a leg,
And charges chicken!

"And wha may ye be," gin ye speer,
"That brings your auld-warld clavers here?"

Truth, if there's onybody near
That kens the roads,
I'll haud ye Burgundy to beer,
He kens Meg Dodds.

I came a piece frae west o' Currie;
And, since I see you're in a hurry,
Your patience I'll nae langer worry,
But be sae crouse
As speak a word for ane Will Murray,
That keeps this house.

Plays are auld-fashion'd things, in truth,
And ye've seen wonders mair uncouth;
Yet actors shouldn'a suffer drouth,
Or want of dramock,
Although they speak but wi' their mouth,
Not with their stamock

But ye tak care of a' folk's pantry;
And surely to hae stooden sentry
Ower this big house, (that's far frae rent-free,)
For a lone sister,
Is claims as gude's to be a ventri—
How'st ca'd—loquier.

Wool, sirs, gude'en, and have a care,
The bairns mak fun o' Meg nae mair;
For gin they do, she tells you fair,
And without failzie,
As sure as ever ye sit there,
She'll tell the Bailie.

EPILOGUE.

[1824.]

The sages—for authority, pray look
Seneca's morals, or the copy-book—
The sages to disparage woman's power,
Say, beauty is a fair, but fading flower;—
I cannot tell—I've small philosophy—
Yet, if it fades, it does not surely die,
But, like the violet, when decay'd in bloom,
Survives through many a year in rich perfume.
Witness our theme to-night, two ages gone,
A third wanes fast, since Mary fill'd the throne.
Brief was her bloom, with scarce one sunny day,
'Twixt Pinkie's field and fatal Fother-ingay:
But when, while Scottish hearts and blood you boast,
Shall sympathy with Mary's woes be lost?
O'er Mary's mem'ry the learn'd quarrel,
By Mary's grave the poet plants his laurel,
Time's echo, old tradition, makes her name.
The constant burden of his fault'ring theme;
LYRICAL PIECES.

In each old hall his gray-hair'd heralds tell
Of Mary's picture, and of Mary's cell,
And show—my fingers tingle at the thought—
The loads of tapestry which that poor Queen wrought,
In vain did fate bestow a double dower
Of ev'ry ill that waits on rank and pow'r,
Of ev'ry ill on beauty that attends—
False ministers, false lovers, and false friends.
Spite of three wedlocks so completely curst,
They rose in ill from bad to worse, and worst,
In spite of errors—I dare not say more,
For Duncan Targe lays hand on his claymore.
In spite of all, however, humours vary,
There is a talisman in that word Mary,
That unto Scottish bosoms all and some
Is found the genuine open sesamum!
In history, ballad, poetry, or novel,
It charms alike the castle and the hovel,
Even you—forgive me—who, demure and shy,
Gorge not each bait, nor stir at every fly,
Must rise to this, else in her ancient reign
The Rose of Scotland has survived in vain.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON.

[June, 1825.]

When with Poetry dealing
Room enough in a shieling:
Neither cabin nor hovel
Too small for a novel:

Though my back I should rub
On Diogenes' tub,
How my fancy could prance
In a dance of romance!
But my house I must swap
With some Brobdignag chap,
Ere I grapple, God bless me! with Emperor Nap.

LINES TO SIR CUTHBERT SHARP.

[1827.]

Forget thee? No! my worthy fere!
Forget blithe mirth and gallant cheer!
Death sooner stretch me on my bier!
Forget thee? No.

Forget the universal shout
When "canny Sunderland" spoke out—
A truth which knaves affect to doubt—
Forget thee? No.

Forget you? No—though now-a-day
I've heard your knowing people say,
Disown the debt you cannot pay,
You'll find it far the thriftiest way—
But I?—O no.

Forget your kindness found for all room,
In what, though large, seem'd still a small room
Forget my Surtees in a ball-room—
Forget you? No.

Forget your sprightly dumpty-diddles,
And beauty tripping to the fiddles,
Forget my lovely friends the Liddells—
Forget you? No.
THE DEATH OF KEELDAR.

[1828.]

Percy or Percival Rede of Trochend, in Redesdale, Northumberland, is celebrated in tradition as a huntsman, and a soldier. He was, upon two occasions, singularly unfortunate; once, when an arrow, which he had discharged at a deer, killed his celebrated dog Keeldar; and again, when, being on a hunting party, he was betrayed into the hands of a clan called Crossar, by whom he was murdered. Mr. Cooper's painting of the first of these incidents, suggested the following stanzas.

Up rose the sun, o'er moor and mead;
Up with the sun rose Percy Rede;
Brave Keeldar, from his couples freed,
Career'd along the lea;
The Palfrey sprung with sprightly bound,
As if to match the gamesome hound;
His horn the gallant huntsman wound:
They were a jovial three!

Man, hound, or horse, of higher fame,
To wake the wild deer never came,
Since Alnwick's Earl pursued the game
On Cheviot's rueful day;
Keeldar was matchless in his speed,
Than Tarras, ne'er was stancher steed,
A peerless archer, Percy Rede:
And right dear friends were they.

The chase engross'd their joys and woes,
Together at the dawn they rose,
Together shared the noon's repose,
By fountain or by stream;
And oft, when evening skies were red,
The heather was their common bed,
Where each, as wildering fancy led,
Still hunted in his dream.

Now is the thrilling moment near,
Of sylvan hope and sylvan fear,
You thicket holds the harbour'd deer,
The signs the hunters know;—
With eyes of flame, and quivering ears,
The brake sagacious Keeldar nears;
The restless palfrey paws and rears;
The archer strings his bow.

The game's afoot!—Halloo! Halloo!
Hunter, and horse, and hound pursue;—
But woe the shaft that erring flew—
That e'er it left the string!
And ill betide the faithless yew!
The stag bounds scathless o'er the dew,
And gallant Keeldar's life-blood true
Has drench'd the gray-goose wing.

The noble hound—he dies, he dies,
Death, death has glazed his fixed eyes,
Stiff on the bloody heath he lies,
Without a groan or quiver.
Now day may break and bugle sound,
And whoop and hollow ring around,
And o'er his couch the stag may bound,
But Keeldar sleeps for ever.

Dilated nostrils, staring eyes,
Mark the poor palfrey's mute surprise,
He knows not that his comrade dies,
Nor what is death—but still
His aspect hath expression drear
Of grief and wonder, mix'd with fear,
Like startled children when they hear
Some mystic tale of ill.

But he that bent the fatal bow,
Can well the sum of evil know,
And o'er his favourite, bending low,
In speechless grief recline;
Can think he hears the senseless clay,
In unreprouachable accents say,
"The hand that took my life away,
Dear master, was it thine?

"And if it be, the shaft be bless'd,
Which sure some erring aim address'd,
Since in your service prized, caress'd
I in your service die;
And you may have a fleeter hound,
To match the dun-deer's merry bound,
But by your couch will ne'er be found
So true a guard as I."

And to his last stout Percy rued
The fatal chance, for when he stood
'Gainst fearful odds in deadly feud,
And fell amid the fray,
E'en with his dying voice he cried,
"Had Keeldar but been at my side.
Your treacherous ambush had been spied—
I had not died to-day!"

Remembrance of the erring bow
Long since had join'd the tides which flow,
Conveying human bliss and woe
Down dark oblivion's river;
But Art can Time's stern doom arrest,
And snatch his spoil from Lethe's breast,
And, in her Cooper's colours drest,
The scene shall live for ever.

THE FORAY.

[1830.]

The last of our steers on the board
has been spread,
And the last flask of wine in our goblet is red;
Up! up, my brave kinsmen! belt swords and begone,
There are dangers to dare, and there's spoil to be won

The eyes, that so lately mix'd glances with ours,
For a space must be dim, as they gaze from the towers,
And strive to distinguish through tempest and gloom,
The prance of the steed, and the toss of the plume.

The rain is descending; the wind rises loud;
And the moon her red beacon has veil'd with a cloud;
'Tis the better, my mates! for the warder's dull eye
Shall in confidence slumber, nor dream we are nigh.

Our steeds are impatient! I hear my blithe Grey!
There is life in his hoot-clang, and hope in his neigh;
Like the flash of a meteor, the glance of his mane
Shall marshal your march through the darkness and rain.

The drawbridge has dropp'd, the bugle has blown;
One pledge is to quaff yet—then mount and begone!—
To their honour and peace, that shall rest with the slain;
To their health and their glee, that see Teviot again!

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE MONUMENT OF THE REV.
GEORGE SCOTT.

[1830.]

To youth, to age, alike, this tablet pale
Tells the brief moral of its tragic tale.
Art thou a parent? Reverence this bier,
The parents' fondest hopes lie buried here.
Art thou a youth, prepared on life to start,  
With opening talents and a generous heart,  
Fair hopes and flattering prospects all thine own?  
Lo! here their end—a monumental stone.

But let submission tame each sorrowing thought,  
Heaven crown'd its champion ere the fight was fought.

LINES ON FORTUNE.

[1831.]

"By the advice of Dr. Ebenezer Clarkson, Sir Walter consulted a skilful mechanist, by name Fortune, about a contrivance for the support of the lame limb, which had of late given him much pain, as well as inconvenience. Mr. Fortune produced a clever piece of handiwork, and Sir Walter felt at first great relief from the use of it: insomuch that his spirits rose to quite the old pitch, and his letter to me upon the occasion overflows with merry applications of sundry maxims and verses about Fortune. "Fortes Fortuna adjuvât"—he says—"never more sing I."

Fortune, my Foe, why dost thou frown on me?  
And will my Fortune never better be?  
Wilt thou, I say, for ever breed my pain?  
And wilt thou ne'er return my joys again?

No—let my ditty be henceforth—

Fortune, my Friend, how well thou favourest me!  
A kinder Fortune man did never see!  
Thou propp'st my thigh, thou ridd'st my knee of pain,  
I'll walk, I'll mount—I'll be a man again.—

Life vol. x. p. 38.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

HALIDON HILL;

A DRAMATIC SKETCH FROM SCOTTISH HISTORY.

PREFACE.

THOUGH the Public seldom feel much interest in such communications (nor is there any reason why they should), the Author takes the liberty of stating, that these scenes were commenced with the purpose of contributing to a miscellany projected by a much-esteemed friend. But instead of being confined to a scene or two, as intended, the work gradually swelled to the size of an independent publication. It is designed to illustrate military antiquities, and the manners of chivalry. The drama (if it can be termed one) is, in no particular, either designed or calculated for the stage.

The subject is to be found in Scottish history; but not to overload so slight a publication with antiquarian research, or quotations from obscure chronicles, may be sufficiently illustrated by the following passage from Pinkerton's History of Scotland, vol. i. p. 72.

"The Governor (anno 1402) dispatched a considerable force under Murdac, his eldest son: the Earls of Angus and Moray also joined Douglas, who entered England with an army of ten thousand men, carrying terror and devastation to the walls of Newcastle.

"Henry IV. was now engaged in the Welsh war against Owen Glendour; but the Earl of Northumberland, and his son, the Hotspur Percy, with the Earl of March, collected a numerous array, and awaited the return of the Scots, impeded with spoil, near Milfield, in the north part of Northumberland. Douglas had reached Wooler, in his return; and, perceiving the enemy, seized a strong post between the two armies, called Homildon-hill. In this method he rivalled his predecessor at the battle of Otterburn, but not with like success. The English advanced to the assault, and Henry Percy was about to lead them up the hill, when March caught his bridle, and advised him to advance no farther, but to pour the dreadful shower of English arrows into the enemy. This advice was followed by the usual fortune; for in all ages the bow was the English instrument of victory; and though the Scots, and perhaps the French, were superior in the use of the spear, yet this weapon was useless after the distant bow had decided the combat. Robert the Great, sensible of this at the battle of Bannockburn, ordered a prepared detachment of cavalry to rush among the English archers at the commencement, totally to disperse them, and stop the deadly effusion. But Douglas now used no such precaution; and the consequence was, that his people, drawn up on the face of the hill, presented one general mark to the enemy, none of whose arrows descended in vain. The Scots fell without fight, and unreveled, till a spirited knight, Swinton, exclaimed aloud, 'O my brave countrymen! what fascination has seized you to-day, that you stand like deer to be shot, instead of indulging your ancient courage, and meeting your enemies hand to hand? Let those who will, descend with me, that we may gain victory, or life, or fall like men.' This being heard by Adam Gordon, between whom and Swinton there remained an ancient deadly feud, attended with the mutual slaughter of many followers, he instantly fell on his knees before Swinton, begged his pardon, and desired to be dubbed a knight by him whom he must now regard as the wisest and the boldest of that order in Britain. The ceremony performed, Swinton and
Gordon descended the hill, accompanied only by one hundred men; and a desperate valour led the whole body to death. Had a similar spirit been shown by the Scottish army, it is probable that the event of the day would have been different. Douglas, who was certainly deficient in the most important qualities of a general, seeing his army begin to disperse, at length attempted to descend the hill; but the English archers, retiring a little, sent a flight of arrows so sharp and strong that no armour could withstand; and the Scottish leader himself, whose panoply was of remarkable temper, fell under five wounds, though not mortal. The English men-of-arms, knights, or squires, did not strike one blow, but remained spectators of the rout, which was now complete. Great numbers of the Scots were slain, and near five hundred perished in the river Tweed upon their flight. Among the illustrious captives was Douglas, whose chief wound deprived him of an eye; Murdac, son of Albany; the Earls of Moray and Angus; and about twenty-four gentlemen of eminent rank and power. The chief slain were, Swinton, Gordon, Livingston of Calendar, Ramsay of Dalhousie, Walter Sinclair, Roger Gordon, Walter Scott, and others. Such was the issue of the unfortunate battle of Homildon."

It may be proper to observe, that the scene of action has, in the following pages, been transferred from Homildon to Halidon Hill. For this there was an obvious reason;—for who would again venture to introduce upon the scene the celebrated Hotspur, who commanded the English at the former battle? There are, however, several coincidences which may reconcile even the severer antiquary to the substitution of Halidon Hill for Homildon. A Scottish army was defeated by the English on both occasions, and under nearly the same circumstances of address on the part of the victors, and mismanagement on that of the vanquished, for the English long-bow decided the day in both cases. In both cases, also, a Gordon was left on the field of battle; and at Halidon, as at Homildon, the Scots were commanded by an ill-fated representative of the great house of Douglas. He of Homildon was surnamed Tineman, i.e. Lose

...man, from his repeated defeats and miscarriages; and, with all the personal valour of his race, seems to have enjoyed so small a portion of their sagacity, as to be unable to learn military experience from reiterated calamity. I am far, however, from intimating, that the traits of imbecility and envy attributed to the Regent in the following sketch, are to be historically ascribed either to the elder Douglas of Halidon Hill, or to him called Tineman, who seems to have enjoyed the respect of his countrymen, notwithstanding that, like the celebrated Anne de Montmorency, he was either defeated, or wounded, or made prisoner, in every battle which he fought. The Regent of the sketch is a character purely imaginary.

The tradition of the Swinton family, which still survives in a lineal descent, and to which the author has the honour to be related, avers, that the Swinton who fell at Homildon in the manner related in the preceding extract, had slain Gordon's father; which seems sufficient ground for adopting that circumstance into the following dramatic sketch, though it is rendered improbable by other authorities.

If any reader will take the trouble of looking at Froissart, Fordun, or other historians of the period, he will find, that the character of the Lord of Swinton, for strength, courage, and conduct, is by no means exaggerated.

W. S.

Abbotsford, 1822.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SCOTTISH.

The Regent of Scotland.

Gordon, Swinton, Lennox, Sutherland, Ross, Maxwell, Johnstone, Lindsay,
Adam de Vipont, a Knight Templar,
The Prior of Maison-Dieu.
Reynald, Swinton’s Squire.
Hob Hattely, a Border Moss-Trooper.
Heralds.

ENGLISH.

King Edward III.
Chandos,
Percy,
Ribaumont,
The Abbot of Walthamstow.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

The northern side of the eminence of Halidon. The back Scene represents the summit of the ascent, occupied by the Rear-guard of the Scottish army. Bodies of armed Men appear as advancing from different points, to join the main Body.

Enter De Vipont and the Prior of Maison-Dieu.

Vip. No farther, Father—here I need no guidance—
I have already brought your peaceful step
Too near the verge of battle.
Pri. Fain would I see you join some Baron’s banner,
Before I say farewell. The honour’d sword
That fought so well in Syria, should not wave
Amid the ignoble crowd.
Vip. Each spot is noble in a pitched field,
So that a man has room to fight and fall on’t.
But I shall find out friends. 'Tis scarce twelve years
Since I left Scotland for the wars of Palestine,
And then the flower of all the Scottish nobles
Were known to me; and I, in my degree,
Not all unknown to them.

Pri. Alas! there have been changes since that time!
The Royal Bruce, with Randolph, Douglas, Grahame,
Then shook in field the banners which now moulder
Over their graves i’ the chancel.
Vip. And thence comes it,
That while I look’d on many a well-known crest
And blazon’d shield, as hitherward we came,
The faces of the Barons who displayed them
Were all unknown to me. Brave youths they seem’d;
Yet, surely, fitter to adorn the tilt-yard,
Than to be leaders of a war. Their followers,
Young like themselves, seem like themselves unpractised—
Look at their battle-rank.
Pri. I cannot gaze on’t with undazzled eye,
So thick the rays dart back from shield and helmet,
And sword and battle-axe, and spear and pennon.
Sure 'tis a gallant show! The Bruce himself
Hath often conquer’d at the head of fewer
And worse appointed followers.
Vip. Ay, but 'twas Bruce that led them. Reverend Father,
'Tis not the falchion’s weight decides a combat;
It is the strong and skilful hand that wields it.
Ill fate, that we should lack the noble King,
And all his champions now! Time call’d them not,
For when I parted hence for Palestine,
The brows of most were free from grizzled hair.
Pri. Too true, alas! But well you know, in Scotland
Few hairs are silver’d underneath the helmet;
'Tis cowl's like mine which hide them.  'Mongst the laity,  
War's the rash reaper, who thrusts in his sickle  
Before the grain is white.  In three-score years  
And ten, which I have seen, I have outlived  
Wellnigh two generations of our nobles.  
The race which holds yon summit is the third.  
Vip. Thou mayst outlive them also.  
Pri. Heaven forfend!  
My prayer shall be, that Heaven will close my eyes,  
Before they look upon the wrath to come.  
Vip. Retire, retire, good Father!—Pray for Scotland—  
Think not on me. Here comes an ancient friend,  
Brother in arms, with whom to-day I'll join me.  
Back to your choir, assemble all your brotherhood,  
And weary Heaven with prayers for victory.  
Pri. Heaven's blessing rest with thee,  
Champion of Heaven, and of thy suffering country!  
[Exit Prior. Vipont draws a little aside and lets down the beaver of his helmet.  

Enter Swinton, followed by Reynald and others, to whom he speaks as he enters.  

Swi. Halt here, and plant my pennon, till the Regent  
Assign our band its station in the host.  
Rey. That must be by the Standard. We have had  
That right since good Saint David's reign at least.  
Fain would I see the Marcher would dispute it.  
Swi. Peace, Reynald! Where the general plants the soldier,  
There is his place of honour, and there only  
His valour can win worship. Thou'rt of those,  
Who would have war's deep art bear the wild semblance  
Of some disorder'd hunting, where, pell-mell,  
Each trusting to the swiftness of his horse,  
Gallants press on to see the quarry fall.  
Yon steel-clad Southrons, Reynald, are no deer;  
And England's Edward is no stag at bay.  
Vip. (advancing.) There needed not, to blazon forth the Swinton,  
His ancient burgonet, the sable Boar Chain'd to the gnarl'd oak,—nor his proud step,  
Nor giant stature, nor the ponderous mace,  
Which only he, of Scotland's realm, can wield:  
His discipline and wisdom mark the leader,  
As doth his frame the champion.  
Hail, brave Swinton!  
Swi. Brave Templar, thanks!  
Such your cross'd shoulder speaks you;  
But the closed visor, which conceals your features,  
Forbids more knowledge. Umfraville, perhaps—  
Vip. (unclosing his helmet.) No; one less worthy of our sacred Order.  
Yet, unless Syrian suns have scorched my features  
Swart as my sable visor, Alan Swinton  
Will welcome Symon Vipont.  
Swi. (embracing him.) As the blithe reaper Welcomes a practised mate, when the ripe harvest  
Lies deep before him, and the sun is high!  
Thou'lt follow yon old pennon, wilt thou not?
'Tis tatter'd since thou saw'st it, and
the Boar-heads
Look as if brought from off some
Christmas board,
Where knives had notch'd them
deply.
Vip. Have with them, ne'ertheless.
The Stuart's Chequer,
The Bloody Heart of Douglas, Ross's
Lymphads,
Sutherland's Wild-cats, nor the royal
Lion,
Rampant in golden treasure, wins
me from them.
We'll back the Boar-heads bravely.
I see round them
A chosen band of lances—some well
known to me.
Where's the main body of thy
followers?
Swi. Symon de Vipont, thou dost
see them all
That Swinton's bugle-horn can call
to battle,
However loud it rings. There's not
a boy
Left in my halls, whose arm has
strength enough
To bear a sword—there's not a man
behind,
However old, who moves without a
staff.
Striplings and graybeards, every one
is here,
And here all should be—Scotland
needs them all;
And more and better men, were each
a Hercules,
And yonder handful centuplied.
Vip. A thousand followers—such,
with friends and kinsmen,
Allies and vassals, thou wert wont to
lead—
A thousand followers shrunk to sixty
lances
In twelve years' space?—And thy
brave sons, Sir Alan?
Alas! I fear to ask.
Swi. All slain, De Vipont. In my
empty home
A puny babe lisps to a widow'd
mother,
"Where is my grandsire! wherefore
do you weep?"
But for that pratter, Lyulph's house
is heirless.
I'm an old oak, from which the foresters
Have hew'd four goodly boughs, and
left beside me
Only a sapling, which the fawn may
crush.
As he springs over it.
Vip. All slain?—alas!
Swi. Ay, all, De Vipont. And
their attributes,
John with the Long Spear—Archibald
with the Axe—
Richard the Ready—and my young-
est darling,
My Fair-hair'd William—do but now
survive
In measures which the gray-hair'd
minstrels sing,
When they make maidens weep.
Vip. These wars with England,
they have rooted out
The flowers of Christendom.
Knights, who might win
The sepulchre of Christ from the
rude heathen,
Fall in unholy warfare!
Swi. Unholy warfare? ay, well
hast thou named it;
But not with England—would her
cloth-yard shafts
Had bore'd their cuirasses! Their
lives had been
Lost like their grandsire's, in the
bold defence
Of their dear country—but in private
feud
With the proud Gordon, fell my
Long-spear'd John,
He with the Axe, and he men call'd
the Ready,
Ay, and my Fair-hair'd Will—the
Gordon's wrath
Devour'd my gallant issue.
Vip. Since thou dost weep, their
death is unavenged?
Swi. Templar, what think'st thou
me?—See yonder rock,
From which the fountain gushes—is it
less
Compact of adamant, though waters
flow from it?
Firm hearts have moister eyes.—
They are avenged;
I wept not till they were—till the
proud Gordon
Had with his life-blood dyed my
father's sword,
In guerdon that he thinn'd my
father's lineage,
And then I wept my sons; and, as the
Gordon
Lay at my feet, there was a tear for him,
Which mingled with the rest. We
had been friends,
Had shared the banquet and the
chase together,
Fought side by side,—and our first
cause of strife,
Woe to the pride of both, was but a
light one!
VIP. You are at feud, then, with
the mighty Gordon?
Swi. At deadly feud. Here in this
Border-land,
Where the sire's quarrels descend
upon the son,
As due a part of his inheritance,
As the strong castle and the ancient
blazon,
Where private Vengeance holds the
scales of justice,
Weighing each drop of blood as
scrupulously
As Jews or Lombards balance silver
pence,
Not in this land, 'twixt Solway and
Saint Abb's,
Rages a bitterer feud than mine and
theirs,
The Swinton and the Gordon.
VIP. You, with some threescore
lances—and the Gordon
Leading a thousand followers.
Swi. You rate him far too low.
Since you sought Palestine,
He hath had grants of baronies and
lordships
In the far-distant North. A thousand
horse
His southern friends and vassals
always number'd.
Add Badenoch kerne, and horse from
Dey and Spey,
He'll count a thousand more.—And
now, De Vipont,
If the Boar-heads seem in your eyes
less worthy
For lack of followers—seek yonder
standard—
The bounding Stag, with a brave
host around it;
There the young Gordon makes his
earliest field,
And pants to win his spurs. His
father's friend,
As well as mine, thou wert—go, join
his pennon,
And grace him with thy presence.
VIP. When you were friends, I
was the friend of both,
And now I can be enemy to neither;
But my poor person, though but
slight the aid,
Joins on this field the banner of the
two
Which hath the smallest following.
Swi. Spoke like the generous
Knight, who gave up all,
Leading and lordship, in a heathen
land
To fight, a Christian soldier! Yet,
in earnest,
I pray, De Vipont, you would join
the Gordon
In this high battle. 'Tis a noble
youth,—
So fame doth vouch him,—amorous,
quick, and valiant;
Takes knighthood, too, this day, and
well may use
His spurs too rashly in the wish to
win them.
A friend like thee beside him in the
fight,
Were worth a hundred spears, to rein
his valour
And temper it with prudence:—'tis
the aged eagle
Teaches his brood to gaze upon the
sun,
With eye undazzled.
VIP. Alas! brave Swinton! Would'st thou train the hunter
That soon must bring thee to the bay? Your custom,  
Your most unchristian, savage, fiend-like custom,  
Binds Gordon to avenge his father's death.  
Swi. Why, be it so! I look for nothing else:  
My part was acted when I slew his father,  
Avenging my four sons—Young Gordon's sword,  
If it should find my heart, can ne'er inflict there  
A pang so poignant as his father's did.  
But I would perish by a noble hand,  
And such will his be if he bear him nobly,  
Nobly and wisely on this field of Halidon.  

Enter a Pursuivant.  
Pur. Sir Knights, to council!—'tis the Regent's order,  
That knights and men of leading meet him instantly  
Before the royal standard. Edward's army  
Is seen from the hill-summit.  
Swi. Say to the Regent, we obey his orders.  

[Exit Pursuivant.  
[To Reynald.] Hold thou my casque, and fasten my pennon up  
Close to the staff. I will not show my crest,  
Nor standard, till the common foe shall challenge them.  
I'll take no civil strife, nor tempt the Gordon  
With aught that's like defiance.  
Vip. Will he not know your features?  
Swi. He never saw me. In the distant North,  
Against his will, 'tis said, his friends detain'd him  
During his nurture—caring not, belike,  
To trust a pledge so precious near the Boar-tusks.  

It was a natural but needless caution:  
I wage no war with children, for I think  
Too deeply on mine own.  
Vip. I have thought on it, and will see the Gordon  
As we go hence to council. I do bear  
A cross, which binds me to be Christian priest,  
As well as Christian champion. God may grant,  
That I, at once his father's friend and yours,  
May make some peace betwixt you.  
Swi. When that your priestly zeal,  
and knightly valour,  
Shall force the grave to render up the dead.  
[Exeunt severally.  

SCENE II.  
The summit of Halidon Hill, before the Regent's Tent. The Royal Standard of Scotland is seen in the background, with the Pennons and Banners of the principal Nobles around it.  
Council of Scottish Nobles and Chiefs. Sutherland, Ross, Lennox, Maxwell, and other Nobles of the highest rank, are close to the Regent's person, and in the act of keen debate. Vipont with Gordon and others, remain grouped at some distance on the right hand of the Stage. On the left, standing also apart, is Swinton, alone and bare-headed. The Nobles are dressed in Highland or Lowland habits, as historical costume requires. Trumpets, Heralds, etc., are in attendance.  

Len. Nay, Lordings, put no shame upon my counsels.  
I did but say, if we retired a little,  
We should have fairer field and better vantage.  
I've seen King Robert—ay, The Bruce himself—
Retreat six leagues in length, and think no shame on't
Reg. Ay, but King Edward sent a haughty message
Defying us to battle on this field,
This very hill of Halidon; if we leave
it
Unfought withal, it squares not with our honour.
Swi. (apart.) A perilous honour that allows the enemy,
And such an enemy as this same Edward,
To choose our field of battle! He knows how
To make our Scottish pride betray its master
Into the pitfall.
[During this speech the debate among the Nobles is continued.
Suth. (aloud.) We will not back one furlong—not one yard,
No, nor one inch; where'er we find the foe,
Or where the foe finds us, there will we fight him.
Retreat will dull the spirit of our followers,
Who now stand prompt for battle.
Ross. My Lords, methinks great Morarchat has doubts,
That, if his Northern clans once turn the seam
Of their check'd hose behind, it will be hard
To halt and rally them.
Suth. Say'st thou, MacDonnell?—Add another falsehood,
And name when Morarchat was coward or traitor?
Thine island race, as chronicles can tell,
Were oft affianced to the Southron Loving the weight and temper of their gold,
More than the weight and temper of their steel.
Reg. Peace, my Lords, ho!
Ross. (throwing down his Glove.)
MacDonnell will not peace!
There lies my pledge,
Proud Morarchat, to witness thee alien.
Max. Brought I all Nithsdale from the Western Border;
Left I my towers exposed to foraying England,
And thieving Annandale, to see such misrule?
John. Who speaks of Annandale?
Dare Maxwell slander The gentle House of Lochwood?
Reg. Peace, Lordings, once again. We represent The Majesty of Scotland—in our presence
Brawling is treason.
Suth. Were it in presence of the King himself,
What should prevent my saying——
Enter Lindesay.
Lin. You must determine quickly. Scarce a mile Parts our vanguard from Edward's. On the plain Bright gleams of armour flash through clouds of dust, Like stars through frost-mist—steeds neigh, and weapons clash—And arrows soon will whistle—the worst sound That waits on English War.—You must determine.
Reg. We are determined. We will spare proud Edward Half of the ground that parts us.—Onward, Lords; Saint Andrew strike for Scotland! We will lead The middle ward ourselves, the Royal Standard Display'd beside us; and beneath its shadow Shall the young gallants, whom we knight this day, Fight for their golden spurs.—Lennox, thou'rt wise, And wilt obey command—lead thou the rear.
Len. The rear!—why I the rear? The van were fitter For him who fought abreast with Robert Bruce.
Swi. (apart.) Discretion hath forsaken Lennox too!
The wisdom he was forty years in gathering
Has left him in an instant. 'Tis contagious
Even to witness frenzy.

**SUTH.** The Regent hath determined well. The rear
Suits him the best who counsell'd our retreat.

**LEN.** Proud Northern Thane, the van were soon the rear,
Were thy disorder'd followers planted there.

**SUTH.** Then, for that very word, I make a vow,
By my broad Earldom, and my father's soul,
That, if I have not leading of the van,
I will not fight to-day!

**ROSS.** Morarchat! thou the leading of the van!

Not whilst MacDonnell lives:

**SWI.** (apart.) Nay, then a stone would speak.

*Addresses the Regent.* May't please your Grace,
And you, great Lords, to hear an old man's counsel,

That hath seen fights enow. These open bickerings
Dishearten all our host. If that your Grace,
With these great Earls and Lords, must needs debate,

Let the closed tent conceal your disagreement;
Else 'twill be said, ill fares it with the flock,

If shepherds wrangle, when the wolf

**REG.** The old Knight counsels well. Let every Lord
Or Chief, who leads five hundred men or more,

Follow to council—others are excluded—

We'll have no vulgar censurers of our conduct—

[Looking at Swinton.
Young Gordon, your high rank and numerous following
Give you a seat with us, though yet unhonied.

**GORDON.** I pray you, pardon me. My youth's unfit.
To sit in council, when that Knight's gray hairs
And wisdom wait without.

**REG.** Do as you will; we deign not bid you twice.

*The Regent, Ross, Sutherland, Lennox, Maxwell, etc., enter the Tent. The rest remain grouped about the Stage.*

**GOR.** (observing Swi.) That helmetless old Knight, his giant stature,

His awful accents of rebuke and wisdom,

Have caught my fancy strangely. He doth seem
Like to some vision'd form which I have dream'd of.

But never saw with waking eyes till now.

I will accost him.

**VIP.** Pray you, do not so;

Anon I'll give you reason why you should not.

There's other work in hand—

**GOR.** I will but ask his name. There's in his presence

Something that works upon me like a spell,

Or like the feeling made my childish ear

Dote upon tales of superstitious dread, Attracting while they chill'd my heart with fear.

Now, born the Gordon, I do feel right well

I'm bound to fear nought earthly—and I fear nought.

I'll know who this man is—

[Accosts Swinton.

Sir Knight, I pray you, of your gentle courtesy,

To tell your honour'd name. I am ashamed,

Being unknown in arms, to say that mine

Is Adam Gordon.

**SWINTON** (shows emotion, but instantly subdues it.)

It is a name that soundeth in my ear
Like to a death-knell—ay, and like the call
Of the shrill trumpet to the mortal lists;
Yet, 'tis a name which no'er hath been dishonour'd,
And never will, I trust—most surely never
By such a youth as thou.

**Gor.** There's a mysterious courtesy in this,
And yet it yields no answer to my question.
I trust you hold the Gordon not unworthy
To know the name he asks?

**Swi.** Worthy of all that openness and honour
May show to friend or foe—but, for my name,
Vipont will show it you; and, if it sound
Harsh in your ear, remember that it knells there
But at your own request. This day, at least,
Though seldom wont to keep it in concealment,
As there's no cause I should, you had not heard it.

**Gor.** This strange—

**Vip.** The mystery is needful. Follow me.

[They retire behind the side scene.

**Swi.** (looking after them.) 'Tis a brave youth. How blush'd his noble cheek,
While youthful modesty, and the embarrassment
Of curiosity, combined with wonder,
And half suspicion of some slight intended,
All mingled in the flush; but soon 'twill deepen
Into revenge's glow. How slow is Vipont!—
I wait the issue, as I've seen speculators
Suspend the motion even of the eyelids,
When the slow gunner, with his lighted match,
Approach'd the charged cannon, in the act
To waken its dread slumbers.—Now 'tis out;
He draws his sword, and rushes towards me,
Who will nor seek nor shun him.

**Enter Gordon, withheld by Vipont.**

**Vip.** Hold, for the sake of Heaven! O, for the sake
Of your dear country, hold!—Has Swinton slain your father,
And must you, therefore, be yourself a parricide,
And stand recorded as the selfish traitor,
Who in her hour of need, his country's cause
Deserts, that he may wreak a private wrong?
Look to yon banner—that is Scotland's standard;
Look to the Regent—he is Scotland's general;
Look to the English—they are Scotland's foemen!
Bethink thee, then, thou art a son of Scotland,
And think on nought beside.

**Gor.** He hath come here to brave me!—Off! unhand me!—
Thou canst not be my father's ancient friend,
That stand'st 'twixt me and him who slew my father.

**Vip.** You know not Swinton. Scarce one passing thought
Of his high mind was with you; now, his soul
Is fix'd on this day's battle. You might slay him
At unawares before he saw your blade drawn.—
Stand still, and watch him close.

**Enter Maxwell, from the tent.**

**Swi.** How go our councils, Maxwell, may I ask?

**Max.** As wild, as if the very wind and sea
With every breeze and every billow battled
For their precedence.
Swi. Most sure they are possess’d!
Some evil spirit,
To mock their valour, robs them of discretion.
Fie, fie, upon’t! O, that Dunfermline’s tomb
Could render up The Bruce! that Spain’s red shore
Could give us back the good Lord James of Douglas!
Or that fierce Randolph, with his voice of terror,
Were here, to awe these brawlers to submission!
Vip. (to Gor.) Thou hast perused him at more leisure now.
Gor. I see the giant form which all men speak of,
The stately port—but not the sullen eye,
Not the bloodthirsty look, that should belong
To him that made me orphan. I shall need
To name my father twice ere I can strike
At such gray hairs, and face of such command;
Yet my hand clenches on my falchion hilt,
In token he shall die.
Vip. Need I again remind you, that the place
Permits not private quarrel?
Gor. I’m calm. I will not seek—nay, I will shun it—
And yet methinks that such debate’s the fashion.
You’ve heard how taunts, reproaches, and the lie,
The lie itself, have flown from mouth to mouth;
As if a band of peasants were disputing
About a foot-ball match, rather than Chiefs
Were ordering a battle. I am young, And lack experience; tell me, brave De Vipont,
Is such the fashion of your wars in Palestine?
Vip. Such it at times hath been; and then the Cross
Hath sunk before the Crescent. Heaven’s cause
Won us not victory where wisdom was not.—
Behold yon English host come slowly on,
With equal front, rank marshall’d upon rank,
As if one spirit ruled one moving body;
The leaders, in their places, each prepared
To charge, support, and rally, as the fortune
Of changeful battle needs: then look on ours,
Broken, disjointed, as the tumbling surges
Which the winds wake at random. Look on both,
And dread the issue; yet there might be succour.
Gor. We’re fearfully o’ermatch’d in discipline;
So even my inexperienced eye can judge.
What succour save in Heaven?
Vip. Heaven acts by human means. The artist’s skill
Supplies in war, as in mechaniccrafts, Deﬁciency of tools. There’s courage, wisdom,
And skill enough, live in one leader here,
As, ﬂung into the balance, might avail
To counterpoise the odds ’twixt that ruled host
And our wild multitude. I must not name him.
Gor. I guess, but dare not ask.—What band is yonder, Arranged so closely as the English discipline
Hath marshall’d their best ﬁles?
Vip. Know’st thou not the pennon? One day, perhaps, thou’lt see it all too closely;
It is Sir Alan Swinton’s.
Gor. These, then, are his,—the relics of his power; 
Yet worth an host of ordinary men.—
And I must slay my country's sagest leader,
And crush by numbers that determined handful,
When most my country needs their practised aid,
Or men will say, "There goes degenerate Gordon; 
His father's blood is on the Swinton's sword,
And his is in his scabbard!" [Muses.
Vip. (apart.) High blood and mettle, mix'd with early wisdom,
Sparkle in this brave youth. If he survive
This evil-omen'd day, I pawn my word,
That, in the ruin which I now forbode,
Scotland has treasure left.—How close he eyes
Each look and step of Swinton! Is it hate,
Or is it admiration, or are both
Commingled strangely in that steady gaze?

[Swinton and Maxwell return from the bottom of the stage.
Max. The storm is laid at length amongst these counsellors;
See, they come forth.
Swi. And it is more than time;
For I can mark the vanguard archery
Handling their quivers—bending up their bows.

Enter the Regent and Scottish Lords.
Reg. Thus shall it be, then, since we may no better
And, since no Lord will yield one jot of way
To this high urgency, or give the vanguard
Up to another's guidance, we will abide them
Even on this bent; and as our troops are rank'd,
So shall they meet the foe. Chief, nor Thane,
Nor Noble, can complain of the precedence
Which chance has thus assign'd him.
Swi. (apart.) O, sage discipline,
That leaves to chance the marshalling of a battle!
Gor. Move him to speech, De Vipont.
Vip. Move him!—Move whom?
Gor. Even him, whom, but brief space since,
My hand did burn to put to utter silence.
Vip. I'll move it to him.—Swinton, speak to them,
They lack thy counsel sorely.
Swi. Had I the thousand spears which once I led,
I had not thus been silent. But men's wisdom
Is rated by their means. From the poor leader
Of sixty lances, who seeks words of weight?
Gor. (steps forward.) Swinton, there's that of wisdom on thy brow,
And valour in thine eye, and that of peril
In this most urgent hour, that bids me say,—
Bids me, thy mortal foe, say,—Swinton, speak,
For King and Country's sake!
Swi. Nay, if that voice commands me, speak I will;
It sounds as if the dead lays charge on me.
Reg. (To Lennox, with whom he has been consulting.)
'Tis better than you think. This broad hill-side
Affords fair compass for our power's display.
Rank above rank rising in seemly tiers;
So that the rearward stands as fair and open—-
Swi. As e'er stood mark before an English archer.
Reg. Who dares to say so?—Who isn't dare impeach
Our rule of discipline?
Swi. A poor Knight of these Marches, good my Lord;
Alan of Swinton, who hath kept a house here,
He and his ancestry, since the old days
Of Malcolm, called the Maiden.

Reg. You have brought here, even to this pitched field,
In which the Royal Banner is display'd,
I think some sixty spears, Sir Knight of Swinton;
Our musters name no more.

Swi. I brought each man I had; and Chief, or Earl,
Thane, Duke, or dignitary, brings no more:
And with them brought I what may here be useful—
An aged eye; which, what in England, Scotland,
Spain, France, and Flanders, hath seen fifty battles,
And ta'en some judgment of them; a stark hand too,
Which plays as with a straw with this same mace,—
Which if a young arm here can wield more lightly,
I never more will offer word of counsel.

Len. Hear him, my Lord; it is the noble Swinton—
He hath had high experience.

Max. He is noted
The wisest warrior 'twixt the Tweed and Solway—
I do beseech you, hear him.

John. Ay, hear the Swinton—hear stout old Sir Alan;
Maxwell and Johnstone both agree for once.

Reg. Where's your impatience now?
Late you were all for battle, would not hear
Ourself pronounce a word—and now you gaze
On yon old warrior, in his antique armour,
As if he were arisen from the dead,
To bring us Bruce's counsel for the battle.

Swi. 'Tis a proud word to speak; but he who fought
Long under Robert Bruce, may something guess,
Without communication with the dead,
At what he would have counsell'd.—Bruce had bidden ye
Review your battle-order, marshall'd broadly
Here on the bare hill-side, and bidden you mark
Yon clouds of Southron archers, bearing down
To the green meadow-lands which stretch beneath—
The Bruce had warn'd you, not a shaft to-day
But shall find mark within a Scottish bosom,
If thus our field be order'd. The callow boys,
Who draw but four-foot bows, shall gall our front,
While on our mainward, and upon the rear,
The cloth-yard shafts shall fall like death's own darts,
And, though blind men discharge them, find a mark.
Thus shall we die the death of slaughter'd deer,
Which, driven into the toils, are shot at ease
By boys and women, while they toss aloft
All idly and in vain their branchy horns,
As we shall shake our unavailing spears.

Reg. Tush, tell not me! If their shot fall like hail,
Our men have Milan coats to bear it out.

Swi. Never did armourer temper steel on stithy
That made sure fence against an English arrow;
A cobweb gossamer were guard as good
Against a wasp-sting.
Reg. Who fears a wasp-sting?
Swi. I, my Lord, fear none;
Yet should a wise man brush the insect off,
Or he may smart for it.
Reg. We'll keep the hill; it is the vantage-ground
When the main battle joins.
Swi. It ne'er will join, while their light archery
Can foil our spearmen and our barbed horse.
To hope Plantagenet would seek close combat
When he can conquer riskless, is to deem
Sagacious Edward simpler than a babe
In battle-knowledge. Keep the hill, my Lord,
With the main body, if it is your pleasure;
But let a body of your chosen horse
Make execution on yon waspish archers.
I've done such work before, and love it well;
If 'tis your pleasure to give me the leading,
The dames of Sherwood, Inglewood, and Weardale,
Shall sit in widowhood and long for venison,
And long in vain. Whoe'er remembers Bannockburn,—
And when shall Scotsman, till the last loud trumpet,
Forget that stirring word!—knows that great battle
Even thus was fought and won.
Len. This is the shortest road to bandy blows;
For when the bills step forth and bows go back,
Then is the moment that our hardy spearmen,
With their strong bodies, and their stubborn hearts,
And limbs well knit by mountain exercise,
At the close tug shall foil the short-breath'd Southron.
Swi. I do not say the field will thus be won;
The English host is numerous, brave, and loyal;
Their Monarch most accomplish'd in war's art
Skill'd, resolute, and wary—
Reg. And if your scheme secure not victory,
What does it promise us?
Swi. This much at least,—
Darkling we shall not die: the peasant's shaft,
Loosen'd perchance without an aim or purpose,
Shall not drink up the life-blood we derive
From those famed ancestors, who made their breasts
This frontier's barrier for a thousand years.
We'll meet these Southron bravely hand to hand,
And eye to eye, and weapon against weapon;
Each man who falls shall see the foe who strikes him.
While our good blades are faithful to the hils,
And our good hands to these good blades are faithful,
Blow shall meet blow, and none fall unavenged—
We shall not bleed alone.
Reg. And this is all
Your wisdom hath devised?
Swi. Not all; for I would pray you, noble Lords.
(If one, among the guilty guiltiest, might,) For this one day to charm to ten hours' rest
The never-dying worm of deadly feud,
That gnaws our vexed hearts—think no one foe
Save Edward and his host:—days will remain,
Ay, days by far too many will remain,
To avenge old feuds or struggles for precedence;—
Let this one day be Scotland's.—
For myself,
If there is any here may claim from me
(As well may chance) a debt of blood
and hatred,
My life is his to-morrow unresisting,
So he to-day will let me do the best
That my old arm may achieve for
the dear country
That's mother to us both.

[GORDON shows much emotion
during this and the preceding
speech of SWINTON.

REG. It is a dream—a vision!—
if one troop
Rush down upon the archers, all
will follow,
And order is destroy'd—we'll keep
the battle-rank
Our fathers wont to do. No more
on't.—Ho!
Where be those youths seek knighthood
from our sword?
HER. Here are the Gordon,
Somerville, and Hay,
And Hepburn, with a score of
gallants more.

REG. Gordon, stand forth.
Gor. I pray your Grace,
for me.
REG. How! seek you not for
knighthood?
Gor. I do thirst for't.
But, pardon me—'tis from another
sword.
REG. It is your Sovereign's—
seek you for a worthier?
Gor. Who would drink purely,
seeks the secret fountain,
How small soever—not the general
stream,
Though it be deep and wide. My
Lord, I seek
The boon of knighthood from the
honour'd weapon
Of the best knight, and of the
sagist leader,
That ever graced a ring of chivalry.
—Therefore, I beg the boon on
bended knee,
Even from Sir Alan Swinton.

[Kneels.

REG. Degenerate boy! Abject
at once and insolent!—
See, Lords, he kneels to him that
slew his father!
Gor. (starting up.) Shame be on
him, who speaks such shameful
word!
Shame be on him, whose tongue
would sow dissension,
When most the time demands that
native Scotsmen
Forget each private wrong!

SWI. (interrupting him.) Youth,
since you crave me
To be your sire in chivalry, I remind
you
War has its duties, Office has its
reverence;
Who governs in the Sovereign's
name is Sovereign;—
Crave the Lord Regent's pardon.

Gor. You task me justly, and I
crave his pardon,

[Bows to the Regent.

His and these noble Lords'; and
pray them all
Bear witness to my words.—Ye
noble presence,
Here I remit unto the Knight of
Swinton
All bitter memory of my father's
slaughter,
All thoughts of malice, hatred, and
revenge;
By no base fear or composition moved,
But by the thought, that in our
country's battle
All hearts should be as one. I do
forgive him
As freely as I pray to be forgiven,
And once more kneel to him to sue
for knighthood.

SWI. (affected, and drawing his
sword.)
Alas! brave youth, 'tis I should
kneel to you,
And, tendering thee the hilt of the
fell sword
That made thee fatherless, bid thee
use the point
After thine own discretion. For thy
boon—
Trumpets be ready—In the Holiest name,
And in Our Lady’s and Saint Andrew’s name,
[Touching his shoulder with his sword.
I dub thee Knight!—Arise, Sir Adam Gordon!
Be faithful, brave, and O, be fortunate,
Should this ill hour permit!
[The trumpets sound; the Heralds cry “Largesse,” and the Attendants shout “A Gordon! A Gordon!”
Reg. Beggars and flatterers! Peace, peace, I say!
We’ll to the Standard; knights shall there be made
Who will with better reason crave your clamour.
Len. What of Swinton’s counsel?
Here’s Maxwell and myself think it worth noting.
Reg. (with concentrated indignation.)
Let the best knight, and let the sages lead,—
So Gordon quotes the man who slew his father,—
With his old pedigree and heavy mace,
Essay the adventure if it pleases him,
With his fair threescore horse. As for ourselves,
We will not peril aught upon the measure.
Gor. Lord Regent, you mistake; for if Sir Alan
Shall venture such attack, each man who calls
The Gordon chief, and hopes or fears from him
Or good or evil, follows Swinton’s banner
In this achievement.
Reg. Why, God ha’ mercy! This is of a piece.
Let young and old e’en follow their own counsel,
Since none will list to mine.
Ross. The Border cockrel fain would be on horseback;
’Tis safe to be prepared for fight or flight:
And this comes of it to give Northern lands
To the false Norman blood.
Gor. Hearken, proud Chief of Isles! Within my stalls
I have two hundred horse; two hundred riders
Mount guard upon my castle, who would tread
Into the dust a thousand of your Redshanks,
Nor count it a day’s service.
Swi. Hear I this
From thee, young man, and on the day of battle?
And to the brave MacDonnell?
Gor. ’Twas he that urged me; but I am rebuked.
Reg. He crouches like a leashtusk to his master!
Swi. Each hound must do so that would head the deer—
’Tis mongrel curs that snatch at mate or master.
Reg. Too much of this. Sirs, to the Royal Standard!
I bid you, in the name of good King David.
Sound trumpets—sound for Scotland and King David.
[The Regent and the rest go off, and the Scene closes.
Manent Gordon, Swinton, and Vipont, with Reynald and followers.
Lennox follows the Regent; but returns, and addresses Swinton.
Len. O, were my western horsemen but come up,
I would take part with you!
Swi. Better that you remain
They lack discretion; such gray head as yours
May best supply that want.
Lennox, mine ancient friend, and honour’d lord,
Farewell, I think, for ever!
LEN. Farewell, brave friend!—and farewell, noble Gordon,
Whose sun will be eclipsed even as it rises!—
The Regent will not aid you.
SWI. We will so bear us, that as soon the blood-hound
Shall halt, and take no part, what time his comrade
Is grappling with the deer, as he stand still,
And see us overmatch'd.
LEN. Alas! thou dost not know how mean his pride is,
How strong his envy.
SWI. Then we will die, and leave the shame with him.

[Exit LENNOX.

VIP. (to GORDON.) What ails thee, noble youth?
What means this pause?
Thou dost not rue thy generosity?
GOR. I have been hurried on by strong impulse,
Like to a bark that scuds before the storm,
Till driven upon some strange and distant coast,
Which never pilot dream'd of.—Have I not forgiven?
And am I not still fatherless?
SWI. Gordon, no;
For while we live I am a father to thee.
GOR. Thou, Swinton?—no!—that cannot, cannot be.
SWI. Then change the phrase, and say, that while we live,
Gordon shall be my son. If thou art fatherless,
Am I not childless too? Bethink thee, Gordon,
Our death-feud was not like the household fire,
Which the poor peasant hides among its embers,
To smoulder on, and wait a time for waking.
Ours was the conflagration of the forest,
Which, in its fury, spares nor sprout nor stem,
Hoar oak, nor sapling—not to be extinguish'd,
Till Heaven, in mercy, sends down all her waters;
But, once subdued, its flame is quench'd for ever;
And spring shall hide the tract of devastation,
With foliage and with flowers.—Give me thy hand.
GOR. My hand and heart!—And freely now!—to fight!
VIP. How will you act? [To SWINTON.] The Gordon's band
and thine
Are in the rearward left, I think, in scorn—
I'll post for them who wish to charge the foremost!
SWI. We'll turn that scorn to vantage and descend
Sidelong the hill—some winding path there must be—
O, for a well skill'd guide!

[HOB HATTLEY starts up from a Thicket.

HOB. So here he stands.—An ancient friend, Sir Alan.
Hob Hattely, or, if you like it better,
Hob of the Heron Plume, here stands your guide.
SWI. An ancient friend?—a most notorious knave,
Whose throat I've destined to the dodder'd oak
Before my castle, these ten months and more.
Was it not you who drove from Simprim-mains,
And Swinton-quarter, sixty head of cattle?
HOB. What then, if now I lead your sixty lances
Upon the English flank, where they'll find spoil
Is worth six hundred beeves?
SWI. Why, thou canst do it, knave. I would not trust thee
With one poor bullock; yet would risk my life,
And all my followers, on thine honest guidance.
Hob. There is a dingle, and a most discreet one, (I've trod each step by star-light,) that sweeps round The rearward of this hill, and opens secretly Upon the archers' flank.—Will not that serve Your present turn, Sir Alan? Swi. Bravely, bravely! Gor. Mount, sirs, and cry my slogan. Let all who love the Gordon follow me! Swi. Ay, let all follow—but in silence follow. Scare not the hare that's couchant on her form— The cushion from her nest—brush not, if possible, The dew-drop from the spray— Let no one whisper, until I cry, "Havoc!" Then shout as loud's ye will.—On, on, brave Hob; On, thou false thief, but yet most faithful Scotsman! [Exit.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A rising Ground immediately in front of the Position of the English Main Body. Percy, Chandos, Ribamont, and other English and Norman Nobles, are grouped on the Stage.

Per. The Scots still keep the hill—the sun grows high. Would that the charge would sound. Cha. Thou scent'st the slaughter, Percy.—Who comes here? [Enter the Abbot of Walthamstow. Now, by my life, the holy priest of Walthamstow, Like to a lamb among a herd of wolves! See, he's about to bleat. Ab. The King, methinks, delays the onset long.

Cha. Your general, Father, like your rat-catcher. Pauses to bait his traps, and set his snares. Ab. The metaphor is decent. Cha. Reverend sir, I will uphold it just. Our good King Edward Will presently come to this battle-field, And speak to you of the last tilting match, Or of some feat he did a twenty years since; But not a word of the day's work before him. Even as the artist, sir, whose name offends you, Sits prosing o'er his can, until the trap fall, Announcing that the vermin are secured, And then 'tis up, and on them. Per. Chandos, you give your tongue too bold a license. Cha. Percy, I am a necessary evil. King Edward would not want me, if he could, And could not, if he would. I know my value. My heavy hand excuses my light tongue, So men wear weighty swords in their defence, Although they may offend the tender shin, When the steel-boot is doff'd. Ab. My Lord of Chandos, This is but idle speech on brink of battle, When Christian men should think upon their sins; For as the tree falls, so the trunk must lie, Be it for good or evil. Lord, bethink thee, Thou hast withheld from our most reverend house, The tithes of Everingham and Settleton; Wilt thou make satisfaction to the Church
Before her thunders strike thee? I do warn thee
In most paternal sort.
CHA. I thank you, Father, filially.
Though but a truant son of Holy Church,
I would not choose to undergo her censures,
When Scottish blades are waving at my throat.
I'll make fair composition.
AB. No composition; I'll have all, or none.
CHA. None, then—'tis soonest spoke. I'll take my chance,
And trust my sinful soul to Heaven's mercy,
Rather than risk my worldly goods with thee—
My hour may not be come.
AB. Impious—impenitent—
PER. Hush! the King—the King!

Enter King Edward, attended by Baliol and others.

KING (apart to Cha.) Hark hither, Chandos!—
Have the Yorkshire archers
Yet join'd the vanguard?
CHA. They are marching thither.
K. ED. Bid them make haste, for shame—send a quick rider.
The loitering knaves! were it to steal my venison,
Their steps were light enough. — How now, Sir Abbot?
Say, is your Reverence come to study with us,
The princely art of war?
AB. I've had a lecture from my Lord of Chandos,
In which he term'd your Grace a rat-catcher.
K. ED. Chandos, how's this?
CHA. O, I will prove it, sir!—
These skipping Scots
Have changed a dozen times 'twixt Bruce and Baliol,
Quitting each House when it began to totter;

They're fierce and cunning, treacherous, too, as rats,
And we, as such, will smoke them in their fastnesses.
K. ED. These rats have seen your back, my Lord of Chandos,
And noble Percy's too.
PER. Ay; but the mass which now lies wetering
On yon hill side, like a Leviathan
That's stranded on the shallows, then had soul in't,
Order and discipline, and power of action.
Now 'tis a headless corpse, which only shows,
By wild convulsions, that some life remains in't.
K. ED. True, they had once a head; and 'twas a wise,
Although a rebel head.
AB. (bowing to the KING.) Would he were here! we should find one to match him.
K. ED. There's something in that wish which wakes an echo
Within my bosom. Yet it is as well,
Or better, that The Bruce is in his grave.
We have enough of powerful foes on earth,—
No need to summon them from other worlds.
PER. Your Grace ne'er met The Bruce?
K. ED. Never himself; but in my earliest field,
I did encounter with his famous captains,
AB. My Liege, if I might urge you with a question,
Will the Scots fight to-day?
K. ED. (sharply.) Go look your breviary.
CHA. (apart.) The Abbot has it—Edward will not answer
On that nice point. We must observe his humour.—

[Addresses the KING.
Your first campaign, my Liege?—
That was in Weardale,
When Douglas gave our camp yon midnight ruffle,
And turn'd men's beds to biers?
K. Ed. Ay, by Saint Edward!—
I escaped right nearly.
I was a soldier then for holidays,
And slept not in mine armour: my safe rest
Was startled by the cry of
"Douglas! Douglas!"
And by my couch, a grisly chamberlain,
Stood Alan Swinton, with his bloody mace.
It was a churchman saved me—my stout chaplain,
Heaven quit his spirit! caught a weapon up,
And grappled with the giant.—How now, Louis?

Enter an Officer, who whispers the King.

K. Ed. Say to him—thus—and thus—[Whispers.
Ab. That Swinton's dead. A monk of ours reported,
Bound homeward from St. Ninian's pilgrimage,
The Lord of Gordon slew him.
Per. Father, and if your house stood on our borders,
You might have cause to know that Swinton lives,
And is on horseback yet.
Cha. He slew the Gordon,
That's all the difference—a very trifle.
Ab. Trifling to those who wage a war more noble
Than with the arm of flesh.
Cha. (apart.) The Abbot's vex'd,
I'll rub the sore for him.—
(Aloud.) I have seen priests that used that arm of flesh,
And used it sturdily.—Most reverend Father,
What say you to the chaplain's deed of arms
In the King's tent at Weardale?

Ab. It was most sinful, being against the canon
Prohibiting all churchmen to bear weapons;
And as he fell in that unseemly guise,
Perchance his soul may rue it.
K. Ed. (overhearing the last words.)
Who may rue?
And what is to be rued?
Cha. (apart.) I'll match his Reverence for the tithes of Everingham.
—The Abbot says, my Liege, the deed was sinful,
By which your chaplain, wielding secular weapons,
Secured your Grace's life and liberty,
And that he suffers for't in purgatory.
K. Ed. (to the Abbot.) Say'st thou my chaplain is in purgatory?
Ab. It is the canon speaks it, good my Liege.
K. Ed. In purgatory! thou shalt pray him out on't,
Or I will make thee wish thyself beside him.
Ab. My Lord, perchance his soul is past the aid
Of all the Church may do—there is a place
From which there's no redemption.
K. Ed. And if I thought my faithful chaplain there,
Thou shouldst there join him, priest!
—Go, watch, fast, pray,
And let me have such prayers as will storm Heaven—
None of your maim'd and mutter'd hunting masses.
Ab. (apart to Cha.) For God's sake take him off.
Cha. Wilt thou compound, then,
The tithes of Everingham?
K. Ed. I tell thee, if thou bear'st the keys of Heaven,
Abbot, thou shalt not turn a bolt with them
'Gainst any well-deserving English subject.
Ab. (to Cha.) We will compound,
and grant thee, too, a share
I' the next indulgence. Thou dost need it much,
And greatly 'twill avail thee.
CHA. Enough—we're friends, and when occasion serves,
I will strike in.—
[Looks as if towards the Scottish Army.
K. Ed. Answer, proud Abbot; is my chaplain's soul,
If thou knowest aught on't, in the evil place?
CHA. My Liege, the Yorkshire men have gain'd the meadow.
I see the pennon green of merry Sherwood.
K. Ed. Then give the signal instant! We have lost
But too much time already.
Ab. My Liege, your holy chaplain's blessed soul—
K. Ed. To hell with it and thee! Is this a time
To speak of monks and chaplains?
[Flourish of Trumpets, answered by a distant sound of Bugles.
See, Chandos, Percy—Ha, Saint George! Saint Edward!
See it descending now, the fatal hail-shower,
The storm of England's wrath—sure, swift, resistless,
Which no mail-coat can brook.—Brave English hearts!
How close they shoot together!—as one eye
Had aim'd five thousand shafts—as if one hand
Had loosed five thousand bow-strings!
PER. The thick volley
Darkens the air, and hides the sun from us.
K. Ed. It falls on those shall see the sun no more.
The winged, the resistless plague is with them.
How their vex'd host is reeling to and fro,
Like the chafed whale with fifty lances in him,
They do not see, and cannot shun the wound.
The storm is viewless, as death's sable wing,
Unerring as his scythe.
PER. Horses and riders are going down together.
'Tis almost pity to see nobles fall,
And by a peasant's arrow.
BAL. I could weep them, Although they are my rebels.
CHA. (aside to PER.) His conquerors he means, who cast him out
From his usurped kingdom.—(Aloud.)
'Tis the worst of it,
That knights can claim small honour in the field
Which archers win, unaided by our lances.
K. Ed. The battle is not ended.
[Looks towards the field.
Not ended?—scarce begun! What horse are these,
Rush from the thicket underneath the hill?
PER. They're Hainaulters, the followers of Queen Isabel.
K. Ed. (hastily.) Hainaulters!—thou art blind—wear Hainaulters
Saint Andrew's silver cross?—or would they charge
Full on our archers, and make havoc of them?
Bruce is alive again—ho, rescue! rescue!—
Who wasn't survey'd the ground?
RIBA. Most royal Liege—
K. Ed. A rose hath fallen from thy chaplet, Ribaumont.
RIBA. I'll win it back, or lay my head beside it. [Exit.
K. Ed. Saint George! Saint Edward! Gentlemen, to horse,
And to the rescue!—Percy, lead the bill-men;
Chandos, do thou bring up the men-at-arms.—
If yonder numerous host should now bear down
Bold as their vanguard, (to the Abbot,) thou mayst pray for us,
We may need good men's prayers.—
To the rescue,
Lords, to the rescue! ha, Saint
George! Saint Edward!

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.

A part of the field of Battle betwixt
the two Main Armies. Tumults
behind the scenes; alarums, and
cries of "Gordon, a Gordon,"
"Swinton," etc.

Enter, as victorious over the English
vanguard, Vipont, Reynald, and others.

Vip. 'Tis sweet to hear these war-
cries sound together,—
Gordon and Swinton.

Rey. 'Tis passing pleasant, yet 'tis
strange withal.
Faith, when at first I heard the
Gordon's slogan
Sounded so near me, I had nigh struck
down
The knave who cried it.

Enter Swinton and Gordon.

Swi. Pitch down my pennon in yon
holly bush.

Gor. Mine in the thorn beside it;
let them wave,
As fought this morn their masters,
side by side.

Swi. Let the men rally, and restore
their ranks
Here in this vantage-ground—dis-
order'd chase
Leads to disorder'd flight; we have
done our part,
And if we're succour'd now, Plan-
tagenet
Must turn his bridle southward.—
Reynald, spur to the Regent with the
basnet
Of stout De Grey, the leader of their
vanguard;
Say, that in battle-front the Gordon
slew him,
And by that token bid him send us
succour,

Gor. And tell him that when
Selby's headlong charge
Had well-nigh borne me down, Sir
Alan smote him.
I cannot send his helmet, never nut-
shell
Went to so many shivers.—Harkye,
grooms!

[To those behind the scenes.
Why do you let my noble steed stand
stiffening
After so hot a course?

Swi. Ay, breathe your horses,
they'll have work anon,
For Edward's men-at-arms will soon
be on us,
The flower of England, Gascony, and
Flanders;
But with swift succour we will bide
them bravely.—
De Vipont, thou look'st sad?

Vip. It is because I hold a Temp-
lar's sword
Wet to the crossed hilt with Christian
blood.

Swi. The blood of English archers
—what can gild
A Scottish blade more bravely?

Vip. Even therefore grieve I for
those gallant yeomen,
England's peculiar and appropriate
sons,
Known in no other land. Each boasts
his heart
And field as free as the best lord his
barony,
Owing subjection to no human
vassalage,
Save to their King and law. Hence
are they resolute,
Leading the van on every day of
battle,
As men who know the blessings they
defend.
Hence are they frank and generous
in peace,
As men who have their portion in its
plenty.
No other kingdom shows such worth
and happiness
Veil'd in such low estate—therefore
I mourn them.
Swi. I'll keep my sorrow for our native Scots,
Who, spite of hardship, poverty, oppression,
Still follow to the field their Chieftain's banner,
And die in the defence on't.
Gor. And if I live and see my halls again,
They shall have portion in the good they fight for.
Each hardy follower shall have his field,
His household hearth and sod-built home, as free
As ever Southron had. They shall be happy!—
And my Elizabeth shall smile to see it!—
I have betray'd myself.
Swi. Do not believe it.
Vipont, do thou look out from yonder height,
And see what motion in the Scottish host,
And in King Edward's.—
[Exit Vipont.
Now will I counsel thee;
The Templar's ear is for no tale of love,
Being wedded to his Order. But I tell thee,
The brave young knight that hath no lady-love
Is like a lamp unlighted; his brave deeds,
And its rich painting, do seem then most glorious,
When the pure ray gleams through them.—
Hath thy Elizabeth no other name?
Gor. Must I then speak of her to you, Sir Alan?
The thought of thee, and of thy matchless strength,
Hath conjured phantoms up amongst her dreams,
The name of Swinton hath been spell sufficient
To chase the rich blood from her lovely cheek,
And wouldst thou now know hers?
Swi. I would, nay must. Thy father in the paths of chivalry,
Should know the load-star thou dost rule thy course by.
Gor. Nay, then, her name is—
[Whispers.
Swi. I know it well, that ancient northern house.
Gor. O, thou shalt see its fairest grace and honour
In my Elizabeth. And if music touch thee—
Swi. It did, before disasters had untuned me.
Gor. O, her notes
Shall hush each sad remembrance to oblivion,
Or melt them to such gentleness of feeling,
That grief shall have its sweetness. Who, but she,
Knows the wild harpings of our native land?
Whether they lull the shepherd on his hill,
Or wake the knight to battle; rouse to merriment,
Or soothe to sadness; she can touch each mood.
Princes and statesmen, chiefs renown'd in arms,
And gray-hair'd bards, contend which shall the first
And choicest homage render to the enchantress.
Swi. You speak her talent bravely.
Gor. Though you smile,
I do not speak it half. Her gift creative,
New measures adds to every air she wakes;
Varying and gracing it with liquid sweetness,
Like the wild modulation of the lark;
Now leaving, now returning to the strain!
To listen to her, is to seem to wander
In some enchanted labyrinth of romance,
Whence nothing but the lovely fairy's will,
Who wove the spell, can extricate
the wanderer.
Methinks I hear her now!—
Swi. Bless'd privilege
Of youth! There's scarce three
minutes to decide
'Twixt death and life, 'twixt triumph
and defeat,
Yet all his thoughts are in his lady's
bower,
List'ning her harping!—

[Enter Vipont.
Where are thine, De Vipont?
Vip. On death—on judgment—on
eternity!
For time is over with us.
Swi. There moves not, then, one
pennon to our aid,
Of all that flutter yonder!
Vip. From the main English host
come rushing forward
Pennons enow—ay, and their Royal
Standard.
But ours stand rooted, as for crows
to roost on.
Swi. (to himself) I'll rescue him at
least.—Young Lord of Gordon,
Spur to the Regent—show the
instant need—
Gor. I penetrate thy purpose; but
I go not.
Swi. Not at my bidding? I, thy
sire in chivalry—
Thy leader in the battle?—I
command thee.
Gor. No, thou wilt not command
me seek my safety,—
For such is thy kind meaning—at the
expense
Of the last hope which Heaven
reserves for Scotland.
While I abide, no follower of mine
Will turn his rein for life; but were
I gone,
What power can stay them? and,
our band dispersed,
What swords shall for an instant
stem yon host,
And save the latest chance for
victory?
Vip. The noble youth speaks
truth; and were he gone,

There will not twenty spears be left
with us.
Gor. No, bravely as we have
began the field,
So let us fight it out. The Regent's
eyes,
More certain than a thousand
messages,
Shall see us stand, the barrier of
his host
Against yon bursting storm. If
not for honour,
If not for warlike rule, for shame
at least
He must bear down to aid us.
Swi. Must it be so?
And am I forced to yield the sad
consent,
Devoting thy young life? O,
Gordon, Gordon!
I do it as the patriarch doom'd his
issue;
I at my country's, he at Heaven's
command;
But I seek vainly some atoning
sacrifice,
Rather than such a victim!—
(Trumpets.) Hark, they come!
That music sounds not like thy lady's
lute.
Gor. Yet shall my lady's name
mix with it gaily.—
Mount, vassals, couch your lances,
and cry, "Gordon! Gordon for Scotland and Elizabeth!"

[Exeunt. Loud Alarums.

SCENE III.

Another part of the Field of Battle,
adjacent to the former Scene.

Alarums. Enter Swinton, followed
by Hob Hattely.

Swi. Stand to it yet! The man
who flies to-day,
May bastards warm them at his
household hearth!
Hob. That ne'er shall be my curse.
My Magdalen.
Is trusty as my broadsword.
Swi. Ha, thou knave,
Art thou dismounted too?
Hob. I know, Sir Alan,
You want no homeward guide; so
threw my reins
Upon my palfrey's neck, and let
him loose,
Within an hour he stands before my
gate;
And Magdalen will need no other
token
To bid the Melrose Monks say
masses for me.
Swi. Thou art resolved to cheat
the halter, then?
Hob. It is my purpose,
Having lived a thief, to die a brave
man's death;
And never had I a more glorious
change for't.
Swi. Here lies the way to it,
knave.—Make in, make in,
And aid young Gordon!
[Exeunt. Loud and long Alarums.
After which the back Scene
rises, and discovers Swinton
on the ground, Gordon support-
ing him; both much wounded.
Swi. All are cut down—the reapers
have pass'd o'er us,
And he to distant harvest.—My
toil's over;
There lies my sickle. [Dropping his
sword.] Hand of mine again
Shall never, never wield it!
Gör. O valiant leader, is thy
light extinguish'd!
That only beacon-flame which
promised safety
In this day's deadly wrack!
Swi. My lamp hath long been
dim! But thine, young Gordon,
Just kindled, to be quench'd so
suddenly,
Ere Scotland saw its splendour!—
Gör. Five thousand horse hung
idly on you hill,
Saw us o'erpower'd, and no one
stirr'd to aid us!
Swi. It was the Regent's envy.—
Out!—alas!

Why blame I him!—It was our
civil discord,
Our selfish vanity, our jealous
hatred,
Which framed this day of dole for
our poor country.—
Had thy brave father held yon
leading staff,
As well his rank and valour might
have claim'd it,
We had not fall'n unaided.—How,
O how
Is he to answer it, whose deed
prevented—
Gör. Alas! alas! the author of
the death-feud,
He has his reckoning too! for had
your sons
And num'rous vassals lived, we had
lack'd no aid.
Swi. May God assoil the dead,
and him who follows!
We've drunk the poison'd beverage
which we brew'd:
Have sown the wind, and reap'd
the tenfold whirlwind!—
But thou, brave youth, whose noble-
ness of heart
Pour'd oil upon the wounds our
hate inflicted;
Thou, who hast done no wrong,
need'st no forgiveness,—
Why should'st thou share our
punishment!
Gör. All need forgiveness—[distant
alarum.] —— Hark! in yonder
shout
Did the main battles counter!
Swi. Look on the field, brave
Gordon, if thou canst,
And tell me how the day goes.—But
I guess,
Too surely do I guess—
Gör. All's lost! all's lost!—Of
the main Scottish host,
Some wildly fly, and some rush
wildly forward;
And some there are who seem to
turn their spears
Against their countrymen.
Swi. Rashness, and cowardice,
and secret treason.
Combine to ruin us; and our hot
valour,
Devoid of discipline, is madmen's
strength,
More fatal unto friends than
enemies!
I'm glad that these dim eyes shall
see no more on't.—
Let thy hands close them, Gordon—
I will dream
My fair-hair'd William renders me
that office! [Dies.
Gor. And, Swinton, I will think
I do that duty
To my dead father.

Enter De Vipont.

Vip. Fly, fly, brave youth!—A
handful of thy followers,
The scatter'd gleaning of this
desperate day,
Still hover yonder to essay thy
rescue.—
O linger not! I'll be your guide to
them.
Gor. Look there, and bid me fly!
—The oak has fall'n;
And the young ivy bush, which
learn'd to climb
By its support, must needs partake
its fall.
Vip. Swinton? Alas! the best,
the bravest, strongest,
And sages of our Scottish chivalry!
Forgive one moment, if to save the
living,
My tongue should wrong the dead.
—Gordon, bethink thee,
Thou dost but stay to perish with
the corpse
Of him who slew thy father.
Gor. Ay, but he was my sire in
chivalry.
He taught my youth to soar above
the promptings
Of mean and selfish vengeance;
gave my youth
A name that shall not die even on
this death-spot,
Records shall tell this field had not
been lost,
Had all men fought like Swinton
and like Gordon. [Trumpets.
Save thee, De Vipont. Hark! the
Southron trumpets.
Vip. Nay, without thee I stir not.

Enter Edward, Chandos, Percy,
Baliol, etc.

Gor. Ay, they come on—the Tyrant
and the Traitor
Workman and tool, Plantagenet and
Baliol.
O for a moment's strength in this
poor arm,
To do one glorious deed!
[He rushes on the English, but
is made prisoner with Vipont.
K. Ed. Disarm them—harm them
not; though it was they
Made havoc on the archers of our
vanguard,
They and that bulky champion.
Where is he?
Chai. Here lies the giant! Say
his name, young Knight?
Gor. Let it suffice, he was a man
this morning.
Chai. I question'd thee in sport. I
do not need
Thy information, youth. Who that
has fought
Through all these Scottish wars, but
knows his crest,
The sable boar chain'd to the leafy
oak,
And that huge mace still seen where
war was wildest!
K. Ed. 'Tis Alan Swinton!
Grim chamberlain, who in my tent
at Weardale,
Stood by my startled couch with
torch and mace,
When the Black Douglas' war-cry
waked my camp.
Gor. (sinking down.) If thus thou
know'st him,
Thou wilt respect his corpse.
K. Ed. As belted Knight and
crowned King, I will.
Gor. And let mine
Sleep at his side, in token that our
death
MACDUFF'S CROSS.

TO

MRS. JOANNA BAILLIE,

AUTHORESS OF

"THE PLAYS ON THE PASSIONS."

INTRODUCTION.

These few scenes had the honour to be included in a Miscellany, published in the year 1823, by Mrs. Joanna Baillie, and are here reprinted, to unite them with the trifles of the same kind which owe their birth to the author. The singular history of the Cross and Law of Clan MacDuff is given, at length enough to satisfy the keenest antiquary, in The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. It is here only necessary to state, that the Cross was a place of refuge to any person related to MacDuff, within the ninth degree, who, having committed homicide in sudden quarrel, should reach this place, prove his descent from the Thane of Fife, and pay a certain penalty.

The shaft of the Cross was destroyed at the Reformation. The huge block of stone which served for its pedestal is still in existence near the town of Newburgh, on a kind of pass which commands the county of Fife to the southward, and to the north, the windings of the magnificent Tay and fertile country of Angus-shire. The Cross bore an inscription, which is transmitted to us in an unintelligible form by Sir Robert Sibbald.

ABERTSFORD, January, 1830.

Sworn to my country ere I knew my Order.
K. Ed. I will but know thee as a Christian champion,
And set thee free unransom’d.

Enter Abbot of Walthamstow.

Ab. Heaven grant your Majesty
Many such glorious days as this has been!
K. Ed. It is a day of much and high advantage;
Glorious it might have been, had all our foes
Fought like these two brave champions.—Strike the drums,
Sound trumpets, and pursue the fugitives.
Till the Tweed’s eddies whelm them.
Berwick’s render’d—
These wars, I trust, will soon find lasting close.
"When to the hook the salmon springs,
And the line whistles through the rings."
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Ninian, } Monks of Lindores.
Waldhave,
Lindesay,
Maurice Berkeley, } Scottish Barons.

PRELUDE.

Nay, smile not, Lady, when I speak
of witchcraft,
And say, that still there lurks
amongst our glens
Some touch of strange enchantment.
—Mark that fragment,
I mean that rough-hewn block of
massive stone,
Placed on the summit of this mountain-pass,
Commanding prospect wide o'er field
and fell,
And peopled village and extended
moorland,
And the wide ocean and majestic
Tay,
To the far distant Grampians.—Do
not deem it
A loosen'd portion of the neighbouring
rock,
Detach'd by storm and thunder,—
'twas the pedestal
On which, in ancient times, a Cross
was rear'd,
Carved o'er with words which foil'd
philologists;
And the events it did commemorate
Were dark, remote, and undistinguishable,
As were the mystic characters it bore.
But, mark,—a wizard, born on Avon's
bank,
Tuned but his harp to this wild
northern theme,
And, lo! the scene is hallow'd. None
shall pass,
Now, or in after days, beside that
stone,
But he shall have strange visions;
thoughts and words,
That shake, or rouse, or thrill the
human heart,
sc.

Shall rush upon his memory when
he hears
The spirit-stirring name of this rude
symbol;—
Oblivious ages, at that simple spell,
Shall render back their terrors with
their woes,
Alas! and with their crimes—and
the proud phantoms
Shall move with step familiar to his
eye,
And accents which, once heard, the
ear forgets not,
Though ne'er again to list them.
Siddons, thine,
Thou matchless Siddons! thrill upon
our ear;
And on our eye thy lofty Brother's
form
Rises as Scotland's monarch.—But
to thee,
Joanna, why to thee speak of such
visions?
Thine own wild wand can raise
them.

Yet since thou wilt an idle tale of
mine,
Take one which scarcely is of worth
enough
To give or to withhold.—Our time
creeps on,
Fancy grows colder as the silvery
hair
Tells the advancing winter of our
life.
But if it be of worth enough to please,
That worth it owes to her who set
the task;
If otherwise, the fault rests with
the author.

SCENE I.

The summit of a Rocky Pass near to
Newburgh, about two miles from
the ancient Abbey of Lindores, in
Fife. In the centre is MacDuff's
Cross, an antique Monument; and,
at a small distance, on one side, a
Chapel, with a Lamp burning.
Enter, as having ascended the Pass, Ninian and Waldhave, Monks of Lindores. Ninian crosses himself, and seems to recite his devotions. Waldhave stands gazing on the prospect, as if in deep contemplation.

Nin. Here stands the Cross, good brother, consecrated
By the bold Thane unto his patron saint
Magridius, once a brother of four-house.
Canst thou not spare an ave or a creed?
Or hath the steep ascent exhausted you?
You trode it stably, though 'twas rough and toilsome.
Wald. I have trode a rougher.
Nin. On the Highland hills—Scarce within our sea-girt province here,
Unless upon the Lomonds or Bennarty.
Wald. I spoke not of the literal path, good father,
But of the road of life which I have travel'd,
Ere I assumed this habit; it was bounded,
Hedged in, and limited by earthly prospects,
As ours beneath was closed by dell and thicket.
Here we see wide and far, and the broad sky,
With wide horizon, opens full around,
While earthly objects dwindle.
Brother Ninian,
Fain would I hope that mental elevation
Could raise me equally o'er worldly thoughts,
And place me nearer heaven.
Nin. 'Tis good morality.—But yet forget not,
That though we look on heaven from this high eminence,
Yet doth the Prince of all the airy space,
Arch foe of man, possess the realms between.

Wald. Most true, good brother; and men may be farther
From the bright heaven they aim at, even because
They deem themselves secure on't.
Nin. (after a pause.) You do gaze—
Strangers are wont to do so—on the prospect.
Yon is the Tay roll'd down from Highland hills,
That rests his waves, after so rude a race,
In the fair plains of Gowrie—farther westward,
Proud Stirling rises—yonder to the east,
Dundee, the gift of God, and fair Montrose,
And still more northward lie the ancient towers—
Wald. Of Edzell.
Nin. How? know you the towers of Edzell?
Wald. I've heard of them.
Nin. Then have you heard a tale,
Which when he tells, the peasant shakes his head,
And shuns the mouldering and deserted walls.
Wald. Why, and by whom, deserted?
Nin. Long the tale—Enough to say that the last Lord of Edzell,
Bold Louis Lindesay, had a wife, and found—
Wald. Enough is said, indeed—since a weak woman,
Ay, and a tempting fiend, lost Paradise,
When man was innocent.
Nin. They fell at strife,
Men say, on slight occasion: that fierce Lindesay
Did bend his sword against De Berkeley's breast,
And that the lady threw herself between:
That then De Berkeley dealt the Baron's death-wound.
Enough, that from that time De
Berkeley bore
A spear in foreign wars. But, it is
said,
He hath return'd of late; and, there-
fore, brother,
The Prior hath ordain'd our vigil here,
To watch the privilege of the sanctu-
ary,
And rights of Clan MacDuff.
Wal. What rights are these?
Nin. Most true! you are but newly
come from Rome,
And do not know our ancient usages.
Know then, when fell Macbeth be-
neath the arm
Of the destined knight, unborn or
woman,
Three boons the victor ask'd, and
thrice did Malcolm,
Stooping the sceptre by the Thane
restored,
Assent to his request. And hence
the rule,
That first when Scotland's King
assumes the crown,
MacDuff's descendant rings his brow
with it:
And hence, when Scotland's King
calls forth his host,
MacDuff's descendant leads the van
in battle:
And last, in guerdon of the crown
restored,
Red with the blood of the usurping
tyrant,
The right was granted in succeeding
time,
That if a kinsman of the Thane of
Fife
Commit a slaughter on a sudden
impulse,
And fly for refuge to this Cross
MacDuff,
For the Thane's sake he shall find
sanctuary;
For here must the avenger's step be
staid,
And here the panting homicide find
safety.
Wal. And here a brother of your
order watches,
To see the custom of the place ob-
served?
Nin. Even so;—such is our con-
vent's holy right,
Since Saint Magridius—blessed be
his memory!—
Did by a vision warn the Abbot
Eadmir,—
And chief we watch, when there is
bickering
Among the neighbouring nobles,
now most likely
From this return of Berkeley from
abroad,
Having the Lindesay's blood upon
his hand.
Wal. The Lindesay, then, was
loved among his friends?
Nin. Honour'd and fear'd he was
—but little loved;
For even his bounty bore a show of
sternness;
And when his passions waked, he
was a Sathan
Of wrath and injury.
Wal. How now, Sir Priest!
(fiercely)—Forgive me (recol-
collecting myself)—I was dreaming
Of an old baron, who did bear about
him
Some touch of your Lord Reynold.
Nin. Lindesay's name, my brother,
Indeed was Reynold;—and me-
thinks, moreover,
That, as you spoke even now, he
would have spoken.
I brought him a petition from our
convent;
He granted straight, but in such
tone and manner,
By my good saint! I thought my-
sel scarce safe
Till Tay roll'd broad between us. I
must now
Unto the chapel—meanwhile, the
watch is thine;
And, at thy word, the hurrying
fugitive,
Should such arrive, must here find
sanctuary;
And, at thy word, the fiery-paced
avenger
Must stop his bloody course—e'en as
dswohn Jordan
Controll'd his waves, soon as they
touch'd the feet
Of those who bore the ark,
WAL. Is this my charge?
NIN. Even so; and I am near,
should chance require me.
At midnight I relieve you on your
watch,
When we may taste together some
refreshment:
I have cared for it; and for a flask
of wine—
There is no sin, so that we drink it
not
Until the midnight hour, when lauds
toll'd,
Farewell a while, and peaceful watch
be with you!
Exit towards the Chapel.
WAL. It is not with me, and alas! alas!
I know not where to seek it. This
monk's mind
Is with his cloister match'd, nor
lacks more room,
Its petty duties, formal ritual,
Its humble pleasures and its paltry
troubles,
Fill up his round of life; even as
some reptiles,
They say, are moulded to the very
shape,
And all the angles of the rocky
crevise,
In which they live and die. But for
myself,
Retired in passion to the narrow
cell,
Couching my tired limbs in its re-
cesses,
So ill-adapted am I to its limits,
That every attitude is agony.——
How now! what brings him back?

Re-enter Ninian.

NIN. Look to your watch, my
brother; horsemen come:
I heard their tread when kneeling in
the chapel.

WAL. (looking to a distance.) My
thoughts have rapt me more
than thy devotion,
Else had I heard the tread of distant
horses
Farther than thou could'st hear the
sacring bell;
But now in truth they come:—flight
and pursuit
Are sights I've been long strange to.
NIN. See how they gallop down
the opposing hill!
You gray steed bounding down the
headlong path,
As on the level meadow; while the
black,
Urged by the rider with his naked
sword,
Stoops on his prey, as I have seen
the falcon
Dashing upon the heron.—Thou dost
frown
And clench thy hand, as if it grasp'd
a weapon?
WAL. 'Tis but for shame to see a
man fly thus
While only one pursues him.
Coward, turn!—
Turn thee, I say! thou art as stout
as he,
And well mayst match thy single
sword with his—
Shame, that a man should rein a
steed like thee,
Yet fear to turn his front against a
foe!—
I am ashamed to look on them.
NIN. Yet look again; they quit
their horses now;
Unfit for the rough path: the
fugitive
Keeps the advantage still.—They
strain towards us.
WAL. I'll not believe that ever the
bold Thane
Rear'd up his Cross to be a sanctuary
To the base coward, who shunn'd an
equal combat.—
How's this?—that look—that niue
—mine eyes grow dizzy!—
NIN. He comes!—thou art a novice
on this watch,—
As these good men may say an ave-marie,—
So, Heaven be good to me! I will forgive thee
Thy deed and all its consequences.
Ber. Were not my right hand fetter'd by the thought
That slaying thee were but a double guilt
In which to steep my soul, no bride-groom ever
Stepp'd forth to trip a measure with
More joyfully than I, young man, would rush
To meet thy challenge.
Lix. He quails, and shuns to look
Upon my weapon,
Yet boasts himself a Berkeley!
Ber. Lindsay, and if there were
For shunning thee than terror of thy
That rock-hewn Cross as soon should
Because a shepherd-boy blew horn
As I for brag of thine.
Nix. I charge you both, and in
The name of Heaven;
Breathe no defiance on this sacred
Where Christian men must bear
them peacefully,
On pain of the Church thunders.
Calmly tell
Your cause of difference; and, Lord
Lindsay, thou
Be first to speak them.
Lix. Ask the blue welkin—ask the
silver Tay,
The northern Grampians—all things
know my wrongs;
But ask not me to tell them, while
the villain,
Who wrought them, stands and
listens with a smile.
Nix. It is said—
Since you refer us thus to general
fame—
That Berkeley slew thy brother, the
Lord Louis,
In his own halls at Edzell—
Lin. Ay, in his halls—
In his own halls, good father, that's the word.
In his own halls he slew him, while the wine
Pass'd on the board between! The gallant Thane,
Who wreak'd Macbeth's inhospitable murder,
Rear'd not yon Cross to sanction deeds like these.
Ber. Thou say'st I came a guest!—I came a victim,
A destined victim, train'd on to the doom,
His frantic jealousy prepared for me.
He fix'd a quarrel on me, and we fought.
Can I forget the form that came between us,
And perish'd by his sword? 'Twas then I fought
For vengeance,—until then I guarded life,
But then I sought to take it, and prevail'd.
Lin. Wretch! thou didst first dishonour to thy victim.
And then didst slay him!
Ber. There is a busy fiend tugs at my heart,
But I will struggle with it!—Youthful knight,
My heart is sick of war, my hand of slaughter;
I come not to my lordships, or my land,
But just to seek a spot in some cold cloister,
Which I may kneel on living, and, when dead,
Which may suffice to cover me.
Forgive me that I caused your brother's death;
And I forgive thee the injurious terms
With which thou taxest me.
Lin. Take worse and blacker.—Murderer, adulterer!—
Art thou not moved yet?
Ber. Do not press me further.

The hunted stag, even when he seeks the thicket,
Compell'd to stand at bay, grows dangerous!
Most true thy brother perish'd by my hand,
And if you term it murder—I must bear it.
Thus far my patience can; but if thou brand
The purity of yonder martyr'd saint,
Whom then my sword but poorly did avenge,
With one injurious word, come to the valley,
And I will show thee how it shall be answer'd!

Lin. This heat, Lord Berkeley, doth but ill accord
With thy late pious patience.
Ber. Father, forgive, and let me stand excused
To Heaven and thee, if patience brooks no more.
I loved this lady fondly—truly loved—
Loved her, and was beloved, ere yet her father
Conferr'd her on another. While she lived,
Each thought of her was to my soul as hallow'd
As those I send to Heaven; and on her grave,
Her bloody, early grave, while this poor hand
Can hold a sword, shall no one cast a scorn.

Lin. Follow me. Thou shalt hear me call the adulteress
By her right name.—I'm glad there's yet a spur
Can rouse thy sluggard mettle.
Ber. Make then obedienc to the blessed Cross,
For it shall be on earth thy last devotion.

[They are going off.

Wal. (rushing forward.) Madmen, stand!—
Stay but one second—answer but one question.—
There, Maurice Berkeley, can'st thou look upon
That blessed sign, and swear thou'st spoken truth?
Bel. I swear by Heaven,
And by the memory of that murder'd innocent,
Each seeming charge against her was as false
As our bless'd Lady's spotless. Hear, each saint!
Hear me, thou holy rood! hear me from heaven,
Thou martyr'd excellence!—Hear me from heaven,
(For sure not yet thy guilt is expiated!)
Stern ghost of her destroyer!—
Wal. (throws back his coat.) He hears! he hears
Thy spell hath raised the dead.
Lin. My brother! and alive!—
Wal. Alive,—but yet, my Richard, dead to thee,
No tie of kindred binds me to the world;
All were renounced, when, with reviving life,
Came the desire to seek the sacred cloister.
Alas, in vain! for to that last retreat,
Like to a pack of bloodhounds in full chase,
My passion and my wrongs have follow'd me,
Wrath and remorse—and, to fill up the cry,
Thou hast brought vengeance hither.
Lin. But I but sought
To do the act and duty of a brother.
Wal. I ceased to be so when I left the world;
But if he can forgive as I forgive,
God sends me here a brother in mine enemy,
To pray for me and with me. If thou canst,
De Berkeley, give thine hand.—
Bel. (gives his hand.) It is the will
Of Heaven, made manifest in thy preservation,
To inhibit further bloodshed; for De Berkeley,
The votary Maurice lays the title down.
Go to his halls, Lord Richard, where a maiden,
Kin to his blood, and daughter in affection,
Heirs his broad lands;—If thou canst love her, Lindesay,
Woo her, and be successful.

THE DOOM OF DEVORGOIL.

PREFACE.

The first of these dramatic pieces was long since written, for the purpose of obliging the late Mr. Terry, then Manager of the Adelphi Theatre, for whom the Author had a particular regard. The manner in which the mimic goblins of Devorgoil are intermixed with the supernatural machinery, was found to be objectionable, and the production had other faults, which rendered it unfit for representation. I have called the piece a Melo-drama, for want of a better name; but, as I learn from the unquestionable authority of Mr. Colman's Random Records, that one species of the drama is termed an extravaganza, I am sorry I was not sooner aware of a more appropriate name than that which I had selected for Devorgoil.

The Author's Publishers thought it desirable, that the scenes, long condemned to oblivion, should be united to similar attempts of the same kind; and as he felt indifferent on the subject, they are printed in the same volume with Halidon Hill and MacDuft's Cross, and thrown off in a separate form, for
the convenience of those who possess
former editions of the Author's Poetical
Works.

The general story of the Doom or
Devorgoil is founded on an old Scottish
tradition, the scene of which lies in
Galloway. The crime supposed to
have occasioned the misfortunes of
this devoted house, is similar to that
of a Lord Herries of Hoddam Castle,
who is the principal personage of Mr.
Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's interesting
ballad, in the Minstrels of the Scottish
for his crime, he built the singular
monument called the Tower of Repen
tance. In many cases the Scottish
superstitions allude to the fairies, or
those who, for sins of a milder descrip
tion, are permitted to wander with the
"rout that never rest," as they were
termed by Dr. Leyden. They imitate
human labour and human amusements,
but their toil is useless, and without
any advantageous result; and their
gaiety is unsubstantial and hollow.
The phantom of Lord Erick is sup
posed to be a spectre of this character.
The story of the Ghostly Barber is
told in many countries; but the best
narrative founded on the passage, is
the tale called Stumme Liebe, among
the legends of Musæus. I think it
has been introduced upon the English
stage in some pantomime, which was
one objection to bringing it upon the
scene a second time.

Abbotsford. April, 1830.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Oswald of Devorgoil, a decayed Scottish
Baron.
Leonard, a Ranger.
Durward, a Palmer.
Lancelot Blackthorn, a Companion of
Leonard, in love with Katleen.
Gullcrammer, a conceited Student.
Owlspiegle and Cockledemoy, Maskers, represented
by Blackthorn and Katleen.
Spirit of Lord Erick of Devorgoil.
Peasants, Shepherds, and Vassals of
inferior rank.

Eleanor, Wife of Oswald, descended of
obscure Parentage.
Flora, Daughter of Oswald.
Katleen, Niece of Eleanor.

ACT I.—SCENE I.
The Scene represents a wild and hilly,
but not a mountainous Country, in
a frontier District of Scotland. The
flat Scene exhibits the Castle of
Devorgoil, decayed, and partly
ruinous, situated upon a Lake, and
connected with the Land by a
Drawbridge, which is lowered.
Time—Sunset.

Flora enters from the Castle, looks
timidly around, then comes forward
and speaks.

He is not here—those pleasures are
not ours
Which placid evening brings to all
things else.

SONG.
The sun upon the lake is low,
The wild birds hush their song,
The hills have evening's deepest
glow,
Yet Leonard tarries long.
Now all whom varied toil and care
From home and love divide,
In the calm sunset may repair
Each to the loved one's side.

The noble dame, on turret high,
Who waits her gallant knight,
Looks to the western beam to spy
The flash of armour bright.
The village maid, with hand on
brow,
The level ray to shade,
Upon the footpath watches now
For Colin's darkening plaid.

Now to their mates the wild swans
row,
By day they swam apart,
And to the thicket wanders slow,
The hind beside the hart,
The woodlark at his partner's side,  
Twitters his closing song—  
All meet whom day and care divide,  
But Leonard tarries long.

| Katleen has come out of the  
| Castle while Flora was  
| singing, and speaks when  
| the Song is ended.  

Kat. Ah, my dear coz!—if that  
your mother's niece  
May so presume to call your father's  
daughter—  
All these fond things have got some  
home of comfort  
To tempt their rovers back—the  
lady's bower,  
The shepherdess's hut, the wild  
swan's couch  
Among the rushes, even the lark's  
low nest,  
Has that of promise which lures  
home a lover,—  
But we have nought of this.  
Flo. How call you, then, this  
castle of my sire,  
The towers of Devorgoil?  
Kat. Dungeons for men, and  
palaces for owls;  
Yet no wise owl would change a  
farmer's barn  
For yonder hungry hall—our latest  
mouse,  
Our last of mice, I tell you, has been  
found  
Starved in the pantry; and the  
reverend spider,  
Sole living tenant of the Baron's  
halls,  
Who, train'd to abstinence, lived a  
whole summer  
Upon a single fly, he's famish'd too;  
The cat is in the kitchen-chimney  
seated  
Upon our last of fagots, destined  
soon  
To dress our last of suppers, and,  
poor soul,  
Is starved with cold, and mewling  
mad with hunger.  
Flo. D'ye mock our misery,  
Katleen?  
Kat. No, but I am hysteric on the  
subject,  
So I must laugh or cry, and laugh-  
ing's lightest.  
Flo. Why stay you with us, then,  
my merry cousin?  
From you my sire can ask no filial  
duty.  
Kat. No, thanks to Heaven!  
No noble in wide Scotland, rich or  
poor,  
Can claim an interest in the vulgar  
blood  
That dances in my veins; and I  
might wed  
A forester to-morrow, nothing fearing  
The wrath of high-born kindred, and  
far less  
That the dry bones of lead-lapp'd  
ancestors  
Would clatter in their cerements at  
the tidings.  
Flo. My mother, too, would gladly  
see you placed  
Beyond the verge of our unhappi-  
ness,  
Which, like a witch's circle, blights  
and taints  
Whatever comes within it.  
Kat. Ah! my good aunt!  
She is a careful kinswoman and  
prudent,  
In all but marrying a ruin'd baron,  
When she could take her choice of  
honest yeomen;  
And now, to balance this ambitious  
error.  
She presses on her daughter's love  
the suit  
Of one, who hath no touch of noble-  
ness,  
In manners, birth, or mind, to  
recommend him,—  
Sage Master Gullcrummer, the new-  
dubb'd preacher.  
Flo. Do not name him, Katleen!  
Kat. Ay, but I must, and with  
some gratitude.  
I said but now, I saw our last of  
fagots  
Destined to dress our last of meals,  
but said not
That the repast consisted of choice dainties, 
Sent to our larder by that liberal suitor, 
The kind Melchisedek. 

Flo. Were famishing the word, 
I'd famish ere I tasted them—the fop, 
The fool, the low-born, low-bred, pedant coxcomb! 
Kat. There spoke the blood of long-descended sires! 
My cottage wisdom ought to echo back,— 
O the snug parsonage! the well-paid stipend! 
The yew-hedged garden! beehives, pigs, and poultry! 
But, to speak honestly, the peasant Katleen, 
Valuing these good things justly, still would scorn 
To wed, for such, the paltry Gullcrammer, 
As much as Lady Flora. 

Flo. Mock me not with a title, gentle cousin, 
Which poverty has made ridiculous.—

| Trumpets far off. |

Hark! they have broken up the weaponshawing; 
The vassals are dismiss'd, and marching homeward. 
Kat. Comes your sire back to-night? 

Flo. He did purpose 
To tarry for the banquet. This day only, 
Summon'd as a king's tenant, he resumes 
The right of rank his birth assigns to him, 
And mingles with the proudest. 

Kat. To return 
To his domestic wretchedness to-morrow—
I envy not the privilege. Let us go 
To yonder height, and see the marksmen practise: 
They shoot their match down in the dale beyond, 
Betwixt the Lowland and the Forest district, 
By ancient custom, for a tun of wine. 
Let us go see which wins. 

Flo. That were too forward. 
Kat. Why, you may drop the screen before your face, 
Which some chance breeze may haply blow aside 
Just when a youth of special note takes aim. 
It chanced even so that memorable morning; 
When, nutting in the woods, we met young Leonard;— 
And in good time here comes his sturdy comrade, 
The rough Lance Blackthorn. 

Enter Lancelot Blackthorn, a Forester, with the Carcass of a Deer on his back, and a Gun in his hand. 

Bla. Save you, damsels! 
Kat. Godden, good yeoman.—Come you from the Weaponshaw? 
Bla. Not I, indeed; there lies the mark I shot at. 

[Lays down the Deer. 

The time has been I had not miss'd the sport, 
Although Lord Nithsdale's self had wanted venison; 
But this same mate of mine, young Leonard Dacre, 
Makes me do what he lists;—he'll win the prize, though: 
The Forest district will not lose its hono' r, 
And that is all I care for—(some shouts are heard). Hark they're at it. 
I'll go see the issue. 

Flo. Leave not here 
The produce of your hunting. 

Bla. But I must, though. 
This is his lair to-night, for Leonard Dacre 
Charged me to leave the stag at Devorgoil;
Then show me quickly where to stow the quarry,
And let me to the sports—(*more shots*). Come, hasten, damsels!
Flo. It is impossible—we dare not take it.
Blas. There let it lie, then, and I'll wind my bugle,
That all within these tottering walls may know
That here lies venison, whose likes to lift it.
[About to blow.
Kat. (to Flo). He will alarm your mother; and, besides,
Our Forest proverb teaches, that no question
Should ask where venison comes from.
Your careful mother, with her wonted prudence,
Will hold its presence plead its own apology.—
Come, Blackthorn, I will show you
where to stow it.
[Exeunt Kateleen and Blackthorn into the Castle—more shooting—then a distant shout—Stragglers, armed in different ways, pass over the Stage, as if from the Weapon-shave.
Flo. The prize is won; that general shout proclaim'd it.
The marksmen and the vassals are dispersing; [She draws back.
First Vassal (a peasant). Ay, ay,—'tis lost and won,—the Forest have it.
'Tis they have all the luck on't.
Second Vassal (a shepherd). Luck, sayst thou, man? 'Tis practice, skill, and cunning.
Third Vassal. 'Tis no such thing.—I had hit the mark precisely,
But for this cursed flint; and, as I fired,
A swallow cross'd mine eye too—
Will you tell me
That that was but a chance, mine honest shepherd?
First Vass. Ay, and last year, when Lancelot Blackthorn won it,
Because my powder happen'd to be damp,
Was there no luck in that?—The worse luck mine.
Second Vass. Still I say 'twas not chance; it might be witchcraft.
First Vass. Faith, not unlikely, neighbours; for these foresters
Do often haunt about this ruin'd castle.
I've seen myself this spark,—young Leonard Dacre,—
Come stealing like a ghost ere break of day,
And after sunset, too, along this path;
And well you know the haunted towers of Devorgoil
Have no good reputation in the land.
Slep. 'That have they not. I've heard my father say,—
Ghosts dance as lightly in its moon-light halls,
As ever maiden did at Midsummer
Upon the village-green.
First Vass. Those that frequent such spirit-haunted ruins
Must needs know more than simple Christians do.—
See, Lance this blessed moment leaves the castle,
And comes to triumph o'er us.
[Blackthorn enters from the Castle, and comes forward while they speak.
Third Vass. A mighty triumph! What is't, after all,
Except the driving of a piece of lead,—
As learned Master Gullcrammer defined it,—
Just through the middle of a painted board.
Black. And if he so define it, by your leave,
Your learned Master Gullcrammer's an ass.
Third Vass. (angrily.) He is a preacher, huntsman, under favour.
Second Vass. No quarrelling, neighbours—you may both be right.
Enter a Fourth Vassal, with a gallon stoup of wine.

Fourth Vass. Why stand you brawling here? Young Leonard Daere

Has set abroad the tun of wine he gain'd,
That all may drink who list. Blackthorn, I sought you;
Your comrade prays you will bestow this flagon
Where you have left the deer you kill'd this morning.

Black. And that I will; but first we will take toll
To see if it's worth carriage. Shepherd, thy horn.
There must be due allowance made
And that will come about a draught a-piece.
Skink it about, and, when our throats are liquor'd,
We'll merrily trowl our song of weaponshaw.

[They drink about out of the Shepherd's horn and then sing.

song.

We love the shrill trumpet, we love the drum's rattle,
They call us to sport, and they call us to battle;
And old Scotland shall laugh at the threats of a stranger,
While our comrades in pastime are comrades in danger.

If there's mirth in our house, 'tis our neighbour that shares it—
If peril approach, 'tis our neighbour that dares it;
And when we lead off to the pipe and the tabor,
The fair hand we press is the hand of a neighbour.

Then close your ranks, comrades, the bands that combine them,
Faith, friendship, and brotherhood, join'd to entwine them;
And we'll laugh at the threats of each insolent stranger,
While our comrades in sport are our comrades in danger.

Black. Well, I must do mine errand. Master flagon

[Shaking it. Is too consumptive for another bleeding.

Shep. I must to my fold.

Third Vass. I'll to the butt of wine.
And see if that has given up the ghost yet.

First Vass. Have with you, neighbour.

[Blackthorn enters the Castle, the rest exectut severally.

Melchisedek Gullcrammer watches them off the stage, and then enters from the side-scene. His costume is a Geneva cloak and band, with a high-crowned hat; the rest of his dress in the fashion of James the First's time. He looks to the windowes of the Castle, then draws back as if to escape observation, while he brushes his cloak, drives the white threads from his waistcoat with his wetted thumb, and dusts his shoes, all with the air of one who would not willingly be observed engaged in these offices. He then adjusts his collar and band, comes forward and speaks.

Gul. Right comely is thy garb, Melchisedek;
As well beseemeth one, whom good Saint Mungo,
The patron of our land and university, Hath graced with license both to teach and preach—
Who dare opine thou luther plod'st on foot?
Trim sits thy cloak, unruffled is thy band,
And not a speck upon thine outward man,
Bewrays the labours of thy weary sole.

[Touches his shoe, and smiles complacently.]

Quaint was that jest and pleasant!—Now, will I Approach and hail the dwellers of this fort; But specially sweet Flora Devorgoil, Ere her proud sire return. He loves me not, Mocketh my lineage, flouts at mine advancement—

Sour as the fruit the crab-tree furnishes,
And hard as is the cudgel it supplies; But Flora—she's a lily on the lake, And I must reach her, though I risk a ducking.

[As Gullcrammer moves towards the drawbridge, Bauldie Durward enters, and interposes himself betwixt him and the Castle. Gullcrammer stops and speaks.]

Whom have we here?—that ancient fortune-teller, Papist and sorcerer, and sturdy beggar,

Old Bauldie Durward! Would I were well past him!

[Durward advances, partly in the dress of a palmer, partly in that of an old Scottish mendicant, having coarse blue cloak and badge, white beard, etc.]

DUR. The blessing of the evening on your worship, And on your taffy doublet. Much I marvel Your wisdom chooseth such trim garb, when tempests Are gathering to the bursting.

Gullcrammer (looks to his dress, and then to the sky, with some apprehension.)

Surely, Bauldie, Thou dost belie the evening—in the west The light sinks down as lovely as this band

Drops o'er this mantle— Tush, man! 'twill be fair.

DUR. Ay, but the storm I bode is big with blows, Horsewhips for hail-stones, clubs for thunderbolts; And for the wailing of the midnight wind, The unpitied howling of a cudgel'd coxcomb, Come, come, I know thou seek'st fair Flora Devorgoil.

GUL. And if I did, I do the damsel grace, Her mother thinks so, and she has accepted At these poor hands gifts of some consequence, And curious dainties for the evening cheer, To which I am invited—She respects me.

DUR. But not so doth her father, haughty Oswald. Bethink thee, he's a baron—

GUL. And a bare one; Construe me that, old man!—The crofts of Mucklewhame—

Destined for mine so soon as heaven and earth Have shared my uncle's soul and bones between them—

The crofts of Mucklewhame, old man, which nourish Three scores of sheep, three cows, with each her follower, A female palfrey eke—I will be candid,

She is of that meek tribe whom, in derision, Our wealthy southern neighbours nickname donkeys—

DUR. She hath her follower too,—when thou art there.

GUL. I say to thee, these crofts of Mucklewhame, In the mere tything of their stock and produce, Outvie whatever patch of land remains To this old rugged castle and its owner.
Well, therefore, may Melchisedek—
Gullcrammer,
Younger of Mucklewhame, for such I write me,
Master of Arts, by grace of good Saint Andrew,
Preacher, in brief expectance of a kirk,
Endow'd with ten score Scottish pounds per annum,
Being eight pounds seventeen eight in sterling coin—
Well then, I say, may this Melchisedek,
Thus highly graced by fortune—and by nature
E'en gifted as thou seest—aspire to woo
The daughter of the beggar'd Devorgoil.

Dur. Credit an old man's word, kind Master Gullcrammer,
You will not find it so.—Come, sir, I've known
The hospitality of Mucklewhame:
It reach'd not to profuseness—yet, in gratitude
For the pure water of its living well,
And for the barley loaves of its fair fields,
Wherein chopp'd straw contended with the grain
Which best should satisfy the appetite,
I would not see the hopeful heir of Mucklewhame
Thus fling himself on danger.

Gul. Danger! what danger?—
Know'st thou not, old Oswald
This day attends the muster of the shire,
Where the crown-vassals meet to show their arms,
And their best horse of service?—
'Twas good sport
(An if a man had dared but laugh at it)
To see old Oswald with his rusty morion,
And huge two-handed sword, that might have seen
The field of Bannockburn or Chevy-Chase,
Without a squire or vassal, page or groom,
Or e'en a single pikeman at his heels,
Mix with the proudest nobles of the county,
And claim precedence for his tatter'd person
O'er armours double gilt and ostrich-plumage.

Dur. Ay! 'twas the jest at which fools laugh the loudest,
The downfall of our old nobility—
Which may forerun the ruin of a kingdom.
I've seen an idiot clap his hands, and shout
To see a tower like you (points to a part of the Castle) stoop to its base
In headlong ruin; while the wise look'd round,
And fearful sought a distant stance to watch
What fragment of the fabric next should follow;
For when the turrets fall, the walls are tottering.

Gul. (after pondering). If that means aught, it means thou saw'st old Oswald
Expelli'd from the assembly.

Dur. Thy sharp wit Hath glanced unwittingly right nigh the truth.
Expelli'd he was not, but, his claim denied
At some contested point of ceremony, He left the weaponshaw in high displeasure, And hither comes—his wonted bitter temper
Scarce sweeten'd by the chances of the day.
'Twere much like rashness should you wait his coming, And thither tends my counsel.

Gul. And I'll take it; Good Bauldie Durward, I will take thy counsel, And will requite it with this minted farthing; That bears our sovereign's head in purest copper.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

DUR. Thanks to thy bounty—
   Haste thee, good young master; Oswald, besides the old two-handed sword,
Bears in his hand a staff of potency,
To charm intruders from his castle purlieus.

GUL. I do abhor all charms, nor will abide
To hear or see, far less to feel their use.
Behold, I have departed.

[Exit hastily.

Manent Durward.

DUR. Thus do I play the idle part of one
Who seeks to save the moth from scorching him
In the bright taper's flame—And Flora's beauty
Must, not unlike that taper, waste away,
Gilding the rugged walls that saw it kindled.
This was a shard-born beetle, heavy, drossy,
Though boasting his dull drone and gilded wing.
Here comes a flatterer of another stamp,
Whom the same ray is charming to his ruin.

Enter Leonard, dressed as a huntsman; he pauses before the Tower,
And whistles a note or two at intervals—drawing back, as if fearful of observation—yet waiting, as if expecting—some reply.—Durward, whom he had not observed, moves round, so as to front Leonard unexpectedly.

LEON. I am too late—it was no easy task
To rid myself from yonder noisy revellers.
Flora!—I fear she's angry—Flora—Flora.

SONG.

Admire not that I gain'd the prize
From all the village crew;
How could I fail with hand or eyes,
When heart and faith were true?

And when in floods of rosy wine
My comrades drown'd their cares,
I thought but that thy heart was mine,
My own leapt light as theirs.

My brief delay then do not blame,
Nor deem your swain untrue;
My form but linger'd at the game,
My soul was still with you.

She hears not!
DUR. But a friend hath heard—Leonard, I pity thee.

LEON. (starts, but recovers himself). Pity, good father, is for those in want,
In age, in sorrow, in distress of mind,
Or agony of body. I'm in health—Can match my limbs against the stag in chase,
Have means enough to meet my simple wants,
And am so free of soul that I can carol
To woodland and to wild in notes as lively
As are my jolly bugle's.

DUR. Even therefore dost thou need my pity, Leonard,
And therefore I bestow it, praying thee,
Before thou feel'st the need, my mite of pity.
Leonard, thou lovest; and in that little word
There lies enough to claim the sympathy
Of men who wear such hoary locks as mine,
And know what misplaced love is sure to end in.

LEON. Good father, thou art old, and even thy youth,
As thou hast told me, spent in
cloister'd cells,
Fits thee but ill to judge the passions,
Which are the joy and charm of
social life.
Press me no further, then, nor waste
those moments
Whose worth thou canst not estimate.

| DUR. (detains him). Stay, young man! |
| Tis seldom that a beggar claims a debt; |
| Yet I bethink me of a gay young stripling,
That owes to these white locks and
hoary beard
Something of reverence and of gratitude
More than he wills to pay. |
| LEON. Forgive me, father! Often hast thou told me,
That in the ruin of my father's house
You saved the orphan Leonard in
his cradle;
And well I know, that to thy care alone—
Care seconded by means beyond thy seeming—
I owe whate'er of nurture I can boast.

| DUR. Then for thy life preserved,
And for the means of knowledge I have furnish'd,
(Which lacking, man is levell'd with
the brutes,)
Grant me this boon:—Avoid these fatal walls!
A curse is on them, bitter, deep, and
heavy,
Of power to split the massiest tower
they boast
From pinnacle to dungeon vault. It rose
Upon the gay horizon of proud
Devorgoil,
As unregarded as the fleecy cloud,
The first forerunner of the hurricane,
Scarce seen amid the welkin's shade-
less blue.
Dark grew it, and more dark, and
still the fortunes

Of this doom'd family have darken'd
with it.
It hid their sovereign's favour, and
obscured
The lustre of their service, gender'd
hate
Betwixt them and the mighty of the
land;
Till by degrees the waxing tempest
rose,
And stripp'd the goodly tree of fruit
and flowers,
And buds, and boughs, and branches.
There remains
A rugged trunk, dismember'd and
unsightly,
Waiting the bursting of the final
bolt
To splinter it to shivers. Now, go
pluck
Its single tendril to enwreathe thy
brow,
And rest beneath its shade—to share
the ruin!

| LEON. This anathema,
Whence should it come?—How merited!—and when!
DUR. 'Twas in the days
Of Oswald's grandsire,—'mid Gal-
wegian chiefs
The feallest foe, the fiercest champion.
His blood-red pennons scared the
Cumbrian coasts,
And wasted towns and manors
mark'd his progress.
His galleys stored with treasure, and
their decks
Crowded with English captives, who
beheld,
With weeping eyes, their native
shores retire,
He bore him homeward; but a
tempest rose—

| LEON. So far I've heard the tale,
And spare thee the recital,—The grim chief,
Marking his vessels labour on the
sea,
And loth to lose his treasure, gave
command
To plunge his captives in the raging
deep.
DUR. There sank the lineage of a noble name, and the wild waves boom’d over sire and son, mother and nursling, of the House of Aglionby, leaving but one frail tendril.—Hence the fate. That hovers o’er these turrets,—hence the peasant, belated, lying homewards, dreads to cast a glance upon that portal, lest he see the unshrouded spectres of the murder’d dead; or the avenging Angel, with his sword, waving destruction; or the grisly phantom of that fell chief, the doer of the deed, which still, they say, roams through his empty halls, and mourns their wasteness and their loneliness. LEON. Such is the dotage of superstition, father, ay, and the cant of hoodwink’d prejudice.—Not for atonement of some foul deed done in the ancient warfare, when war was butchery, and men were wolves, doth Heaven consign the innocent to suffering. I tell thee, Flora’s virtues might atone for all the massacres her sires have done, since first the Pictish race their stained limbs array’d in wolf’s skin. DUR. Leonard, ere yet this beggar’s scrip and cloak supplied the place of mitre and of crosier, which in these alter’d lands must not be worn, I was superior of a brotherhood of holy men,—the Prior of Lanercost.

Nobles then sought my footstool many a league, there to unload their sins—questions of conscience of deepest import were not deem’d too nice. For my decision, youth.—But not even then, with mitre on my brow, and all the voice which Rome gives to a father of her church, dared I pronounce so boldly on the ways. of hidden providence, as thou, young man, whose chiefest knowledge is to track a stag, or wind a bugle, hast presumed to do. LEON. Nay, I pray forgive me, father; thou know’st I meant not to presume—

DUR. Can I refuse thee pardon?—Thou art all that war and change have left to the poor Duward. Thy father, too, who lost his life and fortune defending Lanercost, when its fair aisles were spoil’d by sacrilege—I bless’d his banner, and yet it prosper’d not. But—all I could Thee from the wreck I saved, and for thy sake, have still dragg’d on my life of pilgrimage, and penitence upon the hated shores I else had left for ever. Come with me, and I will teach thee there is healing in the wounds which friendship gives. [Excunt.]

SCENE II.

The scene changes to the interior of the Castle. An apartment is discovered, in which there is much
Eleanor, the wife of Oswald of Devorgoil, Flora and Katleen, her Daughter and Niece, are discovered at work. The former spins, the latter are embroidering. Eleanor quits her own labour to examine the manner in which Flora is executing her task, and shakes her head as if dissatisfied.

ELE. Fy on it, Flora; this botch'd work of thine Shows that thy mind is distant from thy task. The finest tracery of our old cathedral Had not a richer, freer, bolder pattern, Than Flora once could trace. Thy thoughts are wandering. FLO. They're with my father. Broad upon the lake The evening sun sunk down; huge piles of clouds, Crimson and sable, rose upon his disk, And quench'd him ere his setting; like some champion In his last conflict, losing all his glory. Sure signals those of storm. And if my father Be on his homeward road—

ELE. But that he will not. Baron of Devorgoil, this day at least He banquets with the nobles, who the next Would scarce vouchsafe an alms to save his household From want or famine. Thanks to a kind friend, For one brief space we shall not need their aid. FLO. (joyfully.) What! knew you then his gift? How silly I that would, yet durst not tell it! I fear my father will condemn us both, That easily accepted such a present. KAT. Now, here's the game a bystander sees better Than those who play it.—My good aunt is pondering On the good cheer which Gullcrammer has sent us, And Flora thinks upon the forest venison. [Aside. ELE. (to Flo.) Thy father need not know on't—'tis a boon Comes timely, when frugality, nay, abstinence, Might scarce avail us longer. I had hoped Ere now a visit from the youthful donor, That we might thank his bounty; and perhaps My Flora thought the same, when Sunday's kerchief And the best kirtle were sought out, and donn'd To grace a work-day evening. FLO. Nay, mother, that is judging all too close! My work-day gown was torn—my kerchief sullied; And thus—But, think you, will the gallant come? ELE. He will, for with these dainties came a message From gentle Master Gullcrammer, to intimate—

FLO. (greatly disappointed.) Gullcrammer? KAT. There burst the bubble—down fell house of cards, And cousin's like to cry for't! [Aside.
An high-born beggar?—This young
man is modest—
FLO. Silly, good mother; sheepish,
if you will it.
ELE. E'en call it what you list—the
softer temper,
The fitter to endure the bitter sallies
Of one whose wit is all too sharp for
mine.
FLO. Mother, you cannot mean it
as you say;
You cannot bid me prize conceited
folly?
ELE. Content thee, child—each lot
has its own blessings.
This youth, with his plain-dealing
honest suit,
Proffers thee quiet, peace, and com-
petence,
Redemption from a home, o'er which
fell Fate
Stoops like a falcon.—O, if thou
couldst choose
(As no such choice is given) 'twixt
such a mate
And some proud noble!—Who, in
sober judgment,
Would like to navigate the heady
river,
Dashing in fury from its parent
mountain,
More than the waters of the quiet
lake?
Kat. Now can I hold no longer—
Lake, good aunt?
Nay, in the name of truth, say mill-
pond, horse-pond;
Or if there be a pond more mity,
More sluggish, mean-derived, and
base than either,
Be such Gullcrammer's emblem—
and his portion!
Flo. I would that he or I were in
our grave,
Rather than thus his suit should
goad me!—Mother,
Flora of Devorgoil, though low in
fortunes,
Is still too high in mind to join her
name
With such a base-born churl as
Gullcrammer.
ELE. You are trim maidens both!
(To Flora.) Have you forgotten,
Or did you mean to call to my remembrance
Thy father chose a wife of peasant blood?

Flo. Will you speak thus to me,
or think the stream
Can mock the fountain it derives its source from?

My venerated mother, in that name
Lies all on earth a child should chiepest honour;
And with that name to mix reproach or taunt,
Were only short of blasphemy to Heaven.

ELE. Then listen, Flora, to that mother's counsel,
Or rather profit by that mother's fate.
Your father's fortunes were but bent,
Not broken,
Until he listen'd to his rash affection.
Means were afforded to redeem his house,
Ample and large—the hand of a rich heiress
 Awaited, almost courted, his acceptance;
He saw my beauty—such it then was call'd,
Or such at least he thought it—the with'er'd bush,
Whate'er it now may seem, had blossoms then,—
And he forsook the proud and wealthy heiress,
To wed with me and ruin—

Kat. (aside.) The more fool,
Say I, apart, the peasant maid then,
Who might have chose a mate from her own hamlet.

ELE. Friends fell off,
And to his own resources, his own counsels,
Abandon'd, as they said, the thoughtless prodigal,
Who had exchanged rank, riches, pomp, and honour,
For the mean beauties of a cottage maid.

Flo. It was done like my father,
Who scorn'd to sell what wealth can never buy—
True love and free affections. And he loves you!
If you have suffer'd in a weary world,
Your sorrows have been jointly borne, and love
Has made the load sit lighter.

ELE. Ay, but a misplaced match hath that deep curse in't,
That can embitter e'en the purest streams
Of true affection. Thou hast seen me seek,
With the strict caution early habits taught me,
To match our wants and means—
hast seen thy father
With aristocracy's high brow of scorn,
Spurn'd at economy, the cottage virtue,
As best befitting her whose sires were peasants;
Nor can I, when I see my lineage scorn'd,
Always conceal in what contempt I hold
The fancied claims of rank he clings to fondly.

Flo. Why will you do so?—well you know it chafes him.

ELE. Flora, thy mother is but mortal woman,
Nor can at all times check an eager tongue.

Kat. (aside.) That's no new tidings
To her niece and daughter.

ELE. O mayst thou never know the spited feelings
That gender discord in adversity
Betwixt the dearest friends and truest lovers!
In the chill damping gale of poverty,
If Love's lamp go not out, it gleams but palely,
And twinkles in the socket.

Flo. But tenderness can screen it
With her veil,
Till it revive again. By gentleness,
Good mother,
How oft I've seen you soothe my father's mood!
Kat. Now there speak youthful hope and fantasy! [Aside.
Ele. That is an easier task in youth than age;
Our temper hardens, and our charms decay,
And both are needed in that art of soothing.
Kat. And there speaks sad experience.
[Aside.
Ele. Besides, since that our state was utter desperate,
Darker his brow, more dangerous grow his words;
Fain would I snatch thee from the woe and wrath
Which darken'd long my life, and soon must end it.
[Knocking without; Eleanor shows alarm.
It was thy father's knock, haste to the gate.
[Execut Flora and Katleen.
What can have happ'd?—he thought to stay the night.
This gear must not be seen.
[As she is about to remove the basket, she sees the body of the roe-deer.
What have we here? a roe-deer!—
as I fear it,
This was the gift of which poor Flora thought.
The young and handsome hunter;—
but time presses.
[She removes the basket, and the roe into a closet. As she has done—
Enter Oswald of Devorgoil, Flora, and Katleen.
[He is dressed in a scarlet cloak, which should seem worn and old—a headpiece, and old-fashioned sword—the rest of his dress that of a peasant. His countenance and manner should express the moody and irritable haughtiness of a proud man involved in calamity, and who has been exposed to recent insult.
Osw. (addressing his wife). The sun hath set—why is the drawbridge lower'd?
Ele. The counterpoise has fail'd, and Flora's strength, Katleen's, and mine united, could not raise it.
Osw. Flora and thou! A goodly garrison
tohold a castle, which, if fame say true,
Once foil'd the King of Norse and all his rovers.
Ele. It might be so in ancient times, but now—
Osw. A herd of deer might storm proud Devorgoil.
Kat. (aside to Flo). You, Flora, know full well one deer already
Has enter'd at the breach; and, what is worse,
The escort is not yet march'd off, for Blackthorn
Is still within the castle.
Flo. In Heaven's name, rid him out on't, ere my father
Discovers he is here! Why went he not
Before?
Kat. Because I staid him on some little business;
I had a plan to scare poor paltry Gullcrammer
Out of his paltry wits.
Flo. Well, haste ye now, and try to get him off.
Kat. I will not promise that, I would not turn an honest hunter's dog,
So well I love the woodcraft, out of shelter
In such a night as this—far less his master:
But I'll do this, I'll try to hide him for you.
Osw. (whom his wife has assisted to take off his cloak and feathered cap). Ay, take them off; and bring my peasant's bonnet.
And peasant's plaid—I'll noble it no farther.
Let them erase my name from honour's lists,
And drag my scutcheon at their horses' heels;
I have deserved it all, for I am poor,
And poverty hath neither right of birth,
Nor rank, relation, claim, nor privilege,
To match a new-coin'd viscount, whose good grandsire,
The Lord be with him, was a careful skipper,
And steer'd his palty skiff 'twixt Leith and Campvère—
Marry, sir, he could buy Geneva cheap,
And knew the coast by moonlight.
Flo. Mean you the Viscount Ellondale, my father?
What strife has been between you?
Osw. O, a trifle!
Not worth a wise man's thinking twice about—
Precedence is a toy—a superstition
About a table's end, joint-stool, and trencher.
Something was once thought due to long descent,
And something to Galwegia's oldest baron,—
But let that pass—a dream of the old time.
Ele. It is indeed a dream.
Osw. (turning upon her rather quickly.) Ha! said ye, let me hear these words more plain.
Ele. Alas! they are but echoes of your own.
Match'd with the real woes that hover o'er us,
What are the idle visions of precedence,
But, as you term them, dreams, and toys, and trifles,
Not worth a wise man's thinking twice upon?
Osw. Ay, 'twas for you I framed that consolation,
The true philosophy of clouted shoe
And linsey-woolsey kirtle. I know, that minds
Of nobler stamp receive no dearer motive

Than what is link'd with honour
Ribands, tassels,
Which are but shreds of silk and spangled tinsel—
The right of place, which in itself is momentary—
A word, which is but air—may in themselves,
And to the nobler file, be steep'd so richly
In that elixir, honour, that the lack
Of things so very trivial in themselves
Shall be misfortune. One shall seek for them
O'er the wild waves—one in the deadly breach
And battle's headlong front—one in the paths
Of midnight study; and, in gaining these
Emblems of honour, each will hold himself
Repaid for all his labours, deeds, and dangers.
What then should he think, knowing them his own,
Who sees what warriors and what sages toil for,
The formal and establish'd marks of honour,
Usurp'd from him by upstart insolence?
Ele. (who has listened to the last speech with some impatience). This is but empty declamation, Oswald.
The fragments left at yonder full-spread banquet,
Nay, even the poorest crust swept from the table,
Ought to be far more precious to a father,
Whose family lacks food, than the vain boast,
He sate at the board-head.
Osw. Thou'lt drive me frantic!—
I will tell thee, woman—
Yet why to thee? There is another ear
Which that tale better suits, and he shall hear it.
And the fierce dictates of the head-long passions,
Sing, then, my love; for if a voice have influence
To mediate peace betwixt me and my destiny,
Flora, it must be thine.

Flo. My best to please you!

SONG.

When the tempest's at the loudest,
On its gale the eagle rides;
When the ocean rolls the proudest,
Through the foam the sea-bird glides—
All the rage of wind and sea
Is subdued by constancy.

Gnawing want and sickness pining,
All the ills that men endure;
Each their various pangs combining,
Constancy can find a cure—
Pain, and Fear, and Poverty,
Are subdued by constancy.

Bar me from each wonded pleasure,
Make me abject, mean, and poor;
Heap on insults without measure,
Chain me to a dungeon floor—
I'll be happy, rich, and free,
If endow'd with constancy.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A Chamber in a distant part of the Castle. A large Window in the flat scene, supposed to look on the Lake, which is occasionally illuminated by lightning. There is a Couch-bed in the Room, and an antique Cabinet.

Enter Katleen, introducing Blackthorn.

Kat. This was the destined scene of action, Blackthorn,
And here our properties. But all in vain.
For of Gullcrammer we'll see nought to-night,
Except the dainties that I told you of.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

BLA. O, if he's left that same hog's face and sausages,
He will try back upon them, never fear it.
The cur will open on the trail of bacon,
Like my old brach-hound.

KAT. And should that hap, we'll play our comedy,—

Shall we not, Blackthorn? Thou shalt be Owlspiegle——

BLA. And who may that hard-named person be?
KAT. I've told you nine times over.
BLA. Yes, pretty Katleen, but my eyes were busy
In looking at you all the time you were talking;
And so I lost the tale.

KAT. Then shut your eyes, and let your goodly ears
Do their good office.
BLA. That were too hard penance.
Tell but thy tale once more, and I will hearken
As if I were thrown out, and listening for
My bloodhound's distant bay.

KAT. A civil simile!
Then, for the tenth time, and the last—he told,
Owlspiegle was of old the wicked barber
To Erick, wicked Lord of Devorgoil.

BLA. The chief who dround'd his captives in the Solway——
We all have heard of him.

KAT. A hermit hoar, a venerable man——
So goes the legend—came to wake repentance
In the fierce lord, and tax'd him with his guilt;
But he, heart-harden'd, turn'd into derision
The man of heaven, and, as his dignity
Consisted much in a long reverend beard,
Which reach'd his girdle, Erick caused his barber

This same Owlspiegle, violate its honours
With sacrilegious razor, and clip his hair
After the fashion of a roguish fool.

BLA. This was reversing of our ancient proverb,
And shaving for the devil's, not for God's sake.

KAT. True, most grave Blackthorn; and in punishment
Of this foul act of scorn, the barber's ghost
Is said to have no resting after death,
But haunts these halls, and chiefly this same chamber,
Where the profanity was acted, trimming
And clipping all such guests as sleep within it.
Such is at least the tale our elders tell,

With many others, of this haunted castle.

BLA. And you would have me take this shape of Owlspiegle,
And trim the wise Melchisedek!—
I wronnot.

KAT. You will not!
BLA. No—unless you bear a part.

KAT. What! can you not a'one play such a farce?
BLA. Not I—I'm dull. Besides, we foresters

Still hunt our game in couples.

Look you, Katleen,
We danced at Shrovetide—then you were my partner;
We sung at Christmas—you kept time with me;
And if we go a mumming in this business,
By heaven, you must be one, or Master Gullcrammer
Is like to rest unshaven——

KAT. Why, you fool,
What end can this serve?

BLA. Nay, I know not, I.

But if we keep this wont of being partners,
Why, use makes perfect—who knows what may happen?
Kat. Thou art a foolish patch—But sing our carol,
As I have alter'd it, with some few words
To suit the characters, and I will bear—[Gives a paper.
Bl. Part in the gambol. I'll go study quickly.
Is there no other ghost, then, haunts the castle,
But this same barber shave-a-penny goblin?
I thought they glanced in every beam of moonshine,
As frequent as the bat.
Kat. I've heard my aunt's high husband tell of prophecies,
And fates impending o'er the house of Devorgoil;
Legends first coin'd by ancient superstition,
And render'd current by credulity
And pride of lineage. Five years have I dwelt,
And ne'er saw any thing more mischievous
Than what I am myself.
Bl. And that is quite enough, I warrant you.
But, stay, where shall I find a dress
To play this—what d'ye call him—Owlspiegle?
Kat. (takes dresses out of the cabinet.) Why, there are his own clothes,
Preserved with other trumpery of the sort,
For we have kept nought but what is good for nought.
[She drops a cap as she draws out the clothes. Blackthorn lifts it, and gives it to her.
Nay, keep it for thy pains—it is a coxcomb;
So call'd in ancient times, in ours a fool's cap;
For you must know they kept a Fool at Devorgoil
In former days; but now are well contented
To play the fool themselves, to save expenses;
Yet give it me, I'll find a worthy use for't.
I'll take this page's dress, to play the page
Cockledemoy, who waits on ghostly Owlspiegle;
And yet 'tis needless, too, for Gullcrammer
Will scarce be here to-night.
Bl. I tell you that he will—I will uphold
His plighted faith and true allegiance
Unto a sows'd sow's face and sausages,
And such the dainties that you say he sent you,
Against all other likings whatsoever,
Except a certain sneaking of affection,
Which makes some folks I know of play the fool,
To please some other folks.
Kat. Well, I do hope he'll come—there's first a chance
He will be cudgel'd by my noble uncle—
I cry his mercy—by my good aunt's husband,
Who did vow vengeance, knowing nought of him
But by report, and by a limping sonnet
Which he had fashion'd to my cousin's glory,
And forwarded by blind Tom Long the carrier;
So there's the chance, first of a hearty beating,
Which failing, we've this after-plot of vengeance.
Bl. Kind damsel, how considerate and merciful!
But how shall we get off, our parts being play'd?
Kat. For that we are well fitted; here's a trap-door
Sinks with a counterpoise—you shall go that way.
I'll make my exit yonder—'neath the window,
For there never came maid into merry Sherwood,
But she paid the forester’s fee.

I've coursed this twelvemonth this sly puss, young Katleen,
And she has dodged me, turn’d beneath my nose,
And flung me out a score of yards at once;
If this same gear fadge right, I'll cote and mouth her,
And then! whoop! dead! dead! dead!—She is the metal
To make a woodsman’s wife of!—

[Pauses a moment.
Well—I can find a hare upon her form
With any man in Nithsdale—stalk a deer,
Run Reynard to the earth for all his doubles,
Reclaim a haggard hawk that’s wild and wayward,
Can bait a wild-cat,—sure the devil’s in’t
But I can match a woman—I’ll to study.

[Sits down on the couch to examine the paper.

SCENE II.

Scene changes to the inhabited apartment of the Castle, as in the last Scene of the preceding Act. A fire is kindled, by which Oswald sits in an attitude of deep and melancholy thought, without paying attention to what passes around him. Eleanor is busy in covering a table; Flora goes out and re-enters, as if busied in the kitchen. There should be some by-play—the women whispering together, and watching the state of Oswald; then separating, and seeking to avoid his observation, when he casually raises his head, and drops it again. This must be left to taste and management. The Women, in the first
part of the scene, talk apart, and as if fearful of being overheard; the by-play of stopping occasionally, and attending to Oswald’s movements, will give liveliness to the Scene.

Ele. Is all prepared?
Flo. Ay; but I doubt the issue
Will give my sire less pleasure than you hope for.
Ele. Tush, maid—I know thy father’s humour better.
He was high-bred in gentle luxuries;
And when our griefs began, I’ve wept apart,
While lordly cheer and high-fill’d cups of wine
Were blinding him against the woe to come.
He has turn’d his back upon a princely banquet:
We will not spread his board—this night at least,
Since chance hath better furnish’d—
with dry bread,
And water from the well.

Enter Katleen, and hears the last speech.
Kat. (aside.) Considerate aunt! she deems that a good supper
Were not a thing indifferent even to him
Who is to hang to-morrow. Since she thinks so,
We must take care the venison has
due honour—
So much I owe the sturdy knave,
Lance Blackthorn.
Flo. Mother, alas! when Grief
turns raveller,
Despair is cup-bearer. What shall
hap to-morrow?
Ele. I have learn’d carelessness
from fruitless care.
Too long I’ve watch’d to-morrow; let it come
And cater for itself—Thou hear’st the thunder.

[Low and distant thunder.
This is a gloomy night—within, alas!
[Looking at her husband.

Still gloomier and more threatening
— Let us use
Whatever means we have to drive it o’er,
And leave to Heaven to-morrow.
Trust me, Flora,
’Tis the philosophy of desperate want
To match itself but with the present evil,
And face one grief at once.
Away, I wish thine aid and not thy counsel.

[As Flora is about to go off,
Gullcrammer’s voice is heard
behind the flat scene, as if from the drawbridge.

Gul. (behind.) Hillo—hillo—hilloa—ho—hoa!
[Oswald raises himself and
listens; Eleanor goes up
the steps, and opens the window at the loop-hole; Gullcrammer’s voice is then heard more distinctly.

Gul. Kind Lady Devorgoil—sweet Mistress Flora!—
The night grows fearful, I have lost
my way,
And wander’d till the road turn’d
round with me,
And brought me back—For Heaven’s sake give me shelter!
Kat. (aside.) Now, as I live, the
voice of Gullcrammer!
Now shall our gambol be play’d off
with spirit;
I’ll swear I am the only one to whom
That screech-owl whoop was o’er
acceptable.

Osw. What bawling knave is this that takes our dwelling
For some hedge-inn, the haunt of lated drunkards?
Ele. What shall I say?—Go, Katleen, speak to him.
Kat. (aside.) The game is in my hands—I will say something
Will fret the Baron’s pride—and then he enters,
(She speaks from the window.) Good
sir, be patient!
We are poor folks—it is but six
Scotch miles
To the next borough town, where
your Reverence
May be accommodated to your wants;
We are poor folks, an't please your
Reverence,
And keep a narrow household—
there's no track
To lead your steps astray——
Gul. Nor none to lead them
right. — You kill me, lady,
If you deny me harbour. To budge
from hence,
And in my weary plight, were
sudden death,
Interment, funeral - sermon, tomb-
stone, epitaph.
Osw. Who's he that is thus
clamorous without?
(To Ele.) Thou know'st him?
Ele. (confused.) I know him?—no
—yes— 'tis a worthy clergyman,
Benighted on his way;—but think
not of him.
Kat. The morn will rise when
that the tempest's past,
And if he miss the marsh, and can avoid
The crags upon the left, the road is
plain
Osw. Then this is all your piety!
—to leave
One whom the holy duties of his office
Have summon'd over moor and
wilderness,
To pray beside some dying wretch's
bed,
Who (erring mortal) still would
clave to life,
Or wake some stubborn sinner to
repentance—
To leave him, after offices like these,
To choose his way in darkness
'twixt the marsh
And dizzy precipice?
Ele. What can I do?
Osw. Do what thou canst—the
wealthiest do no more—
And if so much, 'tis well. These
crumbling walls,
While yet they bear a roof, shall
now, as ever,
Give shelter to the wanderer—Have
we food?
He shall partake it—Have we none?
the fast
Shall be accounted with the good
man's merits
And our misfortunes——
[He goes to the loop-hole while
he speaks, and places himself
there in room of his Wife,
who comes down with re-
luctance.]
Gul. (without.) Hillo—hoa—hoa!
By my good faith, I cannot plod it
farther;
The attempt were death.
Osw. (speaks from the window.)
Patience, my friend, I come to
lower the drawbridge.
[Descends, and exit.
Ele. O, that the screaming bitter
had his couch
Where he deserves it, in the deepest
marsh !
Kat. I would not give this sport
for all the rent
Of Devorgoil, when Devorgoil was
richest !
(To Ele.) But now you chided me,
my dearest aunt,
For wishing him a horse-pond for
his portion?
Ele. Yes, saucy girl; but, an it
please you, then
He was not fretting me; if he had
sense enough,
And skill to bear him as some casual
stranger,—
But he is dull as earth, and every
hint
Is lost on him, as hail-shot on the
cormorant,
Whose hide is proof except to
musket-bullets!
Flo. (apart.) And yet to such a one
would my kind mother,
Whose chiefest fault is loving me
too fondly,
Wed her poor daughter!

Enter Gulcrammer, his dress dam-
aged by the storm; Eleanor runs
to meet him, in order to explain to him that she wished him to behave as a stranger. Gullcrammer, mistaking her approach for an invitation to familiarity, advances with the air of pedantic conceit belonging to his character, when Oswald enters.—ELEANOR recovers herself, and assumes an air of distance—Gullcrammer is confounded, and does not know what to make of it.

Osw. The counterpoise has clean given way; the bridge
Must e'en remain unraised, and leave us open,
For this night's course at least, to passing visitants.—
What have we here?—is this the reverend man?

[He takes up the candle, and surveys Gullcrammer, who strives to sustain the inspection with confidence, while fear obviously contends with conceit and desire to show himself to the best advantage.

Gul. Kind sir—or, good my lord—my band is ruffled,
But yet 'twas fresh this morning.
This fell shower
Hath somewhat smirch'd my cloak, but you may note
It rates five marks per yard; my doublet
Hath fairly 'scaped—'tis three-piled taffeta.

[Opens his cloak, and displays his doublet.

Osw. A goodly inventory—Art thou a preacher?

Gul. Yea—I laud Heaven and good Saint Mungo for it.

Osw. 'Tis the time's plague, when those that should weed follies
Out of the common field, have their own minds
O'errun with foppery—Envoys 'twixt heaven and earth,
Example should with precept join, to show us

How we may scorn the world with all its vanities.

Gul. Nay, the high heavens forend that I were vain!

When our learn'd Principal such sounding laud

Gave to mine Essay on the hidden qualities

Of the sulphuric mineral, I disclaim'd

All self-exaltment. And (turning to the women) when at the dance,

The lovely Saccharissa Kirkencroft,
Daughter to Kirkencroft of Kirkencroft,

Graced me with her soft hand, credit me, ladies,

That still I felt myself a mortal man, though beauty smiled on me.

Osw. Come, sir, enough of this,

That you're our guest to-night, thank the rough heavens,

And all our worser fortunes; be conformable

Unto my rules; these are no Saccharissas

To gild with compliments. There's in your profession,

As the best grain will have its piles of chaff,

A certain whiffer, who hath dared to bait

A noble maiden with love tales and sonnets;

And if I meet him, his Geneva cap

May scarce be proof to save his ass's ears.

Kat. (aside.) Umph—I am strongly tempted

And yet I think I will be generous,

And give his brains a chance to save his bones,

Then there's more humour in our goblin plot,

Than in a simple drubbing.

Ete. (apart to Fio.) What shall we do? If he discover him,

He'll fling him out at window.

Fio. My father's hint to keep himself unknown

Is all too broad, I think, to be neglected.
ELE. But yet the fool, if we produce his bounty,
May claim the merit of presenting it;
And then we're but lost women for accepting
A gift our needs made timely.
KAT. Do not produce them.
E' en let the fop go supperless to bed,
And keep his bones whole.
Osw. (to his Wife.) Hast thou aught
To place before him ere he seek repose?
ELE. Alas! too well you know our needful fare
Is of the narrowest now, and knows no surplus.
Osw. Shame us not with thy niggard housekeeping:
He is a stranger—were it our last crust,
And he the veriest coxcomb ere wore taffeta,
A pitch he's little short of—he must share it,
Though all should want to-morrow.
Gul. (partly overhearing what passes between them.) Nay, I am no lover of your sauced dainties:
Plain food and plenty is my motto still.
Your mountain air is bleak, and brings an appetite:
A sauced sow's face, now, to my modest thinking,
Has ne'er a fellow. What think these fair ladies
Of a sow's face and sausages?
Flo. Plague on the vulgar hind, and on his courtesies,
The whole truth will come out!
Osw. What should they think, but that you're like to lack
Your favourite dishes, sir, unless perchance
You bring such dainties with you.
Gul. No, not with me; not, indeed,
Directly with me; but—Aha! fair ladies!
[Makes signs again.
Kat. He'll draw the beating down—Were that the worst,
Heaven's will be done! [Aside.
Osw. (apart.) What can he mean?—this is the veriest dog-whelp—
Still he's a stranger, and the latest act
Of hospitality in this old mansion
Shall not be sullied.
Gul. Troth, sir, I think, under the ladies' favour,
Without pretending skill in second sight,
Those of my cloth being seldom conjurers—
Osw. I'll take my Bible-oath that thou art none. [Aside.
Gul. I do opine, still with the ladies' favour,
That I could guess the nature of our supper:
I do not say in such and such precedence
The dishes will be placed; housewives, as you know,
On such forms have their fancies; but, I say still,
That a sow's face and sausages—
Osw. Peace, sir! O'er-driven jests (if this be one) are insolent.
Flo. (apart, seeing her mother uneasy.) The old saw still holds true—a churl's benefits,
Sauced with his lack of feeling, sense, and courtesy,
Savour like injuries.
[He's horn is winded without; then a loud knocking at the gate.
Leo. (without.) Ope, for the sake of love and charity!
[Oswald goes to the loop-hole.
Gul. Heaven's mercy! should there come another stranger,
And he half starved with wandering on the wolds,
The sow's face boasts no substance, nor the sausages,
To stand our reinforced attack! I judge, too,
By this starved Baron's language, there's no hope
Of a reserve of victuals.
Flo. Go to the casement, cousin.
Kat. Go yourself, and bid the gallant who that bugle
Sleep in the storm-swept waste; as meet for him
As for Lance Blackthorn.—Come, I'll get admittance for this second suitor,
And we'll play out this gambol at cross purposes.
But see, your father has prevented me.
Osw. (seems to have spoken with those without, and answers.) Well, I will ope the door; one guest already,
Driven by the storm, has claim'd my hospitality,
And you, if you were fiends, were scarce less welcome
To this my mouldering roof, than empty ignorance
And rank conceit—I hasten to admit you. [Exit.
Ele. (to Flo.) The tempest thickens. By that winded bugle,
I guess the guest that next will honour us.—
Little deceiver, that didst mock my troubles,
'Tis now thy turn to fear!
Flo. Mother, if I knew less or more of this
Unthought of and most perilous visitation,
I would your wishes were fulfill'd on me,
And I were wedded to a thing like you.
Gul. (approaching.) Come, ladies, now you see the jest is threadbare,
And you must own that same sow's face and sausages—

Re-enter Oswald with Leonard, supporting Bauldie Durward.
Oswald takes a view of them, as formerly of Gullcrammer, then speaks.

Osw. (to Leo.) By thy green casock, hunting-spear, and bugle, I guess thou art a huntsman?
Leo. (bowing with respect.) A ranger of the neighbouring royal forest,
Under the good Lord Nithsdale; huntsman, therefore,
In time of peace, and when the land has war,
To my best powers a soldier.
Osw. Welcome, as either. I have loved the chase
And was a soldier once.—This aged man,
What may he be?
Dur. (recovering his breath.) Is but a beggar, sir, an humble mendicant,
Who feels it passing strange, that from this roof,
Above all others, he should now crave shelter.
Osw. Why so? You're welcome both—only the word
Warrants more courtesy than our present means
Permit us to bestow. A huntsman and a soldier
May be a prince's comrade, much more mine;
And for a beggar—friend, there little lacks,
Save that blue gown and badge, and clouted pouches,
To make us comrades too; then welcome both,
And to a beggar's feast. I fear brown bread,
And water from the spring, will be the best on't;
For we had cast to wend abroad this evening,
And left our larder empty.
Gul. Yet, if some kindly fairy, in our behalf, would search its hid recesses,—
(Apart.) We'll not go supperless now—we're three to one.—

Still do I say, that a sowsed face and sausages—

Osw. (looks sternly at him, then at his wife.) There's something under this, but that the present

Is not a time to question. (To Ele.)

Wife, my mood

Is at such height of tide, that a turn'd feather

Would make me frantic now, with mirth or fury!

Tempt me no more—but if thou hast the things

This carrion crow so croaks for,

• bring them forth;

For, by my father's beard, if I stand caterer,

'Twill be a fearful banquet!

Ele. Your pleasure be obey'd—

Come, aid me, Flora. [Exit.

(During the following speeches
the Women place dishes on
the table.)

Osw. (to Dur.) How did you lose your path?

Dur. E'en when we thought to find it, a wild meteor

Danced in the moss, and led our feet astray.—

I give small credence to the tales of old,

Of Friar's-lantern told, and Will-o'-Wisp,

Else would I say, that some malicious demon

Guided us in a round; for to the moat,

Which we had pass'd two hours since, were we led,

And there the gleam flicker'd and disappear'd,

Even on your drawbridge. I was so worn down,

So broke with labouring through marsh and moor,

That, wold I nold I, here my young conducer

Would needs implore for entrance; else, believe me,

I had not troubled you.

Osw. And why not, father?—have you e'er heard aught,

Or of my house or me, that wanderers,

Whom or their loving trade or sudden circumstance

Oblige to seek a shelter, should avoid

The House of Devorgoil?

Dur. Sir, I am English born—

Native of Cumberland. Enough is said

Why I should shun those bowers,

whose lords were hostile

To English blood, and unto Cumber-

land

Most hostile and most fatal.

Osw. Ay, father. Once my grand-

sire plough'd, and harrow'd,

And sow'd with salt, the streets of

your fair towns;

But what of that?—you have the

vantage now.

Dur. True, Lord of Devorgoil, and

well believe I,

That not in vain we sought these
towers to-night,

So strangely guided, to behold their state.

Osw. Ay, thou woldst say, 'twas

fit a Cumbrian beggar

Should sit an equal guest in his

proud halls,

Whose fathers beggar'd Cumberland

—Greybeard, let it be so,

I'll not dispute it with thee.

(To Leo, who was speaking to
Flora, but, on being sur-

prised, occupied himself with

the suit of armour.)

What makest thou there, young man?

Leo. I marvell'd at this harness; it is larger

Than arms of modern days. How

richly carved

With gold inlaid on steel—how close

the rivets—

How justly fit the joints! I think

the gauntlet

Would swallow twice my hand.

[He is about to take down some

part of the Armour; Oswald

inter'eres.
Osw. Do not displace it
My grandsire, Erick, doubled human
strength,
And almost human size—and human
knowledge,
And human vice, and human virtue
also,
As storm or sunshine chanced to
occupy
His mental hemisphere. After a
fatal deed,
He hung his armour on the wall,
forbidding
It e'er should be ta'en down. There
is a prophecy,
That of itself 'twill fall, upon the
night
When, in the fiftieth year from his
decease,
Devorgoil's feast is full. This is the
era;
But, as too well you see, no meet
occasion
Will do the downfall of the armour
justice,
Or grace it with a feast. There let
it bide,
Trying its strength with the old
walls it hangs on
Which shall fall soonest.
Dur. (looking at the trophy with a
mixture of feeling;) Then there
stern Erick's harness hangs un-
touch'd,
Since his last fatal raid on Cumber-
land!
Osw. Ay, waste and want, and
recklessness—a comrade
Still yoked with waste and want—
have stripp'd these walls
Of every other trophy. Antler'd
skulls,
Whose branches vouch'd the tales
old vassals told
Of desperate chases—partisans and
spears—
Knights' barred helms and shields—
the shafts and bows,
Axes and breastplates, of the hardy
yeomanry—
The banners of the vanquish'd—signs
these arms
sc.
Were not assumed in vain, have
disappear'd.
Yes, one by one they all have dis-
appear'd;
And now Lord Erick's harness hangs
alone,
'Midst implements of vulgar hus-
bandry
And mean economy; as some old
warrior,
Whom want hath made an inmate
of an alms-house,
Shows, mid the beggar'd spendthrifts,
base mechanics,
And bankrupt pedlars, with whom
fate has mix'd him.
Dur. Or rather like a pirate, whom
the prison-house,
Prime leveller next the grave, hath
for the first time
Mingled with peaceful captives, low
in fortunes,
But fair in innocence.
Osw. (looking at Dur. with sur-
prise.) Friend, thou art bitter!
Dur. Plain truth, sir, like the
vulgar copper coinage,
Despised amongst the gentry, still
finds value
And currency with beggars.
Osw. Be it so.
I will not trench on the immunities
I soon may claim to share. Thy
features, too,
Though, weather-beaten, and thy
strain of language.
Relish of better days. Come hither,
friend,
[They speak apart.
And let me ask thee of thine occupa-
tion.
[Leonard looks round, and, seeing Oswald engaged with
Durward, and Gullcram-
mer with Eleanor, ap-
proaches towards Flora, who
must give him an opportunity
of doing so, with obvious
attention on her part to give
it the air of chance. The by-
play here will rest with the
Lady, who must engage the
attention of the audience by playing off a little female hypocrisy and simple coquetry.

LEO. Flora——
Flo. Ay, gallant huntsman, may she deign to question
Why Leonard came not at the appointed hour;
Or why he came at midnight?
LEO. Love has no certain loadstar, gentle Flora,
And oft gives up the helm to wayward pilotage.
To say the sooth—A beggar forced me hence,
And Will-o'-Wisp did guide us back again.
Flo. Ay, ay, your beggar was the faded spectre
Of Poverty, that sits upon the threshold
Of these our ruin'd walls. I've been unwise,
Leonard, to let you speak so oft with me;
And you a fool to say what you have said.
E'en let us here break short; and, wise at length,
Hold each our separate way through life's wide ocean.
LEO. Nay, let us rather join our course together,
And share the breeze or tempest, doubling joys,
Relieving sorrows, warding evils off
With mutual effort, or enduring them
With mutual patience.
Flo. This is but flattering counsel—sweet and baneful;
But mine had wholesome bitter in't.
Kat. Ay, ay; but like the sly apothecary,
You'll be the last to take the bitter drug
That you prescribe to others.

[They whisper. Eleanor advances to interrupt them, followed by Gullcrammer.
Ele. What, maid, no household cares? Leave to your elders

The task of filling passing strangers' ears
With the due notes of welcome.

Gul. Be it thine,
O, Mistress Flora, the more useful talent
Of filling strangers' stomachs with substantial;
That is to say,—for learn'd commentators
Do so expound substantial in some places,—
With a sows'd bacon-face and sausages,
Flo. (apart.) Would thou wert sows'd, intolerable pedant,
Base, greedy, perverse, interrupting coxcomb!
Kat. Hush, coz, for we'll be well avenged on him,
And ere this night goes o'er, else woman's wit
Cannot o'ertake her wishes.

[She proceeds to arrange seats.
Oswald and Durward come forward in conversation.

Osw. I like thine humour well.—
So all men beg——

Dur. Yes—I can make it good by proof. Your soldier
Begs for a leaf of laurel, and a line
In the Gazette. He brandishes his sword
To back his suit, and is a sturdy beggar——
The courtier begs a riband or a star,
And, like our gentler mumpers, is provided
With false certificates of health and fortune
Lost in the public service. For your lover,
Who begs a sigh, a smile, a lock of hair,
A buskin-point, he maunds upon the pad,
With the true cant of pure mendicity,
"The smallest trifle to relieve a Christian,
And if it like your Ladyship!"——

[In a begging tone.
Kat. (apart.) This is a cunning knave, and feeds the humour
Of my aunt's husband, for I must not say
Mine honour'd uncle. I will try a question.—
Your man of merit though, who serves the commonwealth,
Nor asks for a requital?—

[To Durward.]

Dur. Is a dumb beggar,
And lets his actions speak like signs for him,
Challenging double guerdon.—Now, I'll show
How your true beggar has the fair advantage
O'er all the tribes of cloak'd mendicity
I have told over to you.—The soldier's laurel,
The statesman's riband, and the lady's favour,
Once won and gain'd, are not held worth a farthing
By such as longest, loudest, canted for them;
Whereas your charitable halfpenny,
Which is the scope of a true beggar's suit,
Is worth two farthings, and, in times of plenty,
Will buy a crust of bread.

Flo. (interrupting him, and addressing her father.) Sir, let me be a beggar with the time,
And pray you come to supper.

Ele. (to Oswald, apart.) Must he sit with us?

[Looking at Durward.

Osw. Ay, ay, what else—since we are beggars all?
When cloaks are ragged, sure their worth is equal
Whether at first they were of silk or woollen.

Ele. Thou art scarce consistent
This day thou didst refuse a princely banquet,

Because a new-made lord was placed above thee;
And now——

Osw. Wife, I have seen, at public executions,
A wretch that could not brook the hand of violence
Should push him from the scaffold, pluck up courage,
And, with a desperate sort of cheerfulness,
Take the fell plunge himself—
Welcome then, beggars, to a beggar's feast.

Gul. (who has in the meanwhile seated himself.) But this is more.
—A better countenance,—
Fair fall the hands that sows'd it!—

Or prettier provender than these same sausages,
(By what good friend sent hither, shall be nameless,

Doubtless some youth whom love hath made profuse,)

[Smiling significantly at Eleanor and Flora.

No prince need wish to peck at.
Long, I ween,
Since that the nostrils of this house (by metaphor,
I mean the chimneys) smell'd a steam so grateful—

By your good leave I cannot dally longer.

[Helps himself.

Osw. (places Durward above Gullcrammer.) Meanwhile, sir,
Please it your faithful learning to give place
To gray hairs and to wisdom; and, moreover,
If you had tarried for the benediction——

Gul. (somewhat abashed.) I said grace to myself.

Osw. (not minding him.)—And waited for the company of others,
It had been better fashion. Time has been,
I should have told a guest at Devorgoil,
But are not all friends treacherous?
—one shall cross you
Even in your dearest interests—one
shall slander you—
This steal your daughter, that de-

fraud your purse;
But this gay flask of Bordeaux will
but borrow
Your sense of mortal sorrows for a
season,
And leave, instead, a gay delirium.
Methinks my brain, unused to such
gay visitants,
The influence feels already!—we
will revel!—
Our banquet shall be loud!—it is our
last.
Katleen, thy song.
Kat. Not now, my lord—I mean
to sing to-night
For this same moderate, grave, and
reverend clergyman;
I'll keep my voice till then.
Ele. Your round refusal shows
but cottage breeding.
Kat. Ay, my good aunt, for I was
cottage-nurtured,
And taught, I think, to prize my own
wild will
Above all sacrifice to compliment.
Here is a huntsman—in his eyes I
read it,
He sings the martial song my uncle
loves,
What time fierce Claver'se with his
Cavaliers,
Abjuring the new change of govern-
ment.
Forcing his fearless way through
timorous friends,
And enemies as timorous, left the
capital
To rouse in James's cause the distant
Highlands.
Have you ne'er heard the song, my
noble uncle?
Osw. Have I not heard, wench?—
It was I rode next him,
'Tis thirty summers since—rode by
his rein;
We marched on through the a'arm'd
city,
As sweeps the osprey through a flock of gulls,
Who scream and flutter, but dare no resistance
Against the bold sea-empress—They did murmur,
The crowds before us, in their sullen wrath,
And those whom we had pass'd, gathering fresh courage,
Cried havoc in the rear—we minded them
E'en as the brave bark minds the bursting billows,
Which, yielding to her bows, burst on her sides,
And ripple in her wake.—Sing me that strain,

[To Leonard.]
And thou shalt have a meed I seldom tender,
Because they're all I have to give—my thanks.
Leo. Nay, if you'll bear with what I cannot help,
A voice that's rough with hollowing to the hounds,
I'll sing the song even as old Rowland taught me.

SONG.

Air—The Bonnets of Bonny Dundee.

To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke,
"Ere the King's crown shall fall there are crowns to be broke;
So let each Cavalier who loves honour and me,
Come follow the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

"Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle your horses, and call up your men;
Come open the West Port, and let me gang free,
And it's room for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!"

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward, the drums they are beat;
But the Provost, douce man, said, "Just 'e'en let him be,
The Gude Town is weel quit of that Deil of Dundee."
Come fill up my cup, etc.

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Ilk carline was flying and shaking her pow;
But the young plants of grace they look'd couthie and slee,
Thinking, luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!
Come fill up my cup, etc.

With sour-featured Whigs the Grassmarket was cram'd
As if half the West had set tryst to hang'd;
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watch'd for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had spears,
And lang-hafted gullies to kill Cavaliers;
But they shrunk to close-heads, and the causeway was free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
Come fill up my cup, etc.

He spurr'd to the foot of the proud Castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke;
"Let Mons Meg and her marrows speak twa words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."
Come fill up my cup, etc.
The Gordon demands of him which way he goes—
"Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose!
Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."
Come fill up my cup, etc.

"There are hills beyond Pentland,
and lands beyond Forth,
If there's lords in the Lowlands,
there's chiefs in the North;
There are wild Duniewassals three thousand times three,
Will cry hoigh! for the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."
Come fill up my cup, etc.

"There's brass on the target of baren’d bull-hide;
There's steel in the scabbard that dangles beside;
The brass shall be burnish’d, the steel shall flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."
Come fill up my cup, etc.

"Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks—
Ere I own an usurper, I'll couch with the fox;
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me!"
Come fill up my cup, etc.

He waved his proud hand, and the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clash’d, and the horsemen rode on,
Till on Ravelston's cliffs and on Clermiston's lee,
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle the horses and call up the men,

Come open your gates, and let me gae free,
For it's up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!

ELE. Katleen, do thou sing now.
Thy uncle's cheerful;
We must not let his humour ebb again.
KAT. But I'll do better, aunt, than if I sung,
For Flora can sing blithe; so can this huntsman,
As he has shown e'en now; let them duet it.
Osw. Well, huntsman, we must give to freakish maiden
The freedom of her fancy.—Raise the carol,
And Flora, if she can, will join the measure.

SONG.

When friends are met o'er merry cheer,
And lovely eyes are laughing near,
And in the goblet's bosom clear
The cares of day are drown'd;
When puns are made, and bumpers quaff'd,
And wild Wit shoots his roving shaft,
And Mirth his jovial laugh has laugh'd,
Then is our banquet crown'd.
Ah gay,
Then is our banquet crown'd.

When glee's are sung, and catches troll'd,
And bashfulness grows bright and bold,
And beauty is no longer cold,
And age no longer dull;
When chimes are brief, and cocks do crow,
To tell us it is time to go,
Yet how to part we do not know,
Then is our feast at full,
Ah gay,
Then is our feast at full.
Osw. (rises with the cup in his hand.) Devorgoil's feast is full—
Drink to the pledge!

[A tremendous burst of thunder follows these words of the Song; and the Lightning should seem to strike the suit of black Armour, which falls with a crash. All rise in surprise and fear except Gullcranner, who tumbles over backwards, and lies still.

Osw. That sounded like the judgment-peal—the roof
Still trembles with the volley.

Dur. Happy those
Who are prepared to meet such fearful summons.—
Leonard, what dost thou there?

Leo. (supporting Flo.) The duty of a man—
Supporting innocence. Were it the final call,
I were not misemploy'd.

Osw. The armour of my grandsire
hath fall'n down,
And old saws have spoke truth.—
(Musing.) The fiftieth year—
Devorgoil's feast at fullest! What to think of it—
Leo. (lifting a scroll which had fallen with the armour.) This may inform us.

[Attempts to read the manuscript, shakes his head, and
gives it to Oswald.

But not to eyes unlearn'd it tells its tidings.

Osw. Hawks, hounds, and reveling consumed the hours
I should have given to study.

[Looks at the manuscript.
These characters I spell not more than thou.
They are not of our day, and, as I think,
Not of our language.—Where's our scholar now,
So forward at the banquet? Is he laggard
Upon a point of learning?

Leo. Here is the man of letter'd dignity,
E'en in a piteous case.

[Drags Gullcranner forward. Osw. Art waking, craven? canst thou read this scroll?
Or art thou only learn'd in sowsing swine's flesh,
And prompt in eating it?

Gul. Eh—ah!—oh—ho!—Have you no better time
To tax a man with riddles, than the moment
When he scarce knows whether he's dead or living?

Osw. Confound the pedant?—Can you read the scroll,
Or can you not, sir? If you can, pronounce
Its meaning speedily.

Gul. Can I read it, quotha!
When at our learned University,
I gain'd first premium for Hebrew learning,—
Which was a pound of high-dried Scottish snuff,
And half a peck of onions, with a bushel
Of curious oatmeal,—our learn'd Principal
Did say, "Melchisedek, thou canst do any thing!"
Now comes he with his paltry scroll
of parchment,
And, "Can you read it?"—After such affront,
The point is, if I will.

Osw. A point soon solved,
Unless you choose to sleep among the frogs;
For look you, sir, there is the chamber window,
Beneath it lies the lake.

Ele. Kind master Gullcranner, beware my husband,
He brooks no contradiction—'tis his fault,
And in his wrath he's dangerous.

Gul. (looks at the scroll, and mutters as if reading.) Hashgabo both hotch-potch—
A simple matter this to make a rout of—
Ten rashersen bacon, mish-mash venison,
Sausagian sowsed-face—'Tis a simple catalogue
Of our small supper—made by the grave sage
Whose prescience knew this night that we should feast
On venison, hash’d sow’s face, and sausages,
And hung his steel-coat for a supper bell—
E’en let us to our provender again,
For it is written we shall finish it,
And bless our stars the lightning left it us.

Osw. This must be impudence or ignorance!—
The spirit of rough Erick stirs within me,
And I will knock thy brains out if thou palterest!
Expound the scroll to me!

Gul. You’re over hasty; And yet you may be right too—'Tis Samaritan,
Now I look closer on’t, and I did take it
For simple Hebrew.

Dur. 'Tis Hebrew to a simpleton,
That we see plainly, friend—Give me the scroll.

Gul. Alas, good friend! what would you do with it?

Dur. (takes it from him.) My best to read it, sir—The character is Saxon,
Used at no distant date within this district;
And thus the tenor runs—nor in Samaritan,
Nor simple Hebrew, but in wholesome English:—
Devorgoil, thy bright moon waneth,
And the rust thy harness staineth;
Servile guests the banquet soil
Of the once proud Devorgoil.
But should Black Erick’s armour fall,
Look for guests shall scare you all!

They shall come ere peep of day,—
Wake and watch, and hope and pray.

Kat. (to Flo.) Here is fine foolery—an old wall shakes
At a loud thunder-clap—down comes a suit
Of ancient armour, when its wasted braces
Were all too rotten too sustain its weight—
A beggar cries out, Miracle! and your father,
Weighing the importance of his name and lineage,
Must needs believe the dotard!

Flo. Mock not, I pray you; this may be too serious.

Kat. And if I live till morning, I will have
The power to tell a better tale of wonder
Wrought on wise Gullcrammer. I'll go prepare me. [Exit.

Flo. I have not Katleen’s spirit, yet I hate
This Gullcrammer too heartily, to stop
Any disgrace that’s hasting towards him.

Osw. (to whom the Beggar has been again reading the scroll.) 'Tis a strange prophecy!—The silver moon,
Now waning sorely, is our ancient bearing—
Strange and unfitting guests—

Gul. (interrupting him.) Ay, ay, the matter.
Is, as you say, all moonshine in the water.

Osw. How mean you, sir? (threatening.)

Gul. To show that I can rhyme
With yonder bluegown. Give me breath and time,
I will maintain, in spite of his pretence,
Mine exposition had the better sense—
It spoke good victuals and increase of cheer;
And his, more guests to eat what we have here—
An increment right needless.
Osw. Get thee gone;
To kennel, hound!
Gul. The hound will have his bone.
[Takes up the platter of meat, and a flask.
Osw. Flora, show him his chamber—take him hence,
Or, by the name I bear, I'll see his brains.
Gul. Ladies, good-night!—I spare you, sir, the pains.
[Exit, lighted by Flora with a lamp.
Osw. The owl is fled.—I'll not to bed to-night;
There is some change impending o'er this house,
For good or ill. I would some holy man
Were here, to counsel us what we should do!
You witless thin-faced gull is but a cassock
Stuff'd out with chaff and straw.
Dur. (assuming an air of dignity.)
I have been wont,
In other days, to point to erring mortals
The rock which they should anchor on.
[He holds up a Cross—the rest take a posture of devotion, and the Scene closes.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

A ruinous Anteroom in the Castle.
Enter Kathleen, fantastically dressed to play the Character of Cockledemoy, with the visor in her hand.

Kat. I've scarce had time to glance at my sweet person,
Yet this much could I see, with half a glance,
My elfish dress becomes me—I'll not mask me

Till I have seen Lance Blackthorn.
Lance! I say—[Calls.
Blackthorn, make haste!

Enter Blackthorn, half dressed as Owlspiegle.

Bla. Here am I—Blackthorn in the upper half,
Much at your service; but my nether parts
Are goblinised and Owlspiegled. I had much ado
To get these trankums on. I judge
Lord Erick
Kept no good house, and starved his quondam barber.
Kat. Peace, ass, and hide you—Gullcrammer is coming;
He left the hall before, but then took fright,
And e'en sneak'd back. The Lady Flora lights him—
Trim occupation for her ladyship!
Had you seen Leonard, when she left the hall
On such fine errand!
Bla. This Gullcrammer shall have a bob extraordinary
For my good comrade's sake.—But tell me, Kathleen,
What dress is this of yours?
Kat. A page's, fool!
Bla. I'm accounted no great scholar,
But 'tis a page that I would fain peruse
A little closer. [Approaches her.
Kat. Put on your spectacles,
And try if you can read it at this distance,
For you shall come no nearer.
Bla. But is there nothing, then, save rank imposture,
In all these tales of goblinry at Devorgoil?
Kat. My aunt's grave lord thinks otherwise, supposing
That his great name so interests the Heavens,
That miracles must needs bespeak its fall—
I would that I were in a lowly cottage
Beneath the greenwood, on its walls no armour
To court the levin-bolt——
Bla. And a kind husband, Katleen,
To ward such dangers as must needs come nigh.—
My father's cottage stands so low and lone,
That you would think it solitude itself;
The greenwood shields it from the northern blast,
And, in the woodbine round its latticed casement,
The linnet's sure to build the earliest nest
In all the forest.
Kat. Peace, you fool, they come.

Flora lights Gullcrammer across the Stage.

Kat. (when they have passed.)
Away with you!
On with your cloak—be ready at the signal.
Bla. And shall we talk of that same cottage, Katleen,
At better leisure? I have much to say
In favour of my cottage.
Kat. If you will be talking,
You know I can't prevent you.
Bla. That's enough.
(Aside.) I shall have leave, I see, to spell the page
A little closer, when the due time comes.

Scene II.

Scene changes to Gullcrammer's Sleeping Apartment. He enters, ushered in by Flora, who sets on the table a flask, with the lamp.

Flo. A flask, in case your Reverence be athirsty;
A light, in case your Reverence be afear'd;—
And so sweet slumber to your Reverence.

Gul. Kind Mistress Flora, will you?—eh! eh! eh!
Flo. Will I what?
Gul. Tarry a little?
Flo. (smiling.) Kind Master Gullcrammer,
How can you ask me aught so unbecoming?
Gul. Oh, fie, fie, fie!—Believe me, Mistress Flora,
'Tis not for that—but being guided through
Such dreary galleries, stairs, and suites of rooms,
To this same cubicle, I'm somewhat loth
To bid adieu to pleasant company.
Flo. A flattering compliment!—In plain truth you are frighten'd.
Gul. What! frighten'd?—I—I am not timorous.
Flo. Perhaps you've heard this is our haunted chamber?
But then it is our best—Your Reverence knows,
That in all tales which turn upon a ghost,
Your traveller belated has the luck
To enjoy the haunted room—it is a rule:—
To some it were a hardship, but to you,
Who are a scholar, and not timorous——
Gul. I did not say I was not timorous,
I said I was not temerarious.—I'll to the hall again.
Flo. You'll do your pleasure.
But you have somehow moved my father's anger,
And you had better meet our playful Owlpiegle—
So is our goblin call'd—than face Lord Oswald.

Gul. Owlpiegle?—It is an uncouth and outlandish name,
And in mine ear sounds fiendish.
Flo. Hush, hush, hush! Perhaps he hears us now—(in an under tone)—A merry spirit:
None of your elves that pinch folks
black and blue,
For lack of cleanliness.
Gul. As for that, Mistress Flora,
My taffeta doublet hath been duly
brush’d,
My shirt hebdomadial put on this
morning.
Flo. Why, you need fear no gob-
lins. But this Owlspiegle
Is of another class;—yet has his
frolics;
Cuts hair, trims beards, and plays
amid his antics
The office of a sinful mortal barber.
Such is at least the rumour.
Gul. He will not cut my clothes,
or scar my face,
Or draw my blood?
Flo. Enormities like these
Were never charged against him.
Gul. And, Mistress Flora, would
you smile on me,
If, prick’d by the fond hope of your
approval,
I should endure this venture?
Flo. I do hope
I shall have cause to smile.
Gul. Well! in that hope,
I will embrace the achievement for
thy sake. [She is going.
Yet, stay, stay, stay!—on second
thoughts I will not—
I’ve thought on it, and will the
mortal cudgel
Rather endure than face the ghostly
razor!
Your crab-tree’s tough but blunt,—
your razor’s polish’d,
But, as the proverb goes, ’tis cruel
sharp,
I’ll to thy father, and unto his
pleasure
Submit these destined shoulders.
Flo. But you shall not,
Believe me, sir, you shall not; he is
desperate,
And better far be trimm’d by ghost or
goblin,
Than by my sire in anger; there are
stores
Of hidden treasure, too, and Heaven
knows what,
Buried among these ruins—you shall
stay.
(Apart.) And if indeed there be such
sprite as Owlspiegle,
And, lacking him, that thy fear
plague thee not
Worse than a goblin, I have miss’d
my purpose,
Which else stands good in either
case.—Good-night, sir.
[Exit, and double-locks the door.
Gul. Nay, hold ye, hold!—Nay,
gentle Mistress Flora,
Wherefore this ceremony?—She has
lock’d me in,
And left me to the goblin!—(Listen-
ing.)—So, so, so!
I hear her light foot trip to such
a distance,
That I believe the castle’s breadth
divides me
From human company. I’m ill at
ease—
But if this citadel (Laying his hand
on his stomach) were better
victual’d,
It would be better mann’d
[Sits down and drinks.
She has a footstep light, and taper
ankle.
[Chuckles.
Aha! that ankle! yet, confound it
too,
But for those charms Melchisedek
had been
Snug in his bed at Mucklewham—
I say,
Confound her footstep, and her
instep too,
To use a cobbler’s phrase.—There
I was quaint.
Now, what to do in this vile circum-
stance,
To watch or go to bed, I can’t
determine;
Were I a-bed, the ghost might catch
me napping,
And if I watch, my terrors will
increase
As ghostly hours approach. I’ll to
my bed
E'en in my taffeta doublet, shrink my head.

Beneath the clothes—leave the lamp burning there,

[Sets it on the table.

And trust to fate the issue.

[He lays aside his cloak, and brushes it, as from habit, starting at every moment; ties a napkin over his head; then shrinks beneath the bed-clothes. He starts once or twice, and at length seems to go to sleep. A bell tolls one.

He leaps up in his bed.

GuL.

I had just coax'd myself to sweet forgetfulness,

And that confounded bell—I hate all bells,

Except a dinner bell—and yet I lie, too,—

I love the bell that soon shall tell the parish

Of Gabblegoose, Melchisedek's incumbent—

And shall the future minister of Gabblegoose

Whom his parishioners will soon require

To exorcise their ghosts, detect their witches,

Lie shivering in his bed for a pert goblin,

Whom, be he switch'd or cocktail'd, horn'd or poll'd,

A few tight Hebrew words will soon send packing?

Tush! I will rouse the parson up within me,

And bid defiance—(A distant noise.)

In the name of Heaven,

What sounds are these!—O Lord! this comes of rashness!

[Drops his head down under the bed-clothes.

Duet without, between Owlspiegle and Cockledemoy.

Owlspiegle.

Cockledemoy! My boy, my boy—

Cockledemoy.

Here, father, here.

Owlspiegle.

Now the pole-star's red and burning,

And the witch's spindle turning,

Appear, appear!

Gul. (who has again raised himself, and listened with great terror to the Duet.) I have heard of the devil's dam before,

But never of his child. Now, Heaven deliver me!

The Papists have the better of us there,—

They have their Latin prayers, cut and dried,

And pat for such occasion—I can think

On nought but the vernacular.

Owlspiegle.

My boy, my boy,

We'll sport us here—

Cockledemoy.

Our gambols play,

Like elfe and fay;

Owlspiegle.

And domineer,

Both.

Laugh, frolic, and frisk, till the morning appear.

Cockledemoy.

Lift latch—open clasp—

Shoot bolt—and burst hasp!

[The door opens with violence.

Enter Blackthorn as Owlspiegle, fantastically dressed as a Spanish Barber, tall, thin, emaciated, and ghostly; Kathleen, as Cockledemoy, attends as
his Page. All their manners, tones, and motions, are fantastic, as those of Goblins. They make two or three times the circuit of the Room, without seeming to see Gullcrummer. They then resume their Chant, or Recitative.

OWLSPIEGLE.
Cockledemoy!
My boy, my boy,
What wilt thou do that will give thee joy?
Wilt thou ride on the midnight owl?

COCKLEDEMOY.
No; for the weather is stormy and foul.

OWLSPIEGLE.
Cockledemoy!
My boy, my boy,
What wilt thou do that can give thee joy?
With a needle for a sword, and a thimble for a hat,
Wilt thou fight a traverse with the castle cat?

COCKLEDEMOY.
Oh, no! she has claws, and I like not that.

GUL. I see the devil is a doting father,
And spoils his children—tis the surest way
To make cursed imps of them. They see me not—
What will they think on next? It must be own'd,
They have a dainty choice of occupations.

OWLSPIEGLE.
Cockledemoy!
My boy, my boy,
What shall we do that can give thee joy?
Shall we go seek for a cuckoo's nest?

COCKLEDEMOY.
That's best, that's best!

BOTH.
About, about,
Like an elvish scout,
The cuckoo's a gull, and we'll soon find him out.
[They search the room with mops and mows. At length] COCKLEDEMOY jumps on the bed. Gullcrummer raises himself half up, supporting himself by his hands. COCKLEDEMOY does the same, and grins at him, then skips from the bed, and runs to OWLSPIEGLE.

COCKLEDEMOY.
I've found the nest,
And in it a guest,
With a sable cloak and a taffeta vest;
He must be wash'd, and trimm'd, and dress'd,
To please the eyes he loves the best.

OWLSPIEGLE.
That's best, that's best.

BOTH.
He must be shaved, and trimm'd, and dress'd,
To please the eyes he loves the best.
[They arrange shaving things on the table, and sing as they prepare them.

BOTH.
Know that all of the humbug, the bite, and the buz,
Of the make-believe world, become forfeit to us.

OWLSPIEGLE (sharpening his razor.)
The sword this is made of was lost in a fray
By a fop, who first bullied and then ran away;
And the strap, from the hide of a lame racer, sold
By Lord Match, to his friend, for some hundreds in gold.

BOTH.
For all of the humbug, the bite, and the buz,
Of the make-believe world, becomes forfeit to us.

COCKLEDEMOY (placing the napkin.)
And this cambric napkin, so white and so fair,
At an usurer's funeral I stole from the heir.

[Drops something from a vial, as going to make suds.

This dewdrop I caught from one eye of his mother,
Which wept while she ogled the parson with t'other.

BOTH.
For all of the humbug, the bite, and the buz,
Of the make-believe world, becomes forfeit to us.

OWLSPIEGLE (arranging the lather and the basin.)
My soap-ball is of the mild alkali made,
Which the soft dedicator employs in his trade;
And it froths with the pith of a promise, that's sworn
By a lover at night, and forgot on the morn.

BOTH.
For all of the humbug, the bite, and the buz,
Of the make-believe world, becomes forfeit to us.

Halloo, halloo,
The blackcock crew,
Thrice shriek'd hath the owl, thrice croak'd hath the raven,

Here, ho! Master Gullcrammer, rise and be shaven!

Da capo.

GUL. (who has been observing them.)
I'll pluck a spirit up; they're merry goblins,
And will deal mildly. I will soothe their humour;
Besides, my beard lacks trimming.

[He rises from his bed, and advances with great symptoms of trepidation, but affecting an air of composure. The Goblins receive him with fantastic ceremony.

Gentlemen, 'tis your will I should be trimm'd—
E'en do your pleasure.

[They point to a seat—he sits.
Think, howsoever,
Of me as one who hates to see his blood;
Therefore I do beseech you, signior,
Be gentle in your craft. I know those barbers,
One would have harrows driven across his visnomy,
Rather than they should touch it with a razor.

OWLSPIEGLE shaves GULLCRAMMER, while COCKLEDEMOY sings.

Father never started hair,
Shaved too close, or left too bare—
Father's razor slips as glib
As from courtly tongue a fib.
Whiskers, mustache, he can trim in Fashion meet to please the women;
Sharp's his blade, perfumed his lather!
Happy those are trimm'd by father!

GUL. That's a good boy. I love to hear a child
Stand for his father, if he were the devil. [He motions to rise.
Craving your pardon, sir.—What! sit again?
My hair lacks not your scissors.

[OWLSPIEGLE insists on his sitting.
Nay, if you're peremptory, I'll ne'er dispute it,
Nor eat the cow and choke upon the tail—
E'en trim me to your fashion.

[Owlssplice passes his hair, and shaves his head, ridiculously.]

COCKLEDEMOY (sings as before.)

Hair-breadth 'scapes, and hair-breadth snares,
Hair-brain'd follies, ventures, cares,
Part when father clips your hairs.
If there is a hero frantic,
Or a lover too romantic;—
If threescore seeks second spouse,
Or fourteen lists lover's vows.
Bring them here—for a Scotch boddle,
Owlssplice shall trim their noodle.

[They take the napkin from about Gullcrammer's neck.
He makes bows of acknowledgment, which they return fantastically, and sing—
Thrice crow'd hath the blackcock,
thrice croak'd hath the raven,
And Master Melchisedek Gullcrammer's shaven!

GUL. My friends, you are too musical for me;
But though I cannot cope with you in song,
I would, in humble prose, inquire of you,
If that you will permit me to acquit
Even with the barber's pence the barber's service?

[They shake their heads.

Or if there is aught else that I can do for you,
Sweet Master Owlspiegle, or your loving child,
The hopeful Cockle'moy?

COCKLEDEMOY.

Sir, you have been trimm'd of late,
Smooth's your chin, and bald your pate;
Lest cold rheums should work you harm,
Here's a cap to keep you warm.

GUL. Welcome, as Fortunatus' wishing cap,
For 'twas a cap that I was wishing for.
(There I was quaint in spite of mortal terror.)

[As he puts on the cap, a pair of ass's ears disengage themselves.

Upon my faith, it is a dainty head-dress,
And might become an alderman!—
Thanks, sweet Monsieur,
Thou'rt a considerate youth.

[Both Goblins bow with ceremony to Gullcrammer, who returns their salutation.
Owlssplice descends by the trap-door.

COCKLEDEMOY springs out at window.

SONG (without.)

Owlssplice.

Cockledemoy, my hope, my care,
Where art thou now, O tell me where?

COCKLEDEMOY.

Up in the sky,
On the bonny dragonfly,
Come, father, come you too—
She has four wings and strength enow,
And her long body has room for two.

GUL. Cockledemoy now is a naughty brat—
Would have the poor old stiff-rump'd devil, his father
Peril his fiendish neck. All boys are thoughtless.

SONG.

Owlssplice.

Which way didst thou take?

COCKLEDEMOY.

I have fall'n in the lake—
Help, father, for Beelzebub's sake.
DRAMATIC THOUGHT SHALL E’ER NOT
Was use—
With told
Exit.

COCKLEDEMOY (sings.)
Now merri’y, merrily, row I to shore,
My bark is a bean-shell, a straw for an oar.

OWLSPIEGLE (sings.)
My life, my joy,
My Cockledemoy!

GUL. I can bear this no longer—thus children are spoil’d.
[Strikes into the tune.
Master Owlspiegle, hoy!
He deserves to be whipp’d little Cockledemoy!
[Their voices are heard, as if dying away.

GUL. They’re gone!—Now, am I scared, or am I not?
I think the very desperate ecstasy
Of fear has given me courage. This is strange, now.
When they were here, I was not half so frighten’d
As now they’re gone—they were a sort of company.
What a strange thing is use—A horn, a claw,
The tip of a fiend’s tail, was wont to scare me.
Now am I with the devil hand and glove:
His soap has lather’d, and his razor shaved me;
I’ve joined him in a catch, kept time and tune,
Could dine with him, nor ask for a long spoon;
And if I keep not better company,
What will become of me when I shall die?
[Exit.

SCENE III.

A Gothic Hall, waste and ruinous.
The moonlight is at times seen through the shafted windows. Enter Katleen and Blackthorn—They have thrown off the more ludicrous parts of their disguise.

KAT. This way—this way; was ever fool so gull’d!
BLA. I play’d the barber better than I thought for.
Well, I’ve an occupation in reserve,
When the long-bow and merry musket fail me.—
But, hark ye, pretty Katleen.
KAT. What should I hearken to?
BLA. Art thou not afraid,
In these wild halls while playing feigned goblins,
That we may meet with real ones?
KAT. Not a jot.
My spirit is too light, my heart too bold,
To fear a visit from the other world.
BLA. But is not this the place, the very hall
In which men say that Oswald’s grandfather,
The black Lord Erick, walks his penance round?
Credit me, Katleen, these half-moulder’d columns
Have in their ruin something very fiendish,
And, if you’ll take an honest friend’s advice,
The sooner that you change their shatter’d splendour
For the snug cottage that I told you of,
Believe me, it will prove the blither dwelling.
KAT. If I e’er see that cottage, honest Blackthorn,
Believe me, it shall be from other motive
Than fear of Erick’s spectre.
[A rustling sound is heard.
BLA. I heard a rustling sound—
Upon my life, there's something in
the hall,
Katleen, besides us two!
Kat. A yeoman thou,
A forester, and frighten'd! I am sorry
I gave the fool's-cap to poor Gull-
crammer,
And let thy head go bare.
[The same rustling sound is repeated.
BLA. Why, are you mad, or hear
you not the sound?
Kat. And if I do, I take small
heed of it.
Will you allow a maiden to be bolder
Than you, with beard on chin and
sword at girdle?
BLA. Nay, if I had my sword, I
would not care;
Though I ne'er heard of master of
defence,
So active at his weapon as to brave
The devil, or a ghost—See! see! see
yonnder
[A Figure is imperfectly seen
between two of the pillars.
Kat. There's something moves,
that's certain, and the moonlight,
Chased by the flitting gale, is too
imperfect
To show its form; but, in the name
of God,
I'll venture on it boldly.
BLA. Will thou so?
Were I alone, now, I were strongly
tempted
To trust my heels for safety; but
with thee,
Be it fiend or fairy, I'll take risk to
meet it.
Kat. It stands full in our path,
and we must pass it,
Or tarry here all night.
BLA. In its vile company?
[As they advance towards the
Figure, it is more plainly
distinguished, which might,
I think, be contrived by raising
successive screens of crape.
The Figure is wrapped in
a long robe, like the mantle of
a Hermit, or Palmer.

PAL. Ho! ye who thread by night
these wildering scenes,
In garb of those who long have
slept in death,
Fear ye the company of those you
initiate?
BLA. This is the devil, Katleen,
let us fly!
[Runs off.
Kat. I will not fly—why should I?
My nerves shake
To look on this strange vision, but
my heart
Partakes not the alarm.—If thou
dost come in Heaven's name,
In Heaven's name art thou welcome!
PAL. I come, by Heaven permitted.
Quit this castle:
There is a fate on't—if for good or
evil,
Brief space shall soon determine.
In that fate,
If good, by lineage thou canst
nothing claim;
If evil, much mayst suffer.—Leave
these precincts.
Kat. Whate'er thou art, be
answer'd—Know, I will not
Desert the kinswoman who train'd
my youth;
Know, that I will not quit my friend,
my Flora
Know, that I will not leave the aged
man
Whose roof has shelter'd me. This
is my resolve—
If evil come, I aid my friends to
bear it;
If good, my part shall be to see
them prosper,
A portion in their happiness from
which
No fiend can bar me.
PAL. Maid, before thy courage,
Firm built on innocence, even beings
of nature
More powerful far than thine, give
place and way;
Take then this key, and wait the
event with courage.
[He drops the key.—He dis-
appears gradually—the moon-
light failing at the same time.
Kat. (after a pause.) What'er it was, 'tis gone! My head turns round—
The blood that lately fortified my heart
Now eddies in full torrent to my brain,
And makes wild work with reason. I will haste,
If that my steps can bear me so far safe,
To living company. What if I meet it
Again in the long aisle, or vaulted passage?
And if I do, the strong support that bore me
Through this appalling interview, again
Shall strengthen and uphold me.
[As she steps forward she stumbles over the key.
What's this? The key?—there may be mystery in't.
I'll to my kinswoman, when this dizzy fit
Will give me leave to choose my way aright.
[She sits down exhausted.
Re-enter Blackthorn, with a drawn sword and torch.
Bla. Katleen! What, Katleen!—What a wretch was I
to leave her!—Katleen,—I am weapon'd now,
And fear nor dog nor devil.—She replies not!
Beast that I was—nay, worse than beast; the stag,
As timorous as he is, fights for his hind.
What's to be done?—I'll search this cursed castle
From dungeon to the battlements; if I find her not,
I'll fling me from the highest pinnacle—
Katleen (who has somewhat gathered her spirits, in consequence of his entrance, comes behind and touches him; he starts.)

I'll spare you that rash leap—You're a bold woodsman!
Surely I hope that from this night henceforward
You'll never kill a hare, since you're akin to them;
O I could laugh—but that my head's so dizzy.
Bla. Lean on me, Katleen—By my honest word,
I thought you close behind—I was surprised,
Not a jot frighten'd.
Kat. Thou art a fool to ask me to thy cottage,
And then to show me at what slight expense
Of manhood I might master thee and it.
Bla. I'll take the risk of that—This goblin business
Came rather unexpected; the best horse
Will start at sudden sights. Try me again,
And if I prove not true to bonny Katleen,
Hang me in mine own bowstring.
[Exeunt.

SCENE IV.
The Scene returns to the Apartment at the beginning of Act Second.
Oswald and Durward are discovered with Eleanor, Flora, and Leonard—Durward shuts a Prayer-book, which he seems to have been reading.

Dur. 'Tis true—the difference betwixt the churches,
Which zealots love to dwell on, to the wise
Of either flock are of far less importance
Than those great truths to which all Christian men
Subscribe with equal reverence.
Osw. We thank thee, father, for the holy office.
Still best performed when the pastor's
tongue
Is echo to his breast; of jarring
creeds
It ill beseems a layman's tongue to speak.—
Where have you stow'd your prayer?

Flo. Safe in the goblin-chamber.
Ele. The goblin-chamber
Maiden, wert thou frantic?—if his
Reverence
Have suffer'd harm by waspish
Owlspiegle,
Be sure thou shalt aby e it,
Flo. Here he comes,
Can answer for himself!

Enter Gullcrammer, in the fashion
in which Owlspiegle had put him:
having the fool's-cap on his head,
and towel about his neck, etc. His
manner through the scene is wild
and extravagant, as if the fright
had a little affected his brain.

Dur. A goodly spectacle!—Is there
such a goblin
(To Osw.) Or has sheer terror
made him such a figure?
Osw. There is a sort of wavering
tradition
Of a malicious imp who teased all
strangers;
My father wont to call him Owl-
spiegle.
Gul. Who talks of Owlspiegel?—
He is an honest fellow for a devil,
So is his son, the hopeful Cockle'moy.

(Sings.)

"My hope, my joy,
My Cockledemoy!"

Leo. The fool's bewitch'd—the
goblin hath furnish'd him
A cap which well befits his reverend
wisdom.
Flo. If I could think he had lost
his slender wits,
I should be sorry for the trick they
play'd him.

Leo. O fear him not; it were a
foul reflection
On any fiend of sense and reputation,
To filch such petty wares as his poor
brains.

Dur. What saw'st thou, sir?
What heard'st thou?
Gul. What was't I saw and heard?
That which old graybeards,
Who conjure Hebrew into Anglo-
Saxon,
To cheat starved barons with, can
little guess at.
Flo. If he begin so roundly with
my father,
His madness is not like to save his
bones.

Gul. Sirs, midnight came, and
with it came the goblin.
I had reposed me after some brief
study;
But as the soldier, sleeping in the
trench,
Keeps sword and musket by him,
so I had
My little Hebrew manual prompt for
service.

Flo. Sausagian sows'd-face; that
much of your Hebrew
Even I can bear in memory.

Gul. We counter'd,
The goblin and myself, even in mid-
chamber,
And each stepp'd back a pace, as
'twere to study
The foe he had to deal with!—I be-
thought me,
Ghosts ne'er have the first word, and
so I took it,
And fired a volley of round Greek at
him.
He stood his ground, and answer'd
in the Syriac;
I flank'd my Greek with Hebrew, and
compell'd him— [A noise heard.
Osw. Peace, idle prater!—Hark—
what sounds are these?
Amid the growling of the storm with-
out,
I hear strange notes of music, and
the clash
Of coursers' trampling feet.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

Voices (without.)
We come, dark riders of the night,
And flit before the dawning light;
Hill and valley, far aloof,
Shake to hear our chargers' hoof;
But not a foot-stamp on the green
At morn shall show where we have been.

Osw. These must be revellers belated—
Let them pass on; the ruin'd halls
of Devorgoil
Open to no such guests.—

[Flourish of trumpets at a
distance, then nearer.
They sound a summons;]
What can they lack at this dead
hour of night?
Look out, and see their number, and
their bearing.
Leo. (goes up to the window.) 'Tis
strange—one single shadowy
form alone
Is hovering on the drawbridge—far
apart
Flit through the tempest banners, horse, and riders,
In darkness lost, or dimly seen by
lightning.—
Hither the figure moves—the bolts
revolve—
The gate uncloses to him.

Ele. Heaven protect us!
The Palmer enters—Gullcrammer runs off.

Osw. Whence and what art thou?
for what end come hither?
Pal. I come from a far land, where
the storm howls not,
And the sun sets not, to pronounce
to thee,
Oswald of Devorgoil, thy house's fate.

Dur. I charge thee, in the name
we late have kneel'd to—
Pal. Abbot of Lanercost, I bid thee
peace!

Uninterrupted let me do mine errand:
Baron of Devorgoil, son of the bold,
the proud,
The warlike and the mighty, where-
fore wear'st thou
The habit of a peasant? Tell me,
wherefore
Are thy fair halls thus waste—thy
chambers bare—
Where are the tapestries, where the
conquer'd banners,
Trophies, and gilded arms, that
deck'd the walls
Of once proud Devorgoil?
[He advances, and places him-
self where the Armour hung,
so as to be nearly in the
centre of the Scene.

Dur. Whoe'er thou art—if thou
dost know so much,
Needs must thou know—
Osw. Peace—I will answer here;
to me he spoke.—
Mysterious stranger, briefly I reply:
A peasant's dress befits a peasant's
fortune;
And 'twere vain mockery to array
these walls
In trophies, of whose memory nought
remains,
Save that the cruelty outvied the
valour
Of those who wore them.

Pal. Degenerate as thou art,
Know'st thou to whom thou say'st
this?
[He drops his mantle, and is
discovered armed as nearly
as may be to the suit which
hung on the wall; all express
terror.

Osw. It is himself—the spirit of
mine Ancestor!

Eri. Tremble not, son, but hear
me!
[He strikes the wall; it opens,
and discovers the Treasure-
Chamber.
There lies piled
The wealth I brought from wasted
Cumberland,
Enough to reinstate thy ruin'd for-
tunes.—
Cast from thine high-born brows
that peasant bonnet,
Throw from thy noble grasp the peasant's staff,
O'er all, withdraw thine hand from that mean mate,
Whom in an hour of reckless desperation
Thy fortunes cast thee on. This do,
And be as great as ere was Devorgoil,
When Devorgoil was richest!

Dur. Lord Oswald, thou art tempted by a fiend,
Who doth assail thee on thy weakest side,—
Thy pride of lineage, and thy love of grandeur.
Stand fast—resist—contemn his fatal offers!

Ele. Urge him not, father; if the sacrifice
Of such a wasted woe-worn wretch as I am,
Can save him from the abyss of misery,
Upon whose verge he's tottering,
let me wander
An unacknowledged outcast from his castle,
Even to the humble cottage I was born in.

Osw. No, Ellen, no—it is not thus they part,
Whose hearts and souls, disasters borne in common
Have knit together, close as summer saplings
Are twined in union by the eddying tempest.—

Spirit of Erick, while thou bear'st his shape,
I'll answer with no ruder conjuration
Thy impious counsel, other than with these words,
Depart, and tempt me not!

Eri. Then fate will have her course.—Fall, massive grate,
Yield them the tempting view of these rich treasures,
But bar them from possession?

[A portcullis falls before the door of the Treasure-Chamber.
Mortals, hear!

No hand may ope that grate, except the Heir

Of plunder'd Aglionby, whose mighty wealth,
Ravish'd in evil hour, lies yonder piled;
And not his hand prevails without the key
Of Black Lord Erick; brief space is given
To save proud Devorgoil.—So wills high Heaven.

[Thunder; he disappears.

Dur. Gaze not so wildly; you have stood the trial
That his commission bore, and Heaven designs,
If I may spell his will, to rescue Devorgoil
Even by the Heir of Aglionby—Behold him
In that young forester, unto whose hand
Those bars shall yield the treasures of his house,
Destined to ransom yours.—Advance, young Leonard,
And prove the adventure.

Leo. (advances and attempts the grate.) It is fast
As is the tower, rock-seated.

Osw. We will fetch other means, and prove its strength,
Nor starve in poverty with wealth before us.

Dur. Think what the vision spoke;
The key—the fated key—

Enter Gullcrammer.

Gul. A key?—I say a quay is what we want,
Thus by the learn'd orthographised
—Q, u, a, y.
The lake is overflow'd!—A quay, a boat,
Oars, punt, or sculler, is all one to me!—
We shall be drown'd, good people ! ! !

Enter Katleen and Blackthorn.

Kat. Deliver us!
Haste, save yourselves—the lake is rising fast.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

BLA. 'T has risen my bow's height in the last five minutes, and still is swelling strangely.

GUL. (who has stood astonished upon seeing them.) We shall be drowned without your kind assistance.

Sweet Master Owlspegle, your dragonfly.—
Your straw, your bean-stalk, gentle Cockle'moy!

LEO. (looking from the shot-hole.) 'Tis true, by all that's fearful! The proud lake
Peers, like ambitious tyrant, o'er his bounds,
And soon will whelm the castle—
Even the drawbridge
Is under water now.

KAT. Let us escape! Why stand you gazing there?

DUR. Upon the opening of that fatal grate
Depends the fearful spell that now entraps us,
The key of Black Lord Erick—ere we find it,
The castle will be whelm'd beneath the waves,
And we shall perish in it!

KAT. (giving the key.) Here, prove this;
A chance most strange and fearful gave it me.

[Oswald puts it into the lock, and attempts to turn it—a loud clap of thunder.

FLO. The lake still rises faster.
—Leonard, Leonard,
Canst thou not save us!

[Leonard tries the lock—it opens with a violent noise, and the Portcullis rises. A loud strain of wild music.—There may be a Chorus here.

[Oswald enters the apartment, and brings out a scroll.

LEO. The lake is ebbing with as wondrous haste
As late it rose—the drawbridge is left dry!

Osw. This may explain the cause.—
(Gullcrammer offers to take it.) But soft you, sir,
We'll not disturb your learning for the matter;
Yet, since you've borne a part in this strange drama,
You shall not go unguerdon'd. Wise or learn'd,
Modest or gentle, Heaven alone can make thee,
Being so much otherwise; but from this abundance
Thou shalt have that shall gild thine ignorance,
Exalt thy base descent, make thy presumption
Seem modest confidence, and find thee hundreds
Ready to swear that same fool's-cap of thine
Is reverend as a mitre.

GUL. Thanks, mighty baron, now no more a bare one!—
I will be quaint with him, for all his quips.

Osw. Nor shall kind Katleen lack Her portion in our happiness.

KAT. Thanks, my good lord, but Katleen's fate is fix'd—
There is a certain valiant forester,
Too much afeard of ghosts to sleep anights
In his lone cottage, without one to guard him.—

LEO. If I forget my comrade's faithful friendship,
May I be lost to fortune, hope, and love!

DUR. Peace, all! and hear the blessing which this scroll
Speaks unto faith, and constancy, and virtue.

No more this castle's troubled guest,
Dark Erick's spirit hath found rest.
The storms of angry Fate are past—
For Constancy defies their blast.
Of Devorgoil the daughter free
Shall wed the Heir of Aglionby;
Nor ever more dishonour soil
The rescued house of Devorgoil.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

AUCHINDRANE;

OR,

THE AYRSHIRE TRAGEDY.

Cur aliquid vidi? cur noxia lumina feci
Cur imprudenti cognita culpa mihi est?
OVIDI Tristium, Liber Secundus.

PREFACE.

There is not, perhaps, upon record, a tale of horror which gives us a more perfect picture than is afforded by the present, of the violence of our ancestors, or the complicated crimes into which they were hurried, by what their wise, but ill-enforced, laws termed the heathenish and accursed practice of Deadly Feud. The author has tried to extract some dramatic scenes out of it; but he is conscious no exertions of his can increase the horror of that which is in itself so iniquitous. Yet, if we look at modern events, we must not too hastily venture to conclude that our own times have so much the superiority over former days as we might at first be tempted to infer. One great object has indeed been obtained. The power of the laws extends over the country universally, and if criminals at present sometimes escape punishment, this can only be by eluding justice,—not, as of old, by defying it.

But the motives which influence modern ruffians to commit actions at which we pause with wonder and horror, arise, in a great measure, from the thirst of gain. For the hope of lucre, we have seen a wretch seduced to his fate, under the pretext that he was to share in amusement and conviviality; and, for gold, we have seen the meanest of wretches deprived of life, and their miserable remains cheated of the grave.

The loftier, if equally cruel, feelings of pride, ambition, and love of vengeance, were the idols of our forefathers, while the caitiffs of our day bend to Mammon, the meanest of the spirits who fell. The criminals, there-

fore, of former times, drew their hellish inspiration from a loftier source than is known to modern villains. The fever of unsated ambition, the frenzy of ungratified revenge, the perfervidum ingenium Scotorum, stigmatised by our jurists and our legislators, held life but as passing breath; and such enormities as now sound like the acts of a madman, were then the familiar deeds of every offended noble. With these observations we proceed to our story.

John Muir, or Mure, of Auchindrane, the contriver and executor of the following cruelties, was a gentleman of an ancient family and good estate in the west of Scotland; bold, ambitious, treacherous to the last degree, and utterly unconscientious,—a Richard the Third in private life, inaccessible alike to pity and to remorse. His view was to raise the power, and extend the grandeur, of his own family. This gentleman had married the daughter of Sir Thomas Kennedy of Barganie, who was, excepting the Earl of Cassilis, the most important person in all Carrick, the district of Ayrshire which he inhabited, and where the name of Kennedy held so great a sway as to give rise to the popular rhyme,—

'Twixt Wigton and the town of Air,
Portpatrick and the Cruives of Cree,
No man need think for to hide there,
Unless he court Saint Kennedie.

Now, Mure of Auchindrane, who had promised himself high advancement by means of his father-in-law Barganie, saw, with envy and resentment, that his influence remained second and inferior to the House of Cassilis, chief of all the Kennedys. The Earl was indeed a minor, but his authority
was maintained, and his affairs well managed, by his uncle, Sir Thomas Kennedy of Cullayne, the brother of the deceased Earl, and tutor and guardian to the present. This worthy gentleman supported his nephew's dignity and the credit of the house so effectually, that Barganie's consequence was much thrown into the shade, and the ambitious Auchindrane, his son-in-law, saw no better remedy than to remove so formidable a rival as Cullayne by violent means.

For this purpose, in the year of God 1597, he came with a party of followers to the town of Maybole (where Sir Thomas Kennedy of Cullayne then resided), and lay in ambush in an orchard, through which he knew his destined victim was to pass, in returning homewards from a house where he was engaged to sup. Sir Thomas Kennedy came alone, and unattended, when he was suddenly fired upon by Auchindrane and his accomplices, who, having missed their aim, drew their swords, and rushed upon him to slay him. But the party thus assailed at disadvantage, had the good fortune to hide himself for that time in a ruinous house, where he lay concealed till the inhabitants of the place came to his assistance.

Sir Thomas Kennedy prosecuted Mure for this assault, who, finding himself in danger from the law, made a sort of apology and agreement with the Lord of Cullayne, to whose daughter he united his eldest son, in testimony of the closest friendship in future. This agreement was sincere on the part of Kennedy, who, after it had been entered into, showed himself Auchindrane's friend and assistant on all occasions. But it was most false and treacherous on that of Mure, who continued to nourish the purpose of murdering his new friend and ally on the first opportunity.

Auchindrane's first attempt to effect this was by means of the young Gilbert Kennedy of Barganie (for old Barganie, Auchindrane's father-in-law, was dead), whom he persuaded to brave the Earl of Cassillis, as one who usurped an undue influence over the rest of the name. Accordingly, this hot-headed youth, at the instigation of Auchindrane, rode past the gate of the Earl of Cassillis, without waiting on his chief, or sending him any message of civility. This led to mutual defiance, being regarded by the Earl, according to the ideas of the time, as a personal insult. Both parties took the field with their followers, at the head of about 250 men on each side. The action which ensued was shorter and less bloody than might have been expected. Young Barganie, with the rashness of headlong courage, and Auchindrane, fired by deadly enmity to the House of Cassillis, made a precipitate attack on the Earl, whose men were strongly posted and under cover. They were received by a heavy fire, Barganie was slain. Mure of Auchindrane, severely wounded in the thigh, became unable to sit his horse, and, the leaders thus slain or disabled, their party drew off without continuing the action. It must be particularly observed, that Sir Thomas Kennedy remained neuter in this quarrel, considering his connection with Auchindrane as too intimate to be broken even by his desire to assist his nephew.

For this temperate and honourable conduct he met a vile reward; for Auchindrane, in resentment of the loss of his relative Barganie, and the downfall of his ambitious hopes, continued his practices against the life of Sir Thomas of Cullayne, though totally innocent of contributing to either. Chance favoured his wicked purpose.

The Knight of Cullayne, finding himself obliged to go to Edinburgh on a particular day, sent a message by a servant to Mure, in which he told him, in the most unsuspecting confidence, the purpose of his journey; and named the road which he proposed to take, inviting Mure to meet him at Duppill, to the west of the town of Ayr, a place appointed, for the purpose of giving him any commissions which he might have for Edinburgh, and assuring his treacherous ally he would attend to any business which he might have in the Scottish metropolis as anxiously
as to his own. Sir Thomas Kennedy's message was carried to the town of Maybole, where his messenger, for some trivial reason, had the import committed to writing by a school-master in that town, and despatched it to its destination by means of a poor student, named Dalrymple, instead of carrying it to the house of Auchindrane in person.

This suggested to Mure a diabolical plot. Having thus received tidings of Sir Thomas Kennedy's motions, he conceived the infernal purpose of having the confiding friend who sent the information, waylaid and murdered at the place appointed to meet with him, not only in friendship, but for the purpose of rendering him service. He dismissed the messenger Dalrymple, cautioning the lad to carry back the letter to Maybole, and to say that he had not found him, Auchindrane, in his house. Having taken this precaution, he proceeded to instigate the brother of the slain Gilbert of Barganie, Thomas Kennedy of Drumurghie by name, and Walter Mure of Cloncaird, a kinsman of his own, to take this opportunity of revenging Barganie's death. The fiery young men were easily induced to undertake the crime. They waylaid the unsuspecting Sir Thomas of Cullayne at the place appointed to meet the traitor Auchindrane, and the murderers having in company five or six servants, well mounted and armed, assaulted and cruelly murdered him with many wounds. They then plundered the dead corpse of his purse, containing a thousand merks in gold, cut off the gold buttons which he wore on his coat, and despoiled the body of some valuable rings and jewels.

The revenge due for his uncle's murder was keenly pursued by the Earl of Cassilis. As the murderers fled from trial, they were declared outlaws; which doom, being pronounced by three blasts of a horn, was called "being put to the horn, and declared the king's rebel." Mure of Auchindrane was strongly suspected of having been the instigator of the crime. But he conceived there could be no evidence to prove his guilt if he could keep the boy Dalrymple out of the way, who delivered the letter which made him acquainted with Cullayne's journey, and the place at which he meant to halt. On the contrary, he saw, that if the lad could be produced at the trial, it would afford ground of fatal presumption, since it could be then proved that persons so nearly connected with him as Kennedy and Cloncaird had left his house, and committed the murder at the very spot which Cullayne had fixed for their meeting.

To avoid this imminent danger, Mure brought Dalrymple to his house, and detained him there for several weeks. But the youth tiring of this confinement, Mure sent him to reside with a friend, Montgomery of Skellmorly, who maintained him under a borrowed name, amid the desert regions of the then almost savage island of Arran. Being confident in the absence of this material witness, Auchindrane, instead of flying, like his agents Drumurghie and Cloncaird, presented himself boldly at the bar, demanded a fair trial, and offered his person in combat to the death against any of Lord Cassilis's friends who might impugn his innocence. This audacity was successful, and he was dismissed without trial.

Still, however, Mure did not consider himself safe, so long as Dalrymple was within the realm of Scotland; and the danger grew more pressing when he learned that the lad had become impatient of the restraint which he sustained in the island of Arran, and returned to some of his friends in Ayrshire. Mure no sooner heard of this than he again obtained possession of the boy's person, and a second time concealed him at Auchindrane, until he found an opportunity to transport him to the Low Countries, where he contrived to have him enlisted in Buccleuch's regiment; trusting, doubtless, that some one of the numerous chances of war might destroy the poor young man whose life was so dangerous to him.

But after five or six years' uncertain safety, bought at the expense of so
much violence and cunning, Auchindrane's fears were exasperated into frenzy, when he found this dangerous witness, having escaped from all the perils of climate and battle, had left, or been discharged from, the Legion of Borderers, and had again accomplished his return to Ayrshire. There is ground to suspect that Dalrymple knew the nature of the hold which he possessed over Auchindrane, and was desirous of extorting from his fears some better provision than he had found either in Arran or the Netherlands. But if so, it was a fatal experiment to tamper with the fears of such a man as Auchindrane, who determined to rid himself effectually of this unhappy young man.

Mure now lodged him in a house of his own, called Chapeldonan, tenanted by a vassal and connection of his called James Bannatyne. This man he commissioned to meet him at ten o'clock at night on the sea-sands near Girvan, and bring with him the unfortunate Dalrymple, the object of his fear and dread. The victim seems to have come with Bannatyne without the least suspicion, though such might have been raised by the time and place appointed for the meeting. When Bannatyne and Dalrymple came to the appointed spot, Auchindrane met them, accompanied by his eldest son, James. Old Auchindrane, having taken Bannatyne aside, imparted his bloody purpose of ridding himself of Dalrymple for ever, by murdering him on the spot. His own life and honour were, he said, endangered by the manner in which this inconvenient witness repeatedly thrust himself back into Ayrshire, and nothing could secure his safety but taking the lad's life, in which action he requested James Bannatyne's assistance. Bannatyne felt some compunction, and remonstrated against the cruel expedient, saying, it would be better to transport Dalrymple to Ireland, and take precautions against his return. While old Auchindrane seemed disposed to listen to this proposal, his son concluded that the time was come for accomplishing the purpose of their meeting, and, without waiting the termination of his father's conference with Bannatyne, he rushed suddenly on Dalrymple, beat him to the ground, and, kneeling down on him, with his father's assistance accomplished the crime, by strangling the unhappy object of their fear and jealousy. Bannatyne, the witness, and partly the accomplice, of the murder, assisted them in their attempt to make a hole in the sand, with a spade which they had brought on purpose, in order to conceal the dead body. But as the tide was coming in, the holes which they made filled with water before they could get the body buried, and the ground seemed, to their terrified consciences, to refuse to be accessory to concealing their crime. Despairing of hiding the corpse in the manner they proposed, the murderers carried it out into the sea as deep as they dared wade, and there abandoned it to the billows, trusting that a wind, which was blowing off the shore, would drive these remains of their crime out to sea, where they would never more be heard of. But the sea, as well as the land, seemed unwilling to conceal their cruelty. After floating for some hours, or days, the dead body was, by the wind and tide, again driven on shore, near the very spot where the murder had been committed.

This attracted general attention, and when the corpse was known to be that of the same William Dalrymple whom Auchindrane had so often spirited out of the country, or concealed when he was in it, a strong and general suspicion arose, that this young person had met with foul play from the bold bad man who had shewn himself so much interested in his absence. It was always said or supposed, that the dead body had bled at the approach of a grandchild of Mure of Auchindrane, a girl who, from curiosity, had come to look at a sight which others crowded to see. The bleeding of a murdered corpse at the touch of the murderer, was a thing at that time so much believed, that it was admitted as a proof of guilt; but I know no case, save that of Auchindrane, in which the phenomenon was
supposed to be extended to the approach of the innocent kindred; nor do I think that the fact itself, though mentioned by ancient lawyers, was ever admitted to proof in the proceedings against Auchindrane.

It is certain, however, that Auchindrane found himself so much the object of suspicion from this new crime, that he resolved to fly from justice, and suffer himself to be declared a rebel and outlaw rather than face a trial. But his conduct in preparing to cover his flight with another motive than the real one, is a curious picture of the men and manners of the times. He knew well that if he were to shun his trial for the murder of Dalrymple, the whole country would consider him as a man guilty of a mean and disgraceful crime in putting to death an obscure lad, against whom he had no personal quarrel. He knew, besides, that his powerful friends, who would have interceded for him had his offence been merely burning a house or killing a neighbour, would not plead for or stand by him in so pitiful a concern as the slaughter of this wretched wanderer.

Accordingly, Mure sought to provide himself with some ostensible cause for avoiding law, with which the feelings of his kindred and friends might sympathise; and none occurred to him so natural as an assault upon some friend and adherent of the Earl of Cassilis. Should he kill such a one, it would be indeed an unlawful action, but so far from being infamous, would be accounted the natural consequence of the avowed quarrel between the families. With this purpose, Mure, with the assistance of a relative, of whom he seems always to have had some ready to execute his worst purposes, beset Hugh Kennedy of Garriehorne, a follower of the Earl's, against whom they had especial ill-will, fired their pistols at him, and used other means to put him to death. But Garriehorne, a stout-hearted man, and well-armed, defended himself in a very different manner from the unfortunate Knight of Cullayne, and beat off the assailants, wounding young Auchindrane in the right hand, so that he wellnigh lost the use of it.

But though Auchindrane's purpose did not entirely succeed, he availed himself of it to circulate a report, that if he could obtain a pardon for firing upon his feudal enemy with pistols, weapons declared unlawful by act of Parliament, he would willingly stand his trial for the death of Dalrymple, respecting which he protested his total innocence. The King, however, was decidedly of opinion that the Mures, both father and son, were alike guilty of both crimes, and used intercession with the Earl of Abercorn, as a person of power in those western counties, as well as in Ireland, to arrest and transmit them prisoners to Edinburgh. In consequence of the Earl's exertions, old Auchindrane was made prisoner, and lodged in the tolbooth of Edinburgh.

Young Auchindrane no sooner heard that his father was in custody, than he became as apprehensive of Bannatyne, the accomplice in Dalrymple's murder, telling tales, as ever his father had been of Dalrymple. He, therefore, hastened to him, and prevailed on him to pass over for a while to the neighbouring coast of Ireland, finding him money and means to accomplish the voyage, and engaging in the meantime to take care of his affairs in Scotland. Secure, as they thought, in this precaution, old Auchindrane persisted in his innocence, and his son found security to stand his trial. Both appeared with the same confidence at the day appointed, and braved the public justice, hoping to be put to a formal trial, in which Auchindrane reckoned upon an acquittal for want of the evidence which he had removed. The trial was, however, postponed, and Mure the elder was dismissed, under high security to return when called for.

But King Janies, being convinced of the guilt of the accused, ordered young Auchindrane, instead of being sent to trial, to be examined under the force of torture, in order to compel him to tell whatever he knew of the things charged against him. He was accordingly severely tortured; but the result only served to show that such
examinations are as useless as they are cruel. A man of weak resolution, or of a nervous habit, would probably have assented to any confession, however false, rather than have endured the extremity of fear and pain to which Mure was subjected. But young Auchindrane, a strong and determined ruffian, endured the torture with the utmost firmness, and by the constant audacity with which, in spite of the intolerable pain, he continued to assert his innocence, he spread so favourable an opinion of his case, that the detaining him in prison, instead of bringing him to open trial, was censured as severe and oppressive. James, however, remained firmly persuaded of his guilt, and by an exertion of authority quite inconsistent with our present laws, commanded young Auchindrane to be still detained in close custody till further light could be thrown on these dark proceedings. He was detained accordingly by the King’s express personal command, and against the opinion even of his privy counsellors. This exertion of authority was much murmured against.

In the meanwhile, old Auchindrane, being, as we have seen, at liberty on pledges, skulked about in the west, feeling how little security he had gained by Dalrymple’s murder, and that he had placed himself by that crime in the power of Bannatyne, whose evidence concerning the death of Dalrymple could not be less fatal than what Dalrymple might have told concerning Auchindrane’s accession to the conspiracy against Sir Thomas Kennedy of Cullayne. But though the event had shown the error of his wicked policy, Auchindrane could think of no better mode in this case than that which had failed in relation to Dalrymple. When any man’s life became inconsistent with his own safety, no idea seems to have occurred to this inveterate ruffian, save to murder the person by whom he might himself be in any way endangered. He therefore attempted the life of James Bannatyne by more agents than one. Nay, he had nearly ripened a plan, by which one Pennycuke was to be employed to slay Bannatyne, while, after the deed was done, it was devised that Mure of Auchnull, a connection of Bannatyne, should be instigated to slay Pennycuke; and thus close up this train of murders by one, which, flowing in the ordinary course of deadly feud, should have nothing in it so particular as to attract much attention.

But the justice of Heaven would bear this complicated train of iniquity no longer. Bannatyne, knowing with what sort of men he had to deal, kept on his guard, and, by his caution, disconcerted more than one attempt to take his life, while another miscarried by the remorse of Pennycuke, the agent whom Mure employed. At length Bannatyne, tired of this state of insecurity, and in despair of escaping such repeated plots, and also feeling remorse for the crime to which he had been accessory, resolved rather to submit himself to the severity of the law, than remain the object of the principal criminal’s practices. He surrendered himself to the Earl of Abercorn, and was transported to Edinburgh, where he confessed before the King and council all the particulars of the murder of Dalrymple, and the attempts to hide his body by committing it to the sea.

When Bannatyne was confronted with the two Mures before the Privy Council, they denied with vehemence every part of the evidence he had given, and affirmed that the witness had been bribed to destroy them by a false tale. Bannatyne’s behaviour seemed sincere and simple, that of Auchindrane more resolute and crafty. The wretched accomplice fell upon his knees, invoking God to witness that all the land in Scotland could not have bribed him to bring a false accusation against a master whom he had served, loved, and followed in so many dangers, and calling upon Auchindrane to honour God by confessing the crime he had committed. Mure the elder, on the other hand, boldly replied, that he hoped God would not so far forsake him as to permit him to confess a crime of which he was innocent, and
exhorted Bannatyne in his turn to confess the practices by which he had been induced to devise such falsehoods against him. The two Mures, father and son, were therefore put upon their solemn trial, along with Bannatyne, in 1611, and, after a great deal of evidence had been brought in support of Bannatyne's confession, all three were found guilty. The elder Auchindrane was convicted of counselling and directing the murder of Sir Thomas Kennedy of Cullayne, and also of the actual murder of the lad Dalrymple. Bannatyne and the younger Mure were found guilty of the latter crime, and all three were sentenced to be beheaded. Bannatyne, however, the accomplice, received the King's pardon, in consequence of his voluntary surrender and confession. The two Mures were both executed. The younger was affected by the remonstrances of the clergy who attended him, and he confessed the guilt of which he was accused. The father, also, was at length brought to avow the fact, but in other respects died as impenitent as he had lived;—and so ended this dark and extraordinary tragedy.

The Lord Advocate of the day, Sir Thomas Hamilton, afterwards successively Earl of Melrose and of Haddington, seems to have busied himself much in drawing up a statement of this foul transaction, for the purpose of vindicating to the people of Scotland the severe course of justice observed by King James VI. He assumes the task in a high tone of prerogative law, and, on the whole, seems at a loss whether to attribute to Providence, or to his most sacred Majesty, the greatest share in bringing to light these mysterious villanies, but rather inclines to the latter opinion. There is, I believe, no printed copy of the intended tract, which seems never to have been published; but the curious will be enabled to judge of it, as it appears in the next fasciculus of Mr. Robert Pitcairn's very interesting publications from the Scottish Criminal Record.

The family of Auchindrane did not become extinct on the death of the two homicides. The last descendant existed in the eighteenth century, a poor and distressed man. The following anecdote shows that he had a strong feeling of his situation.

There was in front of the old castle a huge ash-tree, called the Dule-tree (mourning-tree) of Auchindrane, probably because it was the place where the Baron executed the criminals who fell under his jurisdiction. It is described as having been the finest tree of the neighbourhood. This last representative of the family of Auchindrane had the misfortune to be arrested for payment of a small debt; and, unable to discharge it, was prepared to accompany the messenger (bailiff) to the jail of Ayr. The servant of the law had compassion for his prisoner, and offered to accept of this remarkable tree as of value adequate to the discharge of the debt. "What!" said the debtor, "Sell the Dule-tree of Auchindrane! I will sooner die in the worst dungeon of your prison." In this luckless character the line of Auchindrane ended. The family, blackened with the crimes of its predecessors, became extinct, and the estate passed into other hands.

DRAMATIC PIECES.

John Mure of Auchindrane, an Ayrshire Baron. He has been a follower of the Regent, Earl of Morton, during the Civil Wars, and hides an oppressive, ferocious, and unscrupulous disposition, under some pretences to strictness of life and doctrine, which, however, never influence his conduct. He is in danger from the law, owing to his having been formerly active in the assassination of the Earl of Cassillis.

Philip Mure, his Son, a wild, debauched Profligate, professing and practising a contempt for his Father's hypocrisy, while he is as fierce and licentious as Auchindrane himself.

Gifford, their Relation, a Courtier.

Quentin Blane, a Youth, educated for a Clergyman, but sent by Auchindrane to serve in a Band of Auxiliaries in the Wars of the Netherlands, and
lately employed as Clerk or Comptroller to the Regiment—Disbanded, however, and on his return to his native Country. He is of a mild, gentle, and rather feeble character, liable to be influenced by any person of stronger mind who will take the trouble to direct him. He is somewhat of a nervous temperament, varying from sadness to gaiety, according to the impulse of the moment; an amiable hypochondriac.

Hildebrand, a stout old Englishman, who, by feats of courage, has raised himself to the rank of Sergeant-Major (then of greater consequence than at present). He, too, has been disbanded, but cannot bring himself to believe that he has lost his command over his Regiment.

Privates dismissed from the same Regiment in which Quentin and Hildebrand had served. These are mutinous, and are much disposed to remember former quarrels with their late Officers.

Abraham, Williams, Jenkin, And Others,

Niel MacLellan, Keeper of Auchindrane Forest and Game.
Earl of Dunbar, commanding an army as Lieutenant of James I., for execution of Justice on Offenders.
Guards, Attendants, etc. etc.

Marion, Wife of Niel MacLellan.
Isabel, their Daughter, a Girl of six years old.
Other Children and Peasant Women.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

A rocky Bay on the Coast of Carrick, in Ayrshire, not far from the Point of Turnberry. The Sea comes in upon a bold rocky Shore. The remains of a small half-ruined Tower are seen on the right hand, overhanging the Sea. There is a Vessel at a distance in the offing. A Boat at the bottom of the Stage lands eight or ten Persons, dressed like disbanded, and in one or two cases like disabled Soldiers. They come straggling forward with their knapsacks and bundles. Hildebrand, the Sergeant, belonging to the Party, a stout elderly man, stands by the boat, as if superintending the disembarkation. Quentin remains apart.

ABRAHAM. Farewell, the flats of Holland, and right welcome
The cliffs of Scotland! Fare thee well, black beer
And Schiedam gin! and welcome twopenny,
Oatcakes, and usquebaugh!
Williams (who wants an arm.)
Farewell, the gallant field, and
"Forward, pikemen!"
For the bridge-end, the suburb, and the lane;
And, "Bless your honour, noble gentleman,
Remember a poor soldier!"

Abr. My tongue shall never need to smooth itself
To such poor sounds, while it can boldly say,
"Stand and deliver!"

Wil. Hush, the sergeant hears you!

Abr. And let him hear; he makes a bustle yonder,
And dreams of his authority, forgetting
We are disbanded men, o'er whom his halberd
Has not such influence as the beadle's baton.
We are no soldiers now, but every one
The lord of his own person.

Wil. A wretched lordship—and our freedom such
As that of the old cart-horse, when the owner
Turns him upon the common. I for one
Will still continue to respect the sergeant,
And the comptroller, too,—while the cash lasts.

Abr. I scorn them both. I am too stout a Scotsman

...
To bear a Southron's rule an instant longer
Than discipline obliges; and for Quentin,
Quentin the quillman, Quentin the comptroller,
We have no regiment now; or, if we had,
Quentin's no longer clerk to it.

Wil. For shame! for shame! What, shall old comrades jar thus,
And on the verge of parting, and for ever?—
Nay, keep thy temper, Abraham, though a bad one.—
Good Master Quentin, let thy song last night
Give us once more our welcome to old Scotland.

Abr. Ay, they sing light whose task is telling money,
When dollars clink for chorus.

Que. I've done with counting silver, honest Abraham,
As thou, I fear, with pouching thy small share on't.
But lend your voices, lads, and I will sing
As blithely yet as if a town were won;
As if upon a field of battle gain'd,
Our banners waved victorious.

[He sings, and the rest bear chorus.

Song.

Hither we come,
Once slaves to the drum,
But no longer we list to its rattle;
Adieu to the wars,
With their slashes and scars,
The march, and the storm, and the battle.

There are some of us maim'd,
And some that are lamed,
And some of old aches are complaining;
But we'll take up the tools,
Which we flung by like fools,
'Gainst Don Spaniard to go a-campaigning.

Dick Hathorn doth vow
To return to the plough,
Jack Steele to his anvil and hammer;
The weaver shall find room
At the wight-wapping loom,
And your clerk shall teach writing
And grammar.

Abr. And this is all that thou canst do, gay Quentin?
To swagger o'er a herd of parish brats,
Cut cheese or dibble onions with thy poniard,
And turn the sheath into a ferula?

Que. I am the prodigal in holy writ;
I cannot work,—to beg I am ashamed.
Besides, good mates, I care not who may know it,
I'm e'en as fairly tired of this same fighting,
As the poor cur that's worried in the shambles
By all the mastiff dogs of all the butchers;
Wherefore, farewell sword, poniard, petronel,
And welcome poverty and peaceful labour.

Abr. Clerk Quentin, if of fighting thou art tired,
By my good word, thou'rt quickly satisfied,
For thou'lt seen but little on't.

Wil. Thou dost belie him—I have seen him fight
Bravely enough for one in his condition.

Abr. What he? that counter-casting, smock-faced boy?
What was he but the colonel's scribbling drudge,
With men of straw to stuff the regiment roll;
With cipherings unjust to cheat his comrades,
And cloak false musters for our noble captain?

He bid farewell to sword and petronel!
He should have said, farewell my pen and standish.
These, with the rosin used to hide erasures,
Were the best friends he left in camp behind him.

QUE. The sword you scoff at is not far, but scorns
The threats of an unmann'r'd mutineer.

SER. (interposes.) We'll have no brawling—Shall it o'er be said,
That being comrades six long years together,
While gulping down the frowsy fogs of Holland,
We tilted at each other's throats so soon
As the first draught of native air refresh'd them?
No! by Saint Dunstan, I forbid the combat.
You all, methinks, do know this trusty halberd;
For I opine, that every back amongst you
Hath felt the weight of the tough ashen staff,
Endlong or overthwart. Who is it wishes
A remembrancer now?

[Raises his halberd.

ABR. Comrades, have you ears
To hear the old man bully? 'Eyes to see
His staff rear'd o'er your heads, as o'er the hounds
The huntsman cracks his whip?

WIL. Well said—stout Abraham has the right on't.—
I tell thee, sergeant, we do reverence thee,
And pardon the rash humours thou hast caught,
Like wiser men, from thy authority.
'Tis ended, howso'er, and we'll not suffer
A word of sergeantry, or halberd-staff,
Nor the most petty threat or discipline.

It thou wilt lay aside thy pride of office,
And drop thy wont of swaggering and commanding,
Thou art our comrade still for good or evil.
Else take thy course apart, or with the clerk there—
A sergeant thou, and he being all thy regiment.

SER. Is't come to this, false knaves? And think you not,
That if you bear a name o'er other soldiers,
It was because you follow'd to the charge
One that had zeal and skill enough
to lead you
Where fame was won by danger?

WIL. We grant thy skill in leading, noble sergeant;
Witness some empty boots and sleeves amongst us,
Which else had still been tenanted with limbs
In the full quantity; and for the arguments
With which you used to back our resolution,
Our shoulders do record them. At a word,
Will you conform, or must we part our company?

SER. Conform to you? Base dogs! I would not lead you
A bolt-night farther to be made a general.
Mean mutineers! when you swill'd off the dregs
Of my poor sea-stores, it was, "Noble Sergeant—
Heaven bless old Hildebrand—we'll follow him,
At least, until we safely see him lodged
Within the merry bounds of his own England!"

WIL. Ay, truly, sir; but, mark, the ale was mighty,
And the Geneva potent. Such stout liquor
Makes violent protestations. Skink it round,
If you have any left, to the same tune,
And we may find a chorus for it still. 
ABR. We lose our time.—Tell us at once, old man,
If thou wilt march with us, or stay with Quintin?
SER. Out, mutineers! Dishonour dog your heels!
ABR. Willful will have his way.
Adieu, stout Hildebrand!

[The Soldiers go off laughing,
and taking leave, with
mockery, of the Sergeant
and Quintin, who remain
on the Stage.]

SER. (after a pause.) Fly you not with the rest?—fail you to follow
You goodly fellowship and fair example?
Come, take your wild-goose flight. I know you Scots,
Like your own sea-fowl, seek your course together.
QUE. Faith, a poor heron I, who wing my flight
In loneliness, or with a single partner;
And right it is that I should seek for solitude,
Bringing but evil luck on them I herd with.
SER. Thou'rt thankless. Had we landed on the coast,
Where our course bore us, thou wert far from home;
But the fierce wind that drove us round the island,
Barring each port and inlet that we aim'd at,
Hath wafted thee to harbour; for I judge
This is thy native land we disembark on.
QUE. True, worthy friend. Each rock, each stream I look on,
Each bosky wood, and every frowning tower,
Awakens some young dream of infancy.
SC.

Yet such is my hard hap, I might more safely
Have look'd on Indian cliffs, or Africa's desert,
Than on my native shores. I'm like a babe,
Doom'd to draw poison from my nurse's bosom.
SER. Thou dream'st, young man. Unreal terrors haunt,
As I have noted, giddy brains like thine—
Flighty, poetic, and imaginative—
To whom a minstrel whim gives idle rapture,
And, when it fades, fantastic misery.
QUE. But mine is not fantastic. I can tell thee,
Since I have known thee still my faithful friend,
In part at least the dangerous plight
I stand in.

SER. And I will hear thee willingly, the rather
That I would let these vagabonds march on,
Nor join their troop again. Besides, good sooth,
I'm wearied with the toil of yesterday,
And revel of last night.—And I may aid thee,
Yes, I may aid thee, comrade, and perchance
Thou mayst advantage me.

QUE. May it prove well for both!—But note, my friend,
I can but intimate my mystic story.
Some of it lies so secret,—even the winds
That whistle round us must not
know the whole—
An oath!—an oath!—

SER. That must be kept, of course
I ask but that which thou mayst freely tell.
QUE. I was an orphan boy, and first saw light
Not far from where we stand—my lineage low,
But honest in its poverty. A lord,
The master of the soil for many a mile,
Dreaded and powerful, took a kindly charge
For my advance in letters, and the qualities
Of the poor orphan lad drew some applause.
The knight was proud of me, and, in his halls,
I had such kind of welcome as the great
Give to the humble, whom they love to point to
As objects not unworthy their protection,
Whose progress is some honour to their patron—
A cure was spoken of, which I might serve,
My manners, doctrine, and acquirements fitting.

SER. Hitherto thy luck Was of the best, good friend. Few lords had cared
If thou couldst read thy grammar or thy psalter.
Thou hadst been valued couldst thou scour a harness,
And dress a steed distinctly.

QUE. My old master Held different doctrine, at least it seem'd so—
But he was mix'd in many a deadly feud—
And here my tale grows mystic. I became,
Unwitting and unwilling, the depository
Of a dread secret, and the knowledge on't
Has wreck'd my peace for ever. It became
My patron's will, that I, as one who knew
More than I should, must leave the realm of Scotland,
And live or die within a distant land.

SER. Ah! thou hast done a fault in some wild raid,
As you wild Scotsmen call them.

QUE. Comrade, nay; Mine was a peaceful part, and happ'd by chance.
I must not tell you more. Enough, my presence
Brought danger to my benefactor's house.
Tower after tower conceal'd me, willing still
To hide my ill-omen'd face with owls and ravens,
And let my patron's safety be the purchase
Of my severe and desolate captivity.
So thought I, when dark Arran, with its walls
Of native rock, enclosed me. There I lurk'd,
A peaceful stranger amid armed clans,
Without a friend to love or to defend me,
Where all beside were link'd by close alliances.
At length I made my option to take service
In that same legion of auxiliaries
In which we lately served the Belgian.
Our leader, stout Montgomery, hath been kind
Through full six years of warfare, and assign'd me
More peaceful tasks than the rough front of war,
For which my education little suited me.

SER. Ay, therein was Montgomery kind indeed;
Nay, kinder than you think, my simple Quentin.
The letters which you brought to the Montgomery,
Pointed to thrust thee on some desperate service,
Which should most likely end thee.

QUE. Bore I such letters?—Surely, comrade, no.
Full deeply was the writer bound to aid me.
Perchance he only meant to prove my mettle;
And it was but a trick of my bad fortune
That gave his letters ill interpretation.
SER. Ay, but thy better angel wrought for good,
Whatever ill thy evil fate designed thee.
Montgomery pitied thee, and changed thy service
In the rough field for labour in the tent,
More fit for thy green years and peaceful habits.
QUE. Even there his well-meant kindness injured me.
My comrades hated, undervalued me,
And whatsoe'er of service I could do them,
They guerdon'd with ingratitude and envy—
Such my strange doom, that if I serve a man
At deepest risk, he is my foe for ever!
SER. Hast thou worse fate than others if it were so?
Worse even than me, thy friend, thine officer,
Whom yon ungrateful slaves have pitch'd ashore,
As wild waves heap the sea-weed on the beach,
And left him here, as if he had the pest
Or leprosy, and death were in his company?
QUE. They think at least you have the worst of plagues,
The worst of leprosies,—they think you poor.
SER. They think like lying villains then, I'm rich,
And they too might have felt it. I've a thought—
But stay—what plans your wisdom for yourself?
QUE. My thoughts are wellnigh desperate. But I purpose
Return to my stern patron—there to tell him
That wars, and winds, and waves, have cross'd his pleasure.

And cast me on the shore from whence he banish'd me.
Then let him do his will, and destine for me
A dungeon or a grave.
SER. Now, by the rood, thou art a simple fool!
I can do better for thee. Mark me, Quentin.
I took my license from the noble regiment,
Partly that I was worn with age and warfare,
Partly that an estate of yeomanry,
Of no great purchase, but enough to live on,
Has call'd me owner since a kinsman's death.
It lies in merry Yorkshire, where the wealth
Of fold and furrow, proper to Old England,
Stretches by streams which walk no sluggish pace.
But dance as light as yours. Now, good friend Quentin,
This copyhold can keep two quiet inmates,
And I am childless. Wilt thou be my son?
QUE. Nay, you can only jest, my worthy friend!
What claim have I to be a burden to you?
SER. The claim of him that wants, and is in danger,
On him that has, and can afford protection:
Thou wouldst not fear a foeman in my cottage,
Where a stout mastiff slumber'd on the hearth,
And this good halberd hung above the chimney?
But come—I have it—thou shalt earn thy bread
Duly, and honourably, and usefully.
Our village schoolmaster hath left the parish,
Forsook the ancient schoolhouse with its yew-trees,
That lurk'd beside a church two centuries older,—
So long devotion took the lead of knowledge;
And since his little flock are shepherdless,
'Tis thou shalt be promoted in his room;
And rather than thou wantest scholars, man,
Myself will enter pupil. Better late,
Our proverb says, than never to do well.
And look you, on the holydays I'd tell
To all the wondering boors and gaping children,
Strange tales of what the regiment
Did in Flanders,
And thou shouldst say Amen, and be my warrant,
That I speak truth to them.

Que. Would I might take thy offer! But, alas!
Thou art the hermit who compell'd a pilgrim,
In name of Heaven and heavenly charity,
To share his roof and meal, but found too late
That he had drawn a curse on him and his,
By sheltering a wretch foredoom'd of heaven!

Ser. Thou talk'st in riddles to me.
Que. If I do,
'Tis that I am a riddle to myself.
Thou know'st I am by nature born a friend
To glee and merriment; can make wild verses;
The jest or laugh has never stopp'd with me,
When once 'twas set a rolling.

Ser. I have known thee a blithe companion still, and wonder
Thou shouldst become thus crest-fallen.

Que. Does the lark sing her descant when the falcon
Scales the blue vault with bolder wing than hers,
And meditates a stoop? The mirth thou'st noted
Was all deception, fraud — Hated enough
For other causes, I did veil my feelings
Beneath the mask of mirth,—laugh'd, sung, and caroll'd,
To gain some interest in my comrades' bosoms,
Although mine own was bursting.

Ser. Thou'rt a hypocrite
Of a new order.

Que. But harmless as the innoxious snake,
Which bears the adder's form, lurks in his haunts,
Yet neither hath his fang-teeth nor his poison.
Look you, kind Hildebrand, I would seem merry,
Lest other men should, tiring of my sadness,
Expel me from them, as the hunted wether
Is driven from the flock.

Ser. Faith, thou hast borne it bravely out.
Had I been ask'd to name the merriest fellow
Of all our muster-roll — that man wert thou.

Que. See'st thou, my friend, yon brook dance down the valley,
And sing blithe carols over broken rock
And tiny waterfall, kissing each shrub
And each gay flower it nurses in its passage,—
Where, think'st thou, is its source, the bonny brook?—
It flows from forth a cavern, black and gloomy,
Sullen and sunless, like this heart of mine,
Which others see in a false glare of gaiety,
Which I have laid before you in its sadness.
Ser. If such wild fancies dog thee,
wherefore leave
The trade where thou wert safe 'midst
others' dangers,
And venture to thy native land, where
fate
Lies on the watch for thee? Had
old Montgomery
Been with the regiment, thou hadst
had no conge.
Que. No, 'tis most likely—But I
had a hope,
A poor vain hope, that I might live
obscurely
In some far corner of my native Scot-
land,
Which, of all others, splinter'd into
districts,
Differing in manners, families, even
language,
Seem'd a safe refuge for the humble
wretch,
Whose highest hope was to remain
unheard of.
But fate has baffled me—the winds
and waves,
With force reslistless, have impell'd
me hither—
Have driven me to the clime most
dangerous to me;
And I obey the call, like the hurt
der
Which seeks instinctively his native
lair,
Though his heart tells him it is but
to die there.
Ser. 'Tis false, by Heaven, young
man! This same despair,
Though showing resignation in its
banner,
Is but a kind of covert cowardice.
Wise men have said, that though our
stars incline,
They cannot force us—Wisdom is the
pilot;
And if he cannot cross, he may evade
them.
You lend an ear to idle auguries,
The fruits of our last revels—still
most sad
Under the gloom that follows
boisterous mirth,
As earth looks blackest after brilliant
sunshine.
Que. No, by my honest word. I
join'd the revel,
And aid'd it with laugh, and song,
and shout,
But my heart revell'd not; and, when
the mirth
Was at the loudest, on yon galliot's
prow
I stood unmark'd, and gazed upon
the land,
My native land—each cape and cliff
I knew.
"Behold me now," I said, "your
destined victim!"
So greets the sentenced criminal the
headsmen,
Who slow approaches with his lifted
axe.
"Hither I come," I said, "ye kindred
hills,
Whose darksome outline in a distant
land
Haunted my slumbers; here I stand,
thou ocean,
Whose hoarse voice, murmuring in
my dreams, required me;
See me now here, ye winds, whose
plaintive wail,
On yonder distant shores, appear'd
to call me—
Summon'd, behold me." And the
winds and waves,
And the deep echoes of the distant
mountain,
Made answer—"Come, and die!"
Ser. Fantastic all! Poor boy,
thou art distracted
With the vain terrors of some feudal
tyrant,
Whose frown hath been from infancy
thy bugbear.
Why seek his presence?
Que. Wherefore does the moth
Fly to the scorching taper? Why
the bird,
Dazzled by lights at midnight, seek
the net?
Why does the prey, which feels the
fascination
Of the snake's glaring eye, drop in his jaws?

SER. Such wild examples but refute themselves.

Let bird, let moth, let the coil'd adder's prey,
Resist the fascination and be safe.

Thou goest not near this Baron—if thou goest,
I will go with thee. Known in many a field,
Which he in a whole life of petty feud
Has never dream'd of, I will teach the knight
To rule him in this matter—be thy warrant,
That far from him, and from his petty lordship,
You shall henceforth tread English land, and never
Thy presence shall alarm his conscience more.

QUE. 'Twere desperate risk for both. I will far rather
Hastily guide thee through this dangerous province,
And seek thy school, thy yew-trees, and thy churchyard;—
The last, perchance, will be the first I find.

SER. I would rather face him,
Like a bold Englishman that knows his right,
And will stand by his friend. And yet 'tis folly—
Fancies like these are not to be resisted;
'Tis better to escape them. Many a presage,
Too rashly braved, becomes its own accomplishment.
Then let us go—but whither? My old head
As little knows where it shall lie tonight,
As yonder mutineers that left their officer,
As reckless of his quarters as these billows,
That leave the withered sea-weed on the beach,
And care not where they pile it.

QUE. Think not for that, good friend. We are in Scotland,
And if it is not varied from its wont,
Each cot, that sends a curl of smoke to heaven,
Will yield a stranger quarters for the night,
Simply because he needs them.

SER. But are there none within an easy walk
Give lodgings here for hire? for I have left
Some of the Don's piastres (though I kept
The secret from yon gulls), and I had rather
Pay the fair reckoning I can well afford,
And my host takes with pleasure, than I'd cumber
Some poor man's roof with me and all my wants,
And tax his charity beyond discretion.

QUE. Some six miles hence there is a town and hostelry—
But you are wayworn, and it is most likely
Our comrades must have fill'd it.

SER. Out upon them!—Were there a friendly mastiff who would lend me
Half of his supper, half of his poor kennel,
I would help Honesty to pick his bones,
And share his straw, far rather than I'd sup
On jolly fare with these base varlets!

QUE. We'll manage better; for our Scottish dogs
Though stout and trusty, are but ill-instructed
In hospitable rights.—Here is a maiden,
A little maid, will tell us of the country,
And sorely it is changed since I have left it,
If we should fail to find a harbourage.

Enter Isabel MacLellan, a girl of about six years old, bearing
a milk-pail on her head; she stops on seeing the Sergeant and Quentin.

QUE. There's something in her look that doth remind me—
But 'tis not wonder I find recollections
In all that here I look on.—Pretty maid—
SER. You're slow, and hesitate. I will be spokesman.—
Good even, my pretty maiden—canst thou tell us,
Is there a Christian house would render strangers,
For love or guerdon, a night's meal and lodging?
ISA. Full surely, sir; we dwell in yon old house
Upon the cliff—they call it Chapel-donan. [Points to the building.
Our house is large enough, and if our supper
Chance to be scant, you shall have half of mine,
For, as I think, sir, you have been a soldier.
Up yonder lies our house; I'll trip before,
And tell my mother she has guests a-coming;
The path is something steep, but you shall see
I'll be there first. I must chain up the dogs, too;
Nimrod and Bloodylash are cross to strangers,
But gentle when you know them.
[Exit, and is seen partially ascending to the Castle.

SER. You have spoke
Your country folk aright, both for the dogs
And for the people.—We had luck to light
On one too young for cunning and for selfishness.—
He's in a reverie—a deep one sure,
Since the gibe on his country wakes him not.—
Bestir thee, Quentin!
QUE. 'Twas a wondrous likeness.

SER. Likeness! or whom? I'll warrant thee of one
Whom thou hast loved and lost.
Such fantasies
Live long in brains like thine, which fashion visions
Of woe and death when they are cross'd in love,
As most men are or have been.
QUE. Thy guess hath touch'd me, though it is but slightly,
'Mongst other woes: I knew, in former days,
A maid that view'd me with some glance of favour,
But my fate carried me to other shores,
And she has since been wedded. I did think on't
But as a bubble burst, a rainbow vanish'd;
It adds no deeper shade to the dark gloom
Which chills the springs of hope and life within me.
Our guide hath got a trick of voice and feature
Like to the maid I spoke of—that is all.

SER. She bounds before us like a gamesome doe,
Orrather as the rock-bred eaglet soars
Up to her nest, as if she rose by will
Without an effort. Now a Netherlander,
One of our Frogland friends, viewing the scene,
Would take his oath that tower, and rock, and maiden,
Were forms too light and lofty to be real,
And only some delusion of the fancy,
Such as men dream at sunset. I myself
Have kept the level ground so many years,
I have wellnigh forgot the art to climb,
Unless assisted by thy younger arm.
[They go off as if to ascend to the Tower, the Sergeant leaning upon Quentin.
SCENE II.

Scene changes to the Front of the Old Tower. Isabel comes forward with her Mother.—Marion speaking as they advance.

Mar. I blame thee not, my child, for bidding wanderers Come share our food and shelter, if thy father Were here to welcome them; but, Isabel, He waits upon his lord at Auchindrane, And comes not home to-night.
Isa. What then, my mother? The travellers do not ask to see my father; Food, shelter, rest, is all the poor men want, And we can give them these without my father.
Mar. Thou canst not understand, nor I explain, Why a lone female asks not visitants What time her husband's absent.—(Apart.) My poor child, And if thou'rt wedded to a jealous husband, Thou'lt know too soon the cause.
Isa. (partly overhearing what her mother says.) Ay, but I know already—Jealousy Is, when my father chides, and you sit weeping.
Mar. Out, little spy! thy father never chides; Or, if he does, 'tis when his wife desires it.— But to our strangers; they are old men, Isabel, That seek this shelter? are they not? Isa. One is old— Old as this tower of ours, and worn like that, Bearing deep marks of battles long since fought.
Mar. Some remnant of the wars; he's welcome, surely, Bringing no quality along with him Which can alarm suspicion.—Well, the other?
Isa. A young man, gentle-voiced and gentle-eyed, Who looks and speaks like one the world has frown'd on; But smiles when you smile, seeming that he feels Joy in your joy, though he himself is sad.
Brown hair, and downcast looks.
Mar. (alarmed.) 'Tis but an idle thought—it cannot be! [Listens. I hear his accents—It is all too true—My terrors were prophetic! I'll compose myself, And then accost him firmly. Thus it must be.
[She retires hastily into the Tower.
[The voices of the Sergeant and Quentin are heard ascending behind the Scenes.
Que. One effort more—we stand upon the level. I've seen thee work thee up glacis and cavalier Steeper than this ascent, when cannon, culverine, Musket, and hackbut, shower'd their shot upon thee, And form'd, with ceaseless blaze, a fiery garland Round the defences of the post you storm'd.
[They come on the Stage, and at the same time Marion re-enters from the Tower.
Ser. Truly thou speak'st. I am the tardier, That I, in climbing hither, miss the fire, Which wont to tell me there was death in loitering.—Here stands, methinks, our hostess. 
[He goes forward to address Marion. Quentin, struck on seeing her, keeps back.
Ser. Kind dame, you little lass hath brought you strangers. Willing to be a trouble, not a charge to you.
We are disbanded soldiers, but have means
Ample enough to pay our journey homeward.

MAR. We keep no house of general entertainment,
But know our duty, sir, to locks like yours,
Whiten'd and thinn'd by many a long campaign.
Ill chances that my husband should be absent—
(Apart.)—Courage alone can make me struggle through it—
For in your comrade, though he hath forgot me,
I spy a friend whom I have known in school-days,
And whom I think MacLellan well remembers.

[She goes up to Quentin.
You see a woman's memory
Is faithfuller than yours; for Quentin Blane
Hath not a greeting left for Marion Harkness.

QUE. (with effort.) I seek, indeed, my native land, good Marion,
But seek it like a stranger.—All is changed.
And thou thyself—

MAR. You left a giddy maiden, And find, on your return, a wife and mother.
Thine old acquaintance, Quentin, is my mate—
Stout Niel MacLellan, ranger to our lord,
The Knight of Auchindrane. He's absent now,
But will rejoice to see his former comrade,
If, as I trust, you tarry his return.
(Apart.) Heaven grant he understand my words by contraries!
He must remember Niel and he were rivals;
He must remember Niel and he were foes;
He must remember Niel is warm of temper,

And think, instead of welcome, I would blithely
Bid him, God speed you. But he is as simple
And void of guile as ever.

QUE. Marion, I gladly rest within your cottage,
And gladly wait return of Niel MacLellan,
To clasp his hand, and wish him happiness.
Some rising feelings might perhaps prevent this—
But 'tis a peevish part to grudge our friends
Their share of fortune because we have miss'd it;
I can wish others joy and happiness,
Though I must ne'er partake them.

MAR. But if it grieve you—
QUE. No! do not fear. The brightest gleams of hope
That shine on me are such as are reflected
From those which shine on others.

[The Sergeant and Quentin enter the Tower with the little Girl.

MAR. (comes forward, and speaks in agitation.) Even so! the simple youth has miss'd my meaning.
I shame to make it plainer, or to say, In one brief word, Pass on—Heaven guide the bark,
For we are on the breakers!

[Exit into the Tower.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

A withdrawing Apartment in the Castle of Auchindrane. Servants place a Table, with a Flask of Wine and Drinking-Cups.

Enter Mure of Auchindrane, with Albert Gifford, his Relation and Visitor. They place themselves by the Table after some complimentary ceremony. At some distance is heard the noise of revelling.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

AUCH. We're better placed for confidential talk,
Than in the hall fill'd with disbanded soldiers,
And fools and fiddlers gather'd on the highway,—
The worthy guests whom Philip crowds my hall with,
And with them spends his evening.

GIF. But think you not, my friend,
that your son Philip
Should be participant of these our councils,
Being so deeply mingled in the danger—
Your house's only heir—your only son?

AUCH. Kind cousin Gifford, if thou lack'st good counsel
At race, at cockpit, or at gambling table,
Or any freak by which men cheat themselves
As well of life, as of the means to live,
Call for assistance upon Philip Mure;
But in all serious parley spare invoking him.

GIF. You speak too lightly of my cousin Philip;
All name him brave in arms.

AUCH. A second Bevis;
But I, my youth bred up in graver fashions,
Mourn o'er the mode of life in which he spends,
Or rather dissipates, his time and substance.
No vagabond escapes his search—
The soldier
Spurn'd from the service, henceforth
To be ruffian
Upon his own account, is Philip's comrade;
The fiddler, whose crack'd crowd has still three strings on't;
The balladeer, whose voice has still two notes left;
Whate'er is roguish and whate'er is vile,
Are welcome to the board or Auchindrane,

And Philip will return them shout for shout,
And pledge for jovial pledge, and song for song,
Until the shamefaced sun peep at our windows,
And ask, "What have we here?"

GIF. You take such revel deeply—we are Scotsmen,
Far known for rustic hospitality,
That mind not birth or titles in our guests;
The harper has his seat beside our hearth,
The wanderer must find comfort at our board,
His name unask'd, his pedigree unknown;
So did our ancestors, and so must we.

AUCH. All this is freely granted, worthy kinsman;
And prithee do not think me churl enough
To count how many sit beneath my salt.
I've wealth enough to fill my father's hall
Each day at noon, and feed the guests who crowd it.
I am near mate with those whom men call Lord,
Though a rude western knight. But mark me, cousin,
Although I feed wayfaring vagabonds,
I make them not my comrades. Such as I,
Who have advanced the fortunes of my line,
And swell'd a baron's turret to a palace,
Have oft the curse awaiting on our thrift,
To see, while yet we live, the things which must be
At our decease—the downfall of our family,
The loss of land and lordship, name and knighthood,
The wreck of the fair fabric we have built,
By a degenerate heir. Philip has that
Of inborn meanness in him, that he loves not
The company of betters, nor of equals;
Never at ease, unless he bears the bell,
And crows the loudest in the company.
He's mesh'd, too, in the snares of every female
Who deigns to cast a passing glance on him—
Licentious, disrespectful, rash, and profligate.

Gif. Come, my good coz, think we too have been young,
And I will swear that in your father's lifetime
You have yourself been trapp'd by toys like these.

Ach. A fool I may have been—but not a madman;
I never play'd the rake among my followers,
Pursuing this man's sister, that man's wife;
And therefore never saw I man of mine,
When summon'd to obey my hest, grow restive,
Talk of his honour, of his peace destroy'd,
And, while obeying, mutter threats of vengeance.
But now the humour of an idle youth,
Disgusting trusted followers, sworn dependents,
Plays football with his honour and my safety.

Gif. I'm sorry to find discord in your house,
For I had hoped, while bringing you cold news,
To find you arm'd in union 'gainst the danger.

Ach. What can man speak that I would shrink to hear,
And where the danger I would deign to shun?

Winds whistle past him, billows rage below,
The sea-fowl sweep around, with shriek and clang,
One single slip, one unadvised pace,
One qualm of giddiness—and peace be with him!
But he whose grasp is sure, whose step is firm,
Whose brain is constant—he makes one proud rock
The means to scale another, till he stand
Triumphant on the peak.

Gif. And so I trust
Thou wilt surmount the danger now approaching,
Which scarcely can I frame my tongue to tell you,
Though I rode here on purpose.

Ach. Cousin, I think thy heart was never coward,
And strange it seems thy tongue should take such semblance.
I've heard of many a loud-mouth'd, noisy braggart,
Whose hand gave feeble sanction to his tongue;
But thou art one whose heart can think bold things,
Whose hand can act them—but who shrinks to speak them!

Gif. And if I speak them not, 'tis that I shame
To tell thee of the calumnies that load thee.

Things loudly spoken at the city Cross—
Things closely whisper'd in our Sovereign's ear—
Things which the plumed lord and flat-capp'd citizen
Do circulate amid their different ranks—
Things false, no doubt; but, falsehoods while I deem them,
Still honouring thee, I shun the odious topic.

Ach. Shun it not, cousin; 'tis a friend's best office
To bring the news we hear unwillingly.
The sentinel, who tells the foe's approach,
And wakes the sleeping camp, does but his duty:
Be thou as bold in telling me or danger,
As I shall be in facing danger told of.
Gif. I need not bid thee recollect the death-feud
That raged so long betwixt thy house and Cassilis;
I need not bid thee recollect the league,
When royal James himself stood mediator
Between thee and Earl Gilbert.
Auch. Call you these news? — You might as well have told me
That old King Coil is dead, and graved at Kylesfeld.
I'll help thee out—King James commanded us
Henceforth to live in peace, made us clasp hands too.
O, sir, when such an union hath been made,
In heart and hand conjoining mortal foes,
Under a monarch's royal mediation,
The league is not forgotten. And with this
What is there to be told? The king commanded—
"Be friends." No doubt we were so—Who dare doubt it?
Gif. You speak but half the tale.
Auch. By good Saint Trimon, but I'll tell the whole!
There is no terror in the tale for me—Go speak of ghosts to children!—
This Earl Gilbert
(God sain him) loved Heaven's peace as well as I did,
And we were wondrous friends whene'er we met
At church or market, or in burrows town.
Midst this, our good Lord Gilbert, Earl of Cassilis,
Takes purpose he would journey forth to Edinburgh.
The King was doling gifts of abbey-lands,
Good things that thrifty house was wont to fish for.
Our mighty Earl forsakes his sea-wash'd castle,
Passes our borders some four miles from hence;
And, holding it unwholesome to be faster
Long after sunrise, lo! The Earl and train
Dismount, to rest their nags and eat their breakfast.
The morning rose, the small birds caroll'd sweetly—
The corks were drawn, the pasty brooks incision—
His lordship jests, his train are choked with laughter
When,—wondrous change of cheer, and most unlook'd for,
Strange epilogue to bott'e and to baked meat!—
Flash'd from the greenwood half a score of carabines
And the good Earl of Cassilis, in his breakfast,
Had noon ing, dinner, supper, all at once,
Even in the morning that he closed his journey;
And the grim sexton, for his chamberlain,
Made him the bed which rests the head for ever.
Gif. Told with much spirit, cousin—some there are
Would add, and in a tone resembling triumph.
And would that with these long establish'd facts
My tale began and ended! I must tell you,
That evil-deeming censures of the events,
Both at the time and now, throw blame on thee—
Time, place, and circumstance, they say, proclaim thee,
Alike, the author of that morning's ambush.
Auch. Ay, 'tis an old belief in Carrick here,
Where natives do not always die in bed,
That if a Kennedy shall not attain
Methuselah's last span, a Mure has slain him.
Such is the general creed of all their clan.
Thank Heaven, that they're bound to prove the charge
They are so prompt in making. They have clamour'd
Enough of this before, to show their malice.
But what said these coward pick-thanks when I came
Before the King, before the Justicers,
Rebutting all their calumnies, and daring them
To show that I knew aught of Cassilis' journey—
Which way he meant to travel—where to halt—
Without which knowledge I possess'd no means
To dress an ambush for him? Did I not
Defy the assembled clan of Kennedys
To show, by proof direct or inferential,
Wherefore they slander'd me with this foul charge?
My gauntlet rung before them in the court,
And I did dare the best of them to lift it,
And prove such charge a true one—Did I not?
Gif. I saw your gauntlet lie before the Kennedys,
Who look'd on it as men do on an adder,
Longing to crush, and yet afraid to grasp it.
Not an eye sparkled—not a foot advanced—
No arm was stretch'd to lift the fatal symbol.
Auch. Then, wherefore do the hildings mutter now?
Wish they to see again, how one bold Mure
Can baffle and defy their assembled valour?

Gif. No; but they speak of evidence suppress'd.
Auch. Suppress'd!—what evidence?—by whom suppress'd?
What Will-o'-Wisp—what idiot of a witness,
Is he to whom they trace an empty voice,
But cannot show his person?
Gif. They pretend,
With the King's leave, to bring it to a trial;
Averring that a lad, named Quentin Blane,
Brought thee a letter from the murder'd Earl,
With friendly greetings, telling of his journey,
The hour which he set forth, the place he halted at
Affording thee the means to form the ambush,
Of which your hatred made the application.
Auch. A prudent Earl, indeed, if such his practice,
When dealing with a recent enemy!
And what should he propose by such strange confidence
In one who sought it not?
Gif. His purposes were kindly, say the Kennedys—
Desiring you would meet him where he halted,
Offering to undertake what'er commissions
You listed trust him with, for court or city:
And, thus apprised of Cassilis' purposed journey,
And of his halting place, you placed the ambush,
Prepared the homicides—
Auch. They're free to say their pleasure. They are men
Of the new court—and I am but a fragment
Of stout old Morton's faction. It is reason
That such as I be rooted from the earth
That they may have full room to spread their branches.
No doubt, 'tis easy to find strolling vagrants
To prove whate'er they prompt. This Quentin Blane—
Did you not call him so?—why comes he now?
And wherefore not before? This must be answer'd—(abruptly)—Where is he now?

Gif. Abroad—they say—
kidnapp'd,
By you kidnapp'd, that he might die in Flanders.
But orders have been sent for his discharge,
And his transmission hither.

Auch. (assuming an air of composure.) When they produce such witness, cousin Gifford,
We'll be prepared to meet it. In the meanwhile,
The King doth ill to throw his royal sceptre
In the accuser's scale, ere he can know
How justice shall incline it.

Gif. Our sage prince
Resents, it may be, less the death of Cassilis,
Than he is angry that the feud should burn,
After his royal voice had said, "Be quench'd:"
Thus urging prosecution less for slaughter,
Than that, being done against the King's command,
Treason is mix'd with homicide.

Auch. Ha! ha! most true, my cousin.
Why, well consider'd, 'tis a crime so great
To slay one's enemy, the King forbidding it,
Like parricide, it should be held impossible.
'Tis just as if a wretch retain'd the evil,
When the King's touch had bid the sores be heal'd;
And such a crime merits the stake at least.

What! can there be within a Scottish bosom
A feud so deadly, that it kept its ground
When the King said, Be friends! It is not credible.
Were I King James, I never would believe it:
I'd rather think the story all a dream,
And that there was no friendship, feud, nor journey,
No halt, no ambush, and no Earl of Cassilis,
Than dream anointed Majesty has wrong!—

Gif. Speak within door, coz.

Auch. O, true—(aside)—I shall betray myself
Even to this half-bred fool. I must have room,
Room for an instant, or I suffocate—
Cousin, I prithee call our Philip hither—
Forgive me; 'twere more meet I summon'd him
Myself; but then the sight of yonder revel
Would chase my blood, and I have need of coolness.

Gif. I understand thee—I will bring him straight. [Exit.

Auch. And if thou dost, he's lost his ancient trick
To fathom, as he wont, his five-pint flagons.—
This space is mine—O for the power to fill it,
Instead of senseless rage and empty curses,
With the dark spell which witches learn from fiends,
That smites the object of their hate afar,
Nor leaves a token of its mysticaction,
Stealing the soul from out the unscathed body,
As lightning melts the blade, nor harms the scabbard!
—'Tis vain to wish for it—Each curse of mine
Falls to the ground as harmless as the arrows
Which children shoot at stars! The time for thought,
If thought could aught avail me, melts away,
Like to a snowball in a schoolboy's hand,
That melts the faster the more close he grasps it!—
If I had time, this Scottish Solomon,
Whom some call son of David the Musician,
Might find it perilous work to march to Carrick.
There's many a feud still slumbering in its ashes,
Whose embers are yet red. Nobles we have,
Stout as old Graysteel, and as hot as Bothwell;
Here too are castles look from crags as high
On seas as wide as Logan's. So the King—
Pshaw! He is here again—

Enter Gifford.

Giff. I heard you name
The King, my kinsman; know, he comes not hither.
Auch. (affecting indifference.) Nay, then we need not broach our barrels, cousin,
Nor purchase us new jerkins. — Comes not Philip?
Giff. Yes, sir. He tarries but to drink a service
To his good friends at parting.
Auch. Friends for the beadle or the sheriff-officer.
Well, let it pass. Who comes, and how attended,
Since James designs not westward?
Giff. O you shall have, instead, his fiery functionary,
George Home that was, but now Dunbar's great Earl;
He leads a royal host, and comes to show you
How he distributes justice on the Border,

Where judge and hangman oft reverse their office,
And the noose does its work before the sentence.
But I have said my tidings best and worst.
None but yourself can know what course the time
And peril may demand. To lift your banner,
If I might be a judge, were desperate game:
Ireland and Galloway offer you convenience
For flight, if flight be thought the better remedy;
To face the court requires the consciousness
And confidence of innocence. You alone
Can judge if you possess these attributes.

[A noise behind the scenes.
Auch. Philip, I think, has broken up his revels;
His ragged regiment are dispersing them,
Well liquor'd, doubtless. They're disbanded soldiers,
Or some such vagabonds. — Here comes the gallant.

[Enter Philip. He has a buff-coat and head-piece, wears a sword and dagger, with pistols at his girdle. He appears to be affected by liquor, but to be by no means intoxicated.

Auch. You scarce have been made known to one another.
Although you sate together at the board.—
Son Philip, know and prize our cousin Gifford.

Phi. (tastes the wine on the table.)
If you had prized him, sir, you had been loth
To have welcomed him in bastard Alicant:
I'll make amends, by pledging his good journey
DRAMATIC PIECES.

In glorious Burgundy.—The stirrup-cup, ho!
And bring my cousin's horses to the court.

AUCH. (draws him aside.) The stirrup-cup! He doth not ride to-night—
Shame on such churlish conduct to a kinsman!

PHI. (aside to his father.) I've news of pressing import.
Send the fool off.—Stay, I will start him for you.

(To Gif.) Yes, my kind cousin, Burgundy is better,
On a night-ride, to those who thread our moors,
And we may deal it freely to our friends,
For we came freely by it. Yonder ocean
Rolls many a purple cask upon our shore,
Rough with embossed shells and shagged sea-weed,
When the good skipper and his careful crew
Have had their latest earthly draught of brine,
And gone to quench, or to endure their thirst,
Where nectar's plenty, or even water's scarce,
And filter'd to the parched crew by dropsfull.

AUCH. Thou'rt mad, son Philip!—Gifford's no intruder,
That we should rid him hence by such wild rants:
My kinsman hither rode at his own danger,
To tell us that Dunbar is hasting to us,
With a strong force, and with the King's commission,
To enforce against our house a hateful charge,
With every measure of extremity.

PHI. And is this all that our good cousin tells us?
I can say more, thanks to the ragged regiment,
With whose good company you have upbraided me,
On whose authority, I tell thee, cousin,
Dunbar is here already.

GIF. Already?

PHI. Yes, gentle coz. And you, my sire, be hasty
In what you think to do.

AUCH. I think thou darest not jest on such a subject.
Where hadst thou these fell tidings?

PHI. Where you, too, might have heard them, noble father,
Save that your ears, nail'd to our kinsman's lips,
Would list no coarser accents. O, my soldiers,
My merry crew of vagabonds, for ever!
Scum of the Netherlands, and wash'd ashore
Upon this coast like unregarded sea-weed,
They had not been two hours on Scottish land,
When, lo! they met a military friend,
An ancient fourier, known to them of old,
Who, warm'd by certain stoups of searching wine,
Inform'd his old companions that Dunbar
Left Glasgow yesterday, comes here to-morrow;
Himself, he said, was sent a spy before,
To view what preparations we were making.

AUCH. (to Gif.) If this be sooth, good kinsman, thou must claim
To take a part with us for life and death,
Or speed from hence, and leave us to our fortune.

GIF. In such dilemma,
Believe me, friend, I'd choose upon the instant—
But I lack harness, and a steed to charge on,
For mine is overtired, and, save my page,
There's not a man to back me. But I'll hie
To Kyle, and raise my vassals to your aid.

Phi. 'Twill be when the rats, That on these tidings fly this house of ours,
Come back to pay their rents.— (apart.)

Auch. Courage, cousin— Thou goest not hence ill mounted for thy need
Full forty coursers feed in my wide stalls,
The best of them is yours to speed your journey.

Phi. Stand not on ceremony, good our cousin,
When safety signs, to shorten courtesy.

Gif. (to Auch.) Farewell, then cousin, for my tarrying here
Were ruin to myself, small aid to you;
Yet loving well your name and family,
I'd fain—

Phi. Be gone?—that is our object, too—
Kinsman, adieu.

[Exit Gifford. Philip calls after him.
You yeoman of the stable,
Give Master Gifford there my fleetest steed,
Yon cut-tail'd roan that trembles at a spear.—

[Trampling of the horse heard going off.

Hark! he departs. How swift the dastard rides,
To shun the neighbourhood of jeopardy!

[He lays aside the appearance of levity which he has hither to worn, and says very seriously, And now, my father—

Auch. And now, my son—thou'lt ta'en a perilous game
Into thine hands, rejecting elder counsel,—
How dost thou mean to play it?

Phi. Sir, good gamesters play not Till they review the cards which fate has dealt them, Computing thus the chances of the game; And woefully they seem to weigh against us.

Auch. Exile's a passing ill, and may be borne; And when Dunbar and all his myrmidons Are eastward turn'd, we'll seize our own again.

Phi. Would that were all the risk we had to stand to! But more and worse,—a doom of treason, forfeiture,

Death to ourselves, d'shonour to our house,

Is what the stern Justiciary menaces; And, fatally for us, he hath the means To make his threatenings good.

Auch. It cannot be. I tell thee, there's no force
In Scottish law to raze a house like mine,

Coeval with the time the Lords of Galloway Submitted them unto the Scottish sceptre,
Renouncing rights of Tanistry and Brehon.

Some dreams they have of evidence; some suspicion.

But old Montgomery knows my purpose well, And long before their mandate reach the camp To crave the presence of this mighty witness,

He will be fitted with an answer to it.

Phi. Father, what we call great, is often ruin'd By means so ludicrously disproportion'd,

They make me think upon the gunner's linstock, Which, yielding forth a light about the size And semblance of the glow-worm, yet applied
To powder, blew a palace into atoms,
Sent a young King—a young Queen's mate at least—
Into the air, as high as e'er flew night-hawk,
And made such wild work in the realm of Scotland,
As they can tell who heard,—and you were one
Who saw, perhaps, the night-flight which began it.
Auch. If thou hast nought to speak but drunken folly,
I cannot listen longer.
Phi. I will speak brief and sudden.
—There is one
Whose tongue to us has the same perilous force
Which Bothwell's powder had to Kirk of Field;
One whose least tones, and those but peasant accents,
Could rend the roof from off our fathers' castle,
Level its tallest turret with its base;
And he that doth possess this wondrous power
Sleeps this same night not five miles distant from us.
Auch. (who had looked on Philip with much appearance of astonishment and doubt, exclaims) Then thou art mad indeed!—Ha! ha! I'm glad on't.
I'd purchase an escape from what I dread,
Even by the frenzy of my only son!
Phi. I thank you, but agree not to the bargain.
You rest on what yon civet cat has said:
Yon silken doublet, stuff'd with rotten straw,
Told you but half the truth, and knew no more.
But my good vagrants had a perfect tale:
They told me, little judging the importance,
That Quentin Blane had been discharged with them.

They told me, that a quarrel hap'd at landing,
And that the younger and an ancient sergeant
Had left their company, and taken refuge
In Chapeldonnan, where our ranger dwells;
They saw him scale the cliff on which it stands,
Ere they were out of sight; the old man with him.
And therefore laugh no more at me as mad;
But laugh, if thou hast list for merriment,
To think he stands on the same land with us,
Whose absence thou wouldst deem were cheaply purchased
With thy soul's ransom and thy body's danger.
Auch. 'Tis then a fatal truth! Thou art no yelper
To open rashly on so wild a scent;
Thou'rt the young bloodhound, which careers and springs,
Frolics and fawns, as if the friend of man,
But seizes on his victim like a tiger.
Phi. No matter what I am—I'm as you bred me;
So let that pass till there be time to mend me,
And let us speak like men, and to the purpose.
This object of our fear and of our dread,
Since such our pride must own him, sleeps to-night
Within our power:—to-morrow in Dunbar's,
And we are then his victims.
Auch. He is in ours to-night.
Phi. He is. I'll answer that MacLellan's trusty.
Auch. Yet he replied to you to-day full rudely.
Phi. Yes! The poor knave has got a handsome wife,
And is gone mad with jealousy.
AUCH. Fool!—When we need the utmost faith, allegiance, Obedience, and attachment in our vassals, Thy wild intrigues pour gall into their hearts, And turn their love to hatred! 

PHI. Most reverend sire, you talk of ancient morals, Preach’d on by Knox, and practised by Glencairn; Respectable, indeed, but somewhat musty In these our modern nostrils. In our days, If a young baron chance to leave his vassal The sole possessor of a handsome wife, 'Tis sign he loves his follower; and, if not, He loves his follower’s wife, which often proves The surer bond of patronage. Take either case: Favour flows in of course, and vassals rise. 

AUCH. Philip, this is infamous, And, what is worse, impolitic. Take example: Break not God’s laws or man’s for each temptation That youth and blood suggest. I am a man— A weak and erring man;—full well thou know’st That I may hardly term myself a pattern Even to my son;—yet thus far will I say, I never swerved from my integrity, Save at the voice of strong necessity, Or such o’erpowering view of high advantage As wise men liken to necessity, In strength and force compulsive. No one saw me Exchange my reputation for my pleasure, Or do the Devil’s work without his wages.

I practised prudence, and paid tax to virtue, By following her behests, save where strong reason Compell’d a deviation. Then, if preachers At times look’d sour, or elders shook their heads, They could not term my walk irregular; For I stood up still for the worthy cause, A pillar, though a flaw’d one, of the altar, Kept a strict walk, and led three hundred horse. 

PHI. Ah, these three hundred horse in such rough times Were better commendation to a party Than all your efforts at hypocrisy, Betray’d so oft by avarice and ambition, And dragg’d to open shame. But, righteous father, When sire and son unite in mutual crime, And join their efforts to the same enormity, It is no time to measure other’s faults, Or fix the amount of each. Most moral father, Think if it be a moment now to weigh The vices of the Heir of Auchindrane, Or take precaution that the ancient house Shall have another heir than the sly courtier That’s gaping for the forfeiture. 

AUCH. We’ll disappoint him, Philip,— We’ll disappoint him yet. It is a folly, A wilful cheat, to cast our eyes behind, When time, and the fast flitting opportunity, Call loudly, nay, compel us to look forward: Why are we not already at Mac-Lellan’s, Since there the victim sleeps?
Phi. Nay, soft, I pray thee. I had not made your piety my confessor.
Nor enter'd in debate on these sage councils,
Which you're more like to give than I to profit by,
Cou'd I have used the time more usefully;
But first an interval must pass between
The fate of Quentin and the little artifice
That shall detach him from his comrade,
The stout old soldier that I told you of.
Auch. How work a point so difficult—so dangerous?
Phi. 'Tis cared for. Mark, my father, the convenience
Arising from mean company. My agents
Are at my hand, like a good workman's tools,
And if I mean a mischief, ten to one
That they anticipate the deed and guilt.
Well knowing this, when first the vagrant's tattle
Gave me the hint that Quentin was so near us,
Instant I sent MacLellan, with strong charges
To stop him for the night, and bring me word,
Like an accomplish'd spy, how all things stood,
Lulling the enemy into security.
Auch. There was a prudent general!
Phi. MacLellan went and came within the hour.
The jealous bee, which buzzes in his nightcap,
Had humm'd to him, this fellow, Quentin Blane.
Had been in schoolboy days an humble lover
Of his own pretty wife—
Auch. Most fortunate!
The knave will be more prompt to serve our purpose.
Phi. No doubt on't. 'Mid the tidings he brought back
Was one of some importance. The old man
Is flush of dollars; this I caused him to tell
Among his comrades, who became as eager
To have him in their company, as e'er
They had been wild to part with him. And in brief space
A letter's framed by an old hand amongst them,
Familiar with such feats. It bore the name
And character of old Montgomery,
Whom he might well suppose at no great distance,
Commanding his old Sergeant Hildebrand,
By all the ties of late authority,
Conjuring him by ancient soldiership,
To hasten to his mansion instantly,
On business of high import, with a charge
To come alone——
Auch. Well, he sets out, I doubt it not,—what follows?
Phi. I am not curious into others' practices,—
So far I'm an economist in guilt,
As you my sire advise. But on the road
To old Montgomery's he meets his comrades,
They nourish grudge against him and his dollars,
And things may hap, which counsel, learn'd in law,
Call Robbery and Murder. Should he live,
He has seen nought that we would hide from him.
Auch. Who carries the forged letter to the veteran?
Phi. Why, Niel MacLellan, who, return'd again
To his own tower, as it to pass the night there.
They pass'd on him, or tried to pass, a story,
As if they wish'd the sergeant's company,
Without the young comptroller's— that is Quentin's,
And he became an agent of their plot,
That he might better carry on our own.
AUCH! There's life in it—yes, there is life in't;
And we will have a mounted party ready
To scour the moors in quest of the banditti
That kill'd the poor old man—they shall die instantly.
Dunbar shall see us use sharp justice here,
As well as he in Teviotdale. You are sure
You gave no hint nor impulse to their purpose?
PHI. It needed not. The whole pack oped at once
Upon the scent of dollars.—But time comes
When I must seek the tower, and act with Niel
What farther's to be done.
AUCH. Alone with him thou goest not. He bears grudge—
Thou art my only son, and on a night
When such wild passions are so free abroad,
When such wild deeds are doing, 'tis but natural
I guarantee thy safety.—I'll ride with thee.
PHI. E'en as you will, my lord.
But, pardon me,—
If you will come, let us not have a word
Of conscience, and of pity, and forgiveness;
Fine words to-morrow, out of place to-night.
Take counsel then, leave all this work to me;
Call up your household. make fit preparation,
In love and peace, to welcome this Earl Justiciar,
As one that's free of guilt. Go, deck the castle
As for an honour'd guest. Hallow the chapel
(If they have power to hallow it)
with thy prayers.
Let me ride forth alone, and ere the sun
Comes o'er the eastern hill, thou shalt accost him:
"Now do thy worst, thou oft-returning spy,
Here's nought thou canst discover."
AUCH. Yet goest thou not alone with that MacLelian!
He deems thou bearest will to injure him,
And seek'st occasion suiting to such will.
Philip, thou art irreverent, fierce, ill-nurtured,
Stain'd with low vices, which disgust a father;
Yet ridest thou not alone with yonder man,—
Come weal come woe, myself will go with thee.

[Exit, and calls to horse behind the scene.

PHI. (alone) Now would I give my fleetest horse to know
What sudden thought roused this paternal care,
And if 'tis on his own account or mine:
'Tis true, he hath the deepest share in all
That's likely now to hap, or which has happen'd.
Yet strong through Nature's universal reign,
The link which binds the parent to the offspring:
The she-wolf knows it, and the tigress owns it.
So that dark man, who, shunning what is vicious,
Ne'er turn'd aside from an atrocity,
Hath still some care left for his hapless offspring.
Therefore 'tis meet, though wayward, light, and stubborn,
That I should do for him all that a son
Can do for sire—and his dark wisdom join'd
To influence my bold courses, 'twill be hard
To break our mutual purpose.—Horses there!  [Exit.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

It is moonlight. The scene is the Beach beneath the Tower which was exhibited in the first scene,—the Vessel is gone from her anchorage.

AUCHINDRANE and PHILIP, as if dismounted from their horses, come forward cautiously.

PHI. The nags are safely stow'd. Their noise might scare him; Let them be safe, and ready when we need them, The business is but short. We'll call MacLellan, To wake him, and in quiet bring him forth,
If he be so disposed, or here are waters Enough to drown, and sand enough to cover him. But if he hesitate, or fear to meet us, By heaven I'll deal on him in Chapel-donan With my own hand!—AUCH. Too furious boy!—alarm or noise undoes us, Our practice must be silent as 'tis sudden. Rethink thee that conviction of this slaughter Confirms the very worst of accusations Our foes can bring against us. Wherefore should we,
Who by our birth and fortune mate with nobles,
And are allied with them, take this lad's life,—
His peasant life,—unless to quash his evidence, Taking such pains to rid him from the world, Who would, if spared, have fix'd a crime upon us?
PHI. Well, I do own me one of those wise folks, Who think that when a deed of fate is plann'd, The execution cannot be too rapid. But do we still keep purpose? Is't determined He sails for Ireland—and without a wherry? Salt water is his passport—is it not so? AUCH. I would it could be otherwise. Might he not go there while in life and limb, And breathe his span out in another air?
Many seek Ulster never to return— Why might this wretched youth not harbour there?
PHI. With all my heart. It is small honour to me To be the agent in a work like this.— Yet this poor caitiff, having thrust himself Into the secrets of a noble house And twined himself so closely with our safety, That we must perish, or that he must die, I'll hesitate as little on the action, As I would do to slay the animal Whose flesh supplies my dinner. 'Tis as harmless, That deer or steer, as is this Quentin Blane, And not more necessary is its death To our accommodation—so we slay it Without a moment's pause or hesitation.
AUCH. 'Tis not, my son, the feeling call'd remorse,
That now lies tugging at this heart of mine, Engendering thoughts that stop the lifted hand. Have I not heard John Knox pour forth his thunders Against the oppressor and the man of blood, In accents of a minister of vengeance? Were not his fiery eyeballs turn'd on me, As if he said expressly, "Thou'rt the man?" Yet did my solid purpose, as I listen'd, Remain unshaken as that massive rock. PHI. Well, then, I'll understand 'tis not remorse,— As 'tis a foible little known to thee,— That interrupts thy purpose. What, then, is it? Is't scorn, or is't compassion? One thing's certain, Either the feeling must have free indulgence, Or fully be subjected to your reason— There is no room for these same treacherous courses, Which men call moderate measures. We must confide in Quentin, or must slay him. AUCH. In Ireland he might live afar from us. PHI. Among Queen Mary's faithful partisans, Your ancient enemies, the haughty Hamiltons, The stern MacDonnells, the resentful Graemes— With these around him, and with Cassilis' death Exasperating them against you, think, my father, What chance of Quentin's silence. AUCH. Too true—too true. He is a silly youth too, Who had not wit to shift for his own living— A bashful lover, whom his rivals laugh'd at— Of pliant temper, which companions play'd on— A moonlight waker, and a noontide dreamer— A torturer of phrases into sonnets,— Whom all might lead that chose to praise his rhymes. PHI. I marvel that your memory has room To hold so much on such a worthless subject. AUCH. Base in himself, and yet so strangely link'd With me and with my fortunes, that I've studied To read him through and through, as I would read Some paltry rhyme of vulgar prophecy, Said to contain the fortunes of my house; And, let me speak him truly—He is grateful, Kind, tractable, obedient—a child Might lead him by a thread—He shall not die! PHI. Indeed!—then have we had our midnight ride To wondrous little purpose. AUCH. By the blue heaven, Thou shalt not murder him, cold selfish sensualist! Yon pure vault speaks it—yonder summer moon, With its ten million sparklers, cries, Forbear! The deep earth sighs it forth—Thou shalt not murder!— Thou shalt not mar the image of thy Maker! Thou shalt not from thy brother take the life, The precious gift which God alone can give!— PHI. Here is a worthy guerdon now, for stuffing His memory with old saws and holy sayings! They come upon him in the very crisis, And when his resolution should be firmest, They shake it like a palsy—Let it be,
He'll end at last by yielding to temptation,
Consenting to the thing which must be done,
With more remorse the more he hesitates.—
[To his Father, who has stood fixed after his last speech.
Well, sir, 'tis fitting you resolve at last,
How the young clerk shall be disposed upon;
Unless you would ride home to Auchindrane,
And bid them rear the Maiden in the court-yard,
That when Dunbar comes, he have nought to do
But bid us kiss the cushion and the headsmen.
Auch. It is too true—There is no safety for us,
Consistent with the unhappy wretch's life!
In Ireland he is sure to find my enemies.
Arran I've proved—the Netherlands I've tried,
But wilds and wars return him on my hands.
Phi. Yet fear not, father, we'll make surer work:
The land has caves, the sea has whirlpools,
Where that which they suck in returns no more.
Auch. I will know nought of it, hard-hearted boy!
Phi. Hard-hearted! Why—my heart is soft as yours;
But then they must not feel remorse at once,
We can't afford such wasteful tenderness:
I can mouth forth remorse as well as you.
Be executioner, and I'll be chaplain,
And say as mild and moving things as you can;
But one of us must keep his steely temper.

Auch. Do thou the deed—I cannot look on it.
Phi. So be it—walk with me—MacLellan brings him.
The boat lies moor'd within that reach of rock,
And 'twill require our greatest strength combined
To launch it from the beach. Meantime, MacLellan
Brings our man hither.—See the twinkling light
That glances in the tower.
Auch. Let us withdraw—for should he spy us suddenly,
He may suspect us, and alarm the family.
Phi. Fear not, MacLellan has his trust and confidence,
Bought with a few sweet words and welcomes home.
Auch. But think you that the Ranger may be trusted?
Phi. I'll answer for him.—Let's go float the shallop.

[They go off, and as they leave the Stage, MacLellan is seen descending from the Tower with Quentin. The former bears a dark lantern. They come upon the Stage.

Mac. (showing the light) So—bravely done—that's the last ledge of rocks,
And we are on the sands.—I have broke your slumbers
Somewhat untimely.
Que. Do not think so, friend. These six years past I have been used to stir
When the reveille rung; and that, believe me,
Chooses the hours for rousing me at random,
And, having given its summons, yields no license
To indulge a second slumber. Nay, more, I'll tell thee,
That, like a pleased child, I was c'en too happy
For sound repose.
Mac. The greater fool were you.
Men should enjoy the moments given
to slumber;
For who can tell how soon may be
the waking;
Or where we shall have leave to sleep
again?
Que. The God of Slumber comes
not at command.
Last night the blood danced merry
through my veins:
Instead of finding this our land of
Carrick
The dreary waste my fears had
prehended,
I saw thy wife, MacLellan, and thy
daughter,
And had a brother's welcome;—saw
thee, too,
Renew'd my early friendship with
you both,
And felt once more that I had friends
and country.
So keen the joy that tingled through
my system,
Join'd with the searching powers of
yonder wine,
That I am glad to leave my feverish
lair,
Although my hostess smooth'd my
couch herself,
To cool my brow upon this moonlight
beach,
Gaze on the moonlight dancing on
the waves.
Such scenes are wont to soothe me
into melancholy;
But such the hurry of my spirits
now,
That everything I look on makes me
laugh.
Mac. I've seen but few so game-
some, Master Quentin,
Being roused from sleep so suddenly
as you were.
Que. Why, there's the jest on't.
Your old castle's haunted.
In vain the host—in vain the lovely
hostess,
In kind addition to all means of rest,
Add their best wishes for our sound
repose,
When some hobgoblin brings a press-
ing message:
Montgomery presently must see his
sergeant,
And up gets Hildebrand, and off he
trudges.
I can't but laugh to think upon the
grin
With which he doff'd the kerchief he
had twisted
Around his brows, and put his morion
on—
Ha! ha! ha! ha!
Mac. I'm glad to see you merry,
Quentin.
Que. Why, faith, my spirits are
but transitory,
And you may live with me a month
or more,
And never see me smile. Then some
such trifle
As yonder little maid of yours would
laugh at,
Will serve me for a theme of merri-
ment—
Even no, I scarce can keep my
gravity;
We were so snugly settled in our
quarters,
With full intent to let the sun be high
Ere we should leave our beds—and
first the one
And then the other's summon'd briefly
forth,
To the old tune, "Black Bandsmen,
up and march!"
Mac. Well! you shall sleep anon
—rely upon it—
And make up time misspent. Mean-
time, methinks,
You are so merry on your broken
slumbers,
You ask'd not why I call'd you.
Que. I can guess,
You lack my aid to search the weir
for seals,
You lack my company to stalk a
deer.
Think you I have forgot your silvan
tasks.
Which oft you have permitted me to
share,
Till days that we were rivals?
   Mac. You have memory
Of that too?—
   Que. Like the memory of a
dream,
Delusion far too exquisite to last.
   Mac. You guess not then for what
I call you forth,
It was to meet a friend—
   Que. What friend? Thyself ex-
cepted,
The good old man who's gone to see
Montgomery,
And one to whom I once gave dearer
title,
I know not in wide Scotland man or
woman
Whom I could name a friend.
   Mac. Thou art mistaken,
There is a Baron, and a powerful
one—
   Que. There flies my fit of mirth.
   You have a grave
And alter'd man before you.
   Mac. Compose yourself, there is
no cause for fear,—
He will and must speak with you.
   Que. Spare me the meeting, Niel,
   I cannot see him.
Say, I'm just landed on my native
earth;
Say, that I will not cumber it a day;
Say, that my wretched thread of poor
existence
Shall be drawn out in solitude and
exile,
Where never memory of so mean a
thing
Again shall cross his path—but do
not ask me
To see or speak again with that dark
man!
   Mac. Your fears are now as
foolish as your mirth—
What should the powerful Knight
of Auchindrane
In common have with such a man as
thou?
   Que. No matter; what—Enough,
   I will not see him.
   Mac. He is thy master, and he
claims obedience.
   Que. My master? Ay, my task-
master—Ever since
I could write man, his hand hath
been upon me,
No step I've made but cumber'd with
his chain,
And I am weary on't—I will not see
him.
   Mac. You must and shall—there
is no remedy.
   Que. Take heed that you compel
me not to find one.
I've seen the wars since we had strife
together;
To put my late experience to the test
Were something dangerous—Ha, I
am betray'd!

   While the latter part of this
dialogue is passing, Auchin-
drane and Philip enter on
the Stage from behind, and
suddenly present themselves.

   Auch. What says the runagate?
   Que. (laying aside all appearance
of resistance) Nothing, you are
my fate;
And in a shape more fearfully resist-
less,
My evil angel could not stand before
me.
   Auch. And so you scruple, slave,
at my command,
To meet me when I deign to ask thy
presence?
   Que. No, sir; I had forgot—I am
your bond-slave;
But sure a passing thought of in-
dependence,
For which I've seen whole nations
doing battle,
Was not, in one who has so long
enjoy'd it,
A crime beyond forgiveness.
   Auch. We shall see:
Thou wert my vassal, born upon my
land,
Bred by my bounty—It concern'd me
highly,
Thou know'st it did—and yet against
my charge
Again I find thy worthlessness in
Scotland,
QUE. Alas! the wealthy and the powerful know not
How very dear to those who have least share in't,
Is that sweet word of country!
The poor exile
Feels, in each action of the varied day,
His doom of banishment. The very air
Cools not his brow as in his native land;
The scene is strange, the food is loathly to him;
The language, nay, the music jars his ear.
Why should I, guiltless of the slightest crime,
Suffer a punishment which, sparing life,
Deprives that life of all which men hold dear?
Auch. Hear ye the serf I bred, begin to reckon
Upon his rights and pleasure! Who am I—
Thou abject, who am I, whose will thou thwartest?
Phi. Well spoke, my pious sire. There goes remorse!
Let once thy precious pride take fire, and then,
MacLellan, you and I may have small trouble.
QUE. Your words are deadly, and your power resistless;
I'm in your hands—but, surely, less than life
May give you the security you seek,
Without commission of a mortal crime.
Auch. Who is't would deign to think upon thy life?
I but require of thee to speed to Ireland,
Where thou mayst sojourn for some little space,
Having due means of living dealt to thee,
And, when it suits the changes of the times,
Permission to return.

QUE. Noble my lord, I am too weak to combat with your pleasure;
Yet, O, for mercy's sake, and for the sake
Of that dear land which is our common mother,
Let me not part in darkness from my country!
Pass but an hour or two, and every cape,
Headland, and bay, shall gleam with new-born light,
And I'll take boat as gaily as the bird
That soars to meet the morning.
Grant me but this—to show no darker thoughts
Are on your heart than those your speech expresses!
Phi. A modest favour, friend, is this you ask!
Are we to pace the beach like watermen,
Waiting your worship's pleasure to take boat?
No, by my faith! you go upon the instant.
The boat lies ready, and the ship receives you
Near to the point of Turnberry. — Come, we wait you;
Bestir you!
QUE. I obey.—Then farewell, Scotland,
And Heaven forgoe my sins, and grant that mercy,
Which mortal man deserves not!
Auch. (speaks aside to his Son) What signal
Shall let me know 'tis done?
Phi. When the light is quench'd, Your fears for Quentin Blane are at an end.—
(To QUE.) Come, comrade, come, we must begin our voyage.
QUE. But when, O when to end it!
[He goes off reluctantly with PHILIP and MACLELLAN. AUCHINDRANE stands looking after them. The Moon becomes overclouded, and the Stage dark. AUCHINDRANE,
who has gazed fixedly and eagerly after those who have left the Stage, becomes animated, and speaks.

Auch. It is no fallacy!—The night is dark,
The moon has sunk before the deepening clouds;
I cannot on the murky beach distinguish
The shalltop from the rocks which lie beside it;
I cannot see tall Philip's floating plume,
Nor trace the sullen brow of Niel MacLellan;
Yet still that caitiff's visage is before me,
With chattering teeth, mazed look, and bristling hair,
As he stood here this moment!—Have I changed
My human eyes for those of some night prowler,
The wolf's, the tiger-cat's, or the hoarse bird's,
That spies its prey at midnight? I can see him—
Yes, I can see him, seeing no one else,—
And well it is I do so. In his absence,
Strange thoughts of pity mingled with my purpose,
And moved remorse within me—But they vanished
Whene'er he stood a living man before me;
Then my antipathy awaked within me,
Seeing its object close within my reach,
Till I could scarce forbear him.—How they linger!
The boat's not yet to sea!—I ask myself,
What has the poor wretch done to
wake my hatred—
Docile, obedient, and in sufferance patient?—
As well demand what evil has the hare
Done to the hound that courses her in sport.

Instinct infallible supplies the reason—
And that must plead my cause.—The vision's gone!
Their boat now walks the waves; a single gleam,
Now seen, now lost, is all that marks her course;
That soon shall vanish too—then all is over!—
Would it were o'er, for in this moment lies
The agony of ages!—Now, 'tis gone—
And all is acted!—no—she breasts again
The opposing wave, and bears the tiny sparkle
Upon her crest—(A faint cry heard as from seaward.)

Ah! there was fatal evidence,
All's over now, indeed!—The light is quench'd—
And Quentin, source of all my fear, exists not.—
The morning tide shall sweep his corpse to sea,
And hide all memory of this stern night's work.
[He walks in a slow and deeply meditative manner towards the side of the Stage, and suddenly meets Marion, the wife of MacLellan, who has descended from the Castle.]

Now, how to meet Dunbar—Heaven guard my senses!
Stand! who goes there?—Do spirits walk the earth
Ere yet they've left the body!

Mar. Is it you,
My lord, on this wild beach at such an hour!

Auch. It is MacLellan's wife, in search of him,
Or of her lover—of the murderer,
Or of the murder'd man.—Go to, Dame Marion,
Men have their hunting-gear to give an eye to,
Their snares and trackings for their game. But women
Should shun the night air. A young wife also,
Still more a handsome one, should keep her pillow
Till the sun gives example for her wakening.
Come, dame, go back—back to your bed again.
Mar. Hear me, my lord! there have been sights and sounds
That terrified my child and me—Groans, screams,
As if of dying seamen, came from ocean—
A corpse-light danced upon the crested waves
For several minutes' space, then sunk at once.
When we retired to rest we had two guests,
Besides my husband Niel—I'll tell your lordship
Who the men were—
Auch. Pshaw, woman, can you think
That I have any interest in your gossips?
Please your own husband, and that you may please him,
Get thee to bed, and shut up doors, good dame.
Were I MacLellan, I should scarce be satisfied
To find thee wandering here in mist and moonlight,
When silence should be in thy habitation,
And sleep upon thy pillow.
Mar. Good my lord,
This is a holyday. By an ancient custom
Our children seek the shore at break of day,
And gather shells, and dance, and play, and sport them
In honour of the Ocean. Old men say
The custom is derived from heathen times. Our Isabel
Is mistress of the feast, and you may think
She is awake already, and impatient
To be the first shall stand upon the beach,
And bid the sun good-morrow.
Auch. Ay, indeed?
Linger such dregs of heathendom among you?
And hath Knox preach'd, and Wishart died, in vain?
Take notice, I forbid these sinful practices,
And will not have my followers mingle in them.
Mar. If such your honour's pleasure, I must go
And lock the door on Isabel; she is wilful,
And voice of mine will have small force to keep her
From the amusement she so long has dream'd of.
But I must tell your honour, the old people,
That were survivors of the former race,
Prophesied evil if this day should pass
Without due homage to the mighty Ocean.
Auch. Folly and Papistry—Perhaps the ocean
Hath had his morning sacrifice already;
Or can you think the dreadful element,
Whose frown is death, whose roar the dirge of navies,
Will miss the idle pageant you prepare for?
I've business for you, too—the dawn advances—
I'd have thee lock thy little child in safety,
And get to Auchindrane before the sun rise;
Tell them to get a royal banquet ready,
As if a king were coming there to feast him.
Mar. I will obey your pleasure. But my husband—
Auch. I wait him on the beach, and bring him in
To share the banquet.
Mar. But he has a friend,
Whom it would ill become him to intrude
Upon your hospitality.

Auch. Fear not; his friend shall be made welcome too,
Should he return with Niel.

Mar. He must—he will return—he has no option.

Auch. (apart) Thus rashly do we deem of others' destiny—
He has indeed no option—but he comes not.

Begone on thy commission—I go this way
To meet thy husband.

[Marion goes to her Tower, and after entering it, is seen to come out, lock the door, and leave the Stage, as if to execute Auchindrané's commission. He, apparently going off in a different direction, has watched her from the side of the Stage, and on her departure speaks.

Auch. Fare thee well, fond woman,
Most dangerous of spies—thou prying, prating,
Spying, and telling woman! I've cut short
Thy dangerous testimony—hated word!
What other evidence have we cut short,
And by what fated means, this dreary morning!—
Bright lances here and helmets?—I must shift
To join the others. [Exit.

Enter from the other side the Sergeant, accompanied with an Officer and two Pikemen.

Ser. 'Twas in good time you came; a minute later
The knaves had ta'en my dollars and my life.

Off. You fought most stoutly.
Two of them were down,
Ere we came to your aid.

Ser. Gramercy, halberd!

And well it happens, since your leader seeks
This Quentin Blane, that you have fall'n on me;
None else can surely tell you where he hides,
Being in some fear, and bent to quit this province.

Off. 'Twill do our Earl good service. He has sent
Despatches into Holland for this Quentin.

Ser. I left him two hours since in yonder tower,
Under the guard of one who smoothly spoke,
Although he look'd but roughly—I will chide him
For bidding me go forth with yonder traitor.

Off. Assure yourself 'twas a concerted stratagem.

Montgomery's been at Holyrood for months,
And can have sent no letter—'twas a plan
On you and on your dollars, and a base one,
To which this Ranger was most likely privy;
Such men as he hang on our fiercer barons,
The ready agents of their lawless will;
Boys of the belt, who aid their master's pleasures,
And in his moods ne'er scruple his injunctions.

But haste, for now we must un-kennel Quentin;
I've strictest charge concerning him.

Ser. Go up, then, to the tower.
You've younger limbs than mine—there shall you find him

Lounging and snoring, like a lazy cur

Before a stable door; it is his practice.

[The Officer goes up to the Tower, and after knocking without receiving an answer, turns the key which Marion
had left in the lock, and enters; ISABEL, dressed as if
for her dance, runs out and
descends to the Stage; the
Officer follows.
Off. There's no one in the house,
this little maid
Exepted——
ISA. And for me, I'm there
no longer,
And will not be again for three hours
good:
I'm gone to join my playmates on
the sands.
Off. (detaining her) You shall,
when you have told to me
distinctly
Where are the guests who slept up
there last night.
ISA. Why, there is the old man,
he stands beside you,
The merry old man, with the
glistening hair;
He left the tower at midnight, for
my father
Brought him a letter.
Ser. In ill hour I left you,
I wish to Heaven that I had stay'd
with you;
There is a nameless horror that
comes o'er me.—
Speak, pretty maiden, tell us what
chanced next,
And thou shalt have thy freedom.
ISA. After you went last night, my
father
Grew moody, and refused to doff his
clothes,
Or go to bed, as sometimes he
will do
When there is aught to chafe him.
Until past midnight,
He wander'd to and fro, then call'd
the stranger,
The gay young man, that sung such
merry songs,
Yet ever look'd most sadly whilst he
sung them,
And forth they went together.
Off. And you've seen
Or heard nought of them since?
ISA. Seen surely nothing, and I
cannot think
That they have lot or share in what
I heard.
I heard my mother praying, for the
corpse-lights
Were dancing on the waves; and at
one o'clock,
Just as the Abbey steeple toll'd the
knell,
There was a heavy plunge upon the
waters,
And some one cried aloud for mercy!
—mercy!
It was the water-spirit, sure, which
promised
Mercy to boat and fisherman, if we
Perform'd to-day's rites duly. Let
me go—
I am to lead the ring.
Off. (to Ser.) Detain her not.
She cannot tell us more;
To give her liberty is the sure way
To lure her parents homeward.—
Strahan, take two men,
And should the father or the mother
come,
Arrest them both, or either. Auchin-
drane
May come upon the beach; arrest
him also,
But do not state a cause. I'll back
again,
And take directions from my Lord
Dunbar.
Keep you upon the beach, and have
an eye
To all that passes there.
[Exeunt separately.

SCENE II.

Scene changes to a remote and rocky
part of the Sea-beach. Enter
Auchindrane meeting PHILIP.

AUCH. The devil's brought his
legions to this beach,
That won't to be so lonely; morions,
lances,
Show in the morning beam as thick as glowworms
At summer midnight.
  PHI. I'm right glad to see them,
Be they whooe'er they may, so they are mortal;
For I've contended with a lifeless foe,
And I have lost the battle. I would give
A thousand crowns to hear a mortal steel
Ring on a mortal harness.
  AUCH. How now!—Art mad, or hast thou done the turn—
The turn we came for, and must live or die by?
  PHI. 'Tis done, if man can do it; but I doubt
If this unhappy wretch have Heaven's permission
To die by mortal hands.
  AUCH. Where is he?—where's MacLellan?
  PHI. In the deep—
Both in the deep, and what's immortal of them
Gone to the judgment-seat, where we must meet them.
  AUCH. MacLellan dead, and Quentin too?—So be it
To all that menace ill to Auchindrane,
Or have the power to injure him!—Thy words
Are full of comfort, but thine eye and look
Have in this pallid gloom a ghastliness,
Which contradicts the tidings of thy tongue.
  PHI. Hear me, old man—There is a heaven above us,
As you have heard old Knox and Wishart preach,
Though little to your boot. The dreaded witness
Is slain, and silent. But his misused body
Comes right ashore, as if to cry for vengeance;
It rides the waters like a living thing,
Erect, as if he trode the waves which bear him.
  AUCH. Thou speakest frenzy, when sense is most required.
  PHI. Hear me yet more!—I say I did the deed
With all the coolness of a practised hunter
When dealing with a stag. I struck him overboard,
And with MacLellan's aid I held his head
Under the waters, while the Ranger fired
The weights we had provided to his feet.
We cast him loose when life and body parted,
And bid him speed for Ireland. But even then,
As in defiance of the words we spoke,
The body rose upright behind our stern,
One half in ocean, and one half in air,
And tided after as in chase of us.
  AUCH. It was enchantment!—Did you strike at it?
  PHI. Once and again. But blows avail'd no more
Than on a wreath of smoke, where they may break
The column for a moment, which unites
And is entire again. Thus the dead body
Sunk down before my ear, but rose unharm'd,
And dogg'd us closer still, as in defiance.
  AUCH. 'Twas Hell's own work!—
  PHI. MacLellan then grew restive
And desperate in his fear, blasphemed aloud,
Cursing us both as authors of his ruin.
Myself was wellnigh frantic while pursued
By this dead shape, upon whose ghastly features
The changeful moonbeam spread a grisly light;
And, baited thus, I took the nearest way.
To ensure his silence, and to quell his noise;
I used my dagger, and I flung him overboard,
And half expected his dead carcass also
Would join the chase—but he sunk down at once.
AUCH. He had enough of mortal sin about him,
To sink an argosy.
PHI. But now resolve you what defence to make,
If Quentin’s body shall be recognised;
For ’tis ashore already; and he bears
Marks of my handiwork; so does MacLellan.
AUCH. The concourse thickens still —Away, away!
We must avoid the multitude.

[They rush out.

SCENE III.

Scene changes to another part of the Beach. Children are seen dancing, and Villagers looking on. ISABEL seems to take the management of the Dance.

Vil. Woman. How well she queens it, the brave little maiden!
Vil. Ay, they all queen it from their very cradle,
These willing slaves of haughty Auchindran.
But now I hear the old man’s reign is ended;—
’Tis well—he has been tyrant long enough.
SECOND Vil. Finlay, speak low, you interrupt the sports.
THIRD Vil. Look out to sea—There’s something coming yonder,
Round for the beach, will scare us from our mirth.
FOURTH Vil. Pshaw, it is but a sea-gull on the wing,
Between the wave and sky.
THIRD Vil. Thou art a fool,
Standing on solid land—’tis a dead body.
SECOND Vil. And if it be, he bears him like a live one,
Not prone and weltering like a drowned corpse,
But bolt erect, as if he trode the waters,
And used them as his path.
FOURTH Vil. It is a merman, And nothing of this earth, alive or dead.

[By degrees all the Dancers break off from their sport, and stand gazing to seaward, while an object, imperfectly seen, drifts towards the Beach, and at length arrives among the rocks which border the tide.

THIRD Vil. Perhaps it is some wretch who needs assistance; Jasper, make in and see.
SECOND Vil. Not I, my friend; I’en take the risk yourself, you’d put on others.

[HILDEBRAND has entered, and heard the two last words.

SER. What, are you men? Fear ye to look on what you must be one day?
I, who have seen a thousand dead and dying
Within a flight-shot square, will teach you how in war
We look upon the corpse when life has left it.

[He goes to the back scene, and seems attempting to turn the body, which has come ashore with its face downwards.

Will none of you come aid to turn the body?

ISA. You’re cowards all.—I’ll help thee, good old man.

[She goes to aid the SERGEANT with the body, and presently gives a cry, and faints. HILDEBRAND comes forward. All crowd round him; he speaks with an expression of horror.
DRAMATIC PIECES.

SER. 'Tis Quentin Blane! Poor youth, his gloomy bodings have been the prologue to an act of darkness;
His feet are manacled, his bosom stabb'd,
And he is foully murder'd. The proud Knight
And his dark Ranger must have done this deed,
For which no common ruffian could have motive.

A Pea. Caution were best, old man—Thou art a stranger,
The Knight is great and powerful.

SER. Let it be so.

Call'd on by Heaven to stand forth an avenger,
I will not blench for fear of mortal man.

Have I not seen that when that innocent
Had placed her hands upon the murder'd body,
His gaping wounds, that erst were soak'd with brine,
Burst forth with blood as ruddy as the cloud
Which now the sun doth rise on?

Pea. What of that?

SER. Nothing that can affect the innocent child,
But murder's guilt attaching to her father,
Since the blood musters in the victim's veins
At the approach of what holds lease from him
Of all that parents can transmit to children.
And here comes one to whom I'll vouch the circumstance.

The Earl of Dunbar enters with Soldiers and others, having Auchin-drane and Philip prisoners.

Dun. Fetter the young ruffian and his trait'rous father!
[They are made secure.

Auch. 'Twas a lord spoke it—I have known a knight,
Sir George of Home, who had not dared to say so.

Dun. 'Tis Heaven, not I, decides upon your guilt.
A harmless youth is traced within your power,
Sleeps in your Ranger's house—his friend at midnight
Is spirited away. Then lights are seen,
And groans are heard, and corpses come ashore
Mangled with daggers, while (to Philip) your dagger wears
The sanguine livery of recent slaughter:
Here, too, the body of a murder'd victim,
(Whom none but you had interest to remove,)
Bleeds on a child's approach, because the daughter
Of one the abettor of the wicked deed.
All this, and other proofs corroborative,
Call on us briefly to pronounce the doom
We have in charge to utter.

Auch. If my house perish, Heaven's will be done!
I wish not to survive it; but, O Philip,
Would one could pay the ransom for us both!

Phil. Father, 'tis fitter that we both should die,
Leaving no heir behind.—The piety
Of a bless'd saint, the morals of an anchorite,
Could not atone thy dark hypocrisy,
Or the wild profligacy I have practised.
Ruin'd our house, and shatter'd be our towers,
And with them end the curse our sins have merited.
NOTES.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

1. The feast was over in Branksome tower.

In the reign of James I., Sir William Scott of Buccleuch, chief of the clan bearing that name, exchanged, with Sir Thomas Inglis of Manor, the estate of Murdiestone, in Lanarkshire, for one-half of the barony of Branksome, or Brankholm, lying upon the Teviot, about three miles above Hawick. He was probably induced to this transaction from the vicinity of Branksome to the extensive domain which he possessed in Ettrick Forest and in Teviotdale. Tradition imputes the exchange betwixt Scott and Inglis to a conversation, in which the latter complained much of the injuries which he was exposed to from the English Borderers, who frequently plundered his lands of Branksome. Sir William Scott instantly offered him the estate of Murdiestone, in exchange for that which was subject to such egregious inconvenience. When the bargain was completed, he dryly remarked, that the cattle in Cumberland were as good as those of Teviotdale; and proceeded to commence a system of reprisals upon the English, which was regularly pursued by his successors. In the next reign, James II. granted to Sir Walter Scott of Branksome, and to Sir David, his son, the remaining half of the barony of Branksome, to be held in blanche for the payment of a red rose.

After the period of the exchange with Sir Thomas Inglis, Branksome became the principal seat of the Buccleuch family.

2. Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
   Hung their shields in Branksome Hall.

The ancient barons of Buccleuch, both from feudal splendour and from their frontier situation, retained in their household at Branksome, a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief, for the military service of watching and warding his castle.

3. . . with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow.

The Jedwood-axe was a sort of partisan, used by horsemen, as appears from the arms of Jedburgh, which bear a cavalier mounted, and armed with this weapon. It is also called a Jedwood or Jeddart staff.

4. They watch, against Southern force and guile,
   Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
   Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
   From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

Branksome Castle was continually exposed to the attacks of the English, both from its situation and the restless military disposition of its inhabitants, who were seldom on good terms with their neighbours.

5. Bards long shall tell,
   How Lord Walter fell.

Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch succeeded to his grandfather, Sir David, in 1492. His death was the consequence of a feud betwixt the Scotts and Kerrs.

6. While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
   While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
   The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar
   The havoc of the feudal war,
   Shall never, never be forgot!
Among other expedients resorted to for stanching the feud betwixt the Scotts and the Kerrs, there was a bond executed in 1529, between the heads of each clan, binding themselves to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland, for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel. This indenture is printed in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, vol. i. But either it never took effect, or else the feud was renewed shortly afterwards.

7. With Carr in arms had stood.

The family of Ker, Kerr, or Carr, was very powerful on the Border. Fynes Morrison remarks, in his Travels, that their influence extended from the village of Preston-Grange, in Lothian, to the limits of England.

8. Lord Cranstoun.

The Cranstouns, Lord Cranstoun, are an ancient Border family, whose chief seat was at Crailing, in Teviotdale. They were at this time at feud with the clan of Scott; for it appears that the Lady of Buccleuch, in 1557, beset the Laird of Cranstoun, seeking his life. Nevertheless, the same Cranstoun, or perhaps his son, was married to a daughter of the same lady.


The Bethunes were of French origin, and derived their name from a small town in Artois. There were several distinguished families of the Bethunes in the neighbouring province of Picardy; they numbered among their descendants the celebrated Duc de Sully; and the name was accounted among the most noble in France.

10. He learn'd the art that none may name,

In Padua, far beyond the sea.

Padua was long supposed, by the Scottish peasants, to be the principal school of necromancy.

11. His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

The shadow of a necromancer is independent of the sun. Glycas informs us that Simon Magus caused his shadow to go before him, making people believe it was an attendant spirit.—Heywood's Hierarchie, p. 475.

12. The viewless forms of air.

The Scottish vulgar, without having any very defined notion of their attributes, believe in the existence of an intermediate class of spirits, residing in the air, or in the waters; to whose agency they ascribe floods, storms, and all such phenomena as their own philosophy cannot readily explain. They are supposed to interfere in the affairs of mortals, sometimes with a malevolent purpose, and sometimes with milder views.

13. A fancied moss-trooper, etc.

This was the usual appellation of the marauders upon the Borders; a profession diligently pursued by the inhabitants on both sides, and by none more actively and successfully than by Buccleuch's clan. Long after the union of the crowns the moss-troopers, although sunk in reputation, and no longer enjoying the pretext of national hostility, continued to pursue their calling.

14. . . . tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

The arms of the Kerrs of Cessford were, Vert on a chevron, betwixt three unicorns' heads erased argent, three mullets sable; crest, a unicorn's head, erased proper. The Scotts of Buccleuch bore, Or, on a bend azure; a star of six points betwixt two crescents of the first.

15. William of Deloraine.

The lands of Deloraine are joined to those of Buccleuch in Ettrick Forest. They were immemorially possessed by the Buccleuch family, under the strong
title of occupancy, although no charter was obtained from the crown until 1545. Like other possessions, the lands of Deloraine were occasionally granted by them to vassals, or kinsmen, for Border service. I have endeavoured to give William of Deloraine the attributes which characterised the Borderers of his day.

16. By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
    Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds.

    The lawless life of the Border-riders obliged them to study how to evade the pursuit of blood-hounds.

17. . . . the Moat-hill's mound,
    Where Druid shades still flitted round.

    This is a round artificial mount near Hawick, which, from its name (not Ang. Sax. Concilium, Conventus), was probably anciently used as a place for assembling a national council of the adjacent tribes. There are many such mounds in Scotland, and they are sometimes, but rarely, of a square form.

18. . . . the tower of Hazeldean.

    The estate of Hazeldean, corruptly Hassendean, belonged formerly to a family of Scotts.

19. On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint.

    A romantic assemblage of cliffs, which rise suddenly above the vale of Teviot, in the immediate vicinity of the family-seat, from which Lord Minto takes his title. A small platform, on a projecting crag, commanding a most beautiful prospect, is termed Barnhills' Bed.

20. Ancient Riddel's fair domain.

    The family of Riddel have been very long in possession of the barony called Riddel, or Ryedale, part of which still bears the latter name. Tradition carries their antiquity to a point extremely remote.

21. But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
    He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
    And sought the convent's lonely wall.

    The ancient and beautiful monastery of Melrose was founded by King David I. Its ruins afford the finest specimen of Gothic architecture and Gothic sculpture which Scotland can boast.

22. When buttress and buttress, alternately,
    Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
    When silver edges the imagery,
    And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;

    Then view St. David's ruin'd pile.

    The buttresses ranged along the sides of the ruins of Melrose Abbey are, according to the Gothic style, richly carved and fretted, containing niches for the statues of saints, and labelled with scrolls, bearing appropriate texts of Scripture. Most of these statues have been demolished.

23. For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
    Save to patten an Ave Mary,
    Where I ride on a Border foray.

    The Borderers were, as may be supposed, very ignorant about religious matters. But we learn, from Lesley, that, however deficient in real religion, they regularly told their beads, and never with more zeal than when going on a plundering expedition.

24. So had he seen, in fair Castile,
    The youth in glittering squadrons start;
    Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
    And hurl the unexpected dart.

    The use of the dart, or light javelin, in mimic warfare was borrowed by the Castilians from the Moors, among whom it was a favourite weapon.
25. And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne!

The famous and desperate battle of Otterburne was fought 15th August 1388, betwixt Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James, Earl of Douglas. Both these renowned champions were at the head of a chosen body of troops, and they were rvivals in military fame. The issue of the conflict is well known: Percy was made prisoner, and the Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose, beneath the high altar.

26. Dark Knight of Liddesdale.

William Douglas, called the Knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II., and was so distinguished by his valour, that he was called the Flower of Chivalry. Nevertheless, he tarnished his renown by the cruel murder of Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, originally his friend and brother in arms. The King had conferred upon Ramsay the sheriffdom of Teviotdale, to which Douglas pretended some claim. In revenge of this preference, the Knight of Liddesdale came down upon Ramsay, while he was administering justice at Hawick, seized and carried him off to his remote and inaccessible castle of Hermitage, where he threw his unfortunate prisoner, horse and man, into a dungeon, and left him to perish of hunger. Liddesdale was soon after slain, while hunting in Ettrick Forest, by his own godson and chieftain, William, Earl of Douglas, in revenge, according to some authors, of Ramsay's murder. His body was carried to Lindin church the first night after his death, and thence to Melrose, where he was interred with great pomp, and where his tomb is still shown.

27. The moon on the east oriel shone.

It is impossible to conceive a more beautiful specimen of the lightness and elegance of Gothic architecture, when in its purity, than the eastern window of Melrose Abbey.

28. The wondrous Michael Scott.

Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie flourished during the 13th century, and was one of the ambassadors sent to bring the Maid of Norway to Scotland upon the death of Alexander III. By a poetical anachronism, he is here placed in a later era. He was a man of much learning, chiefly acquired in foreign countries.

29. Salamanca's cave.

Spain, from the relics, doubtless, of Arabian learning and superstition, was accounted a favourite residence of magicians. There were public schools, where magic, or rather the sciences supposed to involve its mysteries, were regularly taught, at Toledo, Seville, and Salamanca. In the latter city, they were held in a deep cavern; the mouth of which was walled up by Queen Isabella, wife of King Ferdinand.

30. The bells would ring in Notre Dame.

Michael Scott, according to one of the traditions current concerning him, was chosen to go upon an embassy, to obtain from the King of France satisfaction for certain piracies committed by his subjects upon those of Scotland. Instead of preparing a new equipage and splendid retinue, the ambassador retreated to his study, opened his book, and evoked a fiend in the shape of a huge black horse, mounted upon his back, and forced him to fly through the air towards France. When he arrived at Paris, he tied his horse to the gate of the palace, entered, and boldly delivered his message. An ambassador, with so little of the pomp and circumstance of diplomacy, was not received with much respect, and the King was about to return a contemptuous refusal to his demand, when Michael besought him to suspend his resolution till he had seen his horse stamp three times. The first stamp shook every steeple in Paris, and caused all the bells to ring; the
second threw down three of the towers of the palace; and the infernal steed had lifted his hoof to give the third stamp, when the King rather chose to dismiss Michael, with the most ample concessions, than to stand to the probable consequences.

31. The words that cleft Eildon hills in three.

Michael Scott was, once upon a time, much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a cauld, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso; it was accomplished in one night, and still does honour to the infernal architect. Michael next ordered, that Eildon hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into the three picturesque peaks which it now bears. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable demon, by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes out of seaweed.

32. That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be.

Baptista Porta, and other authors who treat of natural magic, talk much of eternal lamps, pretended to have been found burning in ancient sepulchres. Fortunius Licetus investigates the subject in a treatise, De Lucernis Antiquorum Reconditis, published at Venice, 1621. One of these perpetual lamps is said to have been discovered in the tomb of Tulliola, the daughter of Cicero. The wick was supposed to be composed of asbestos. Kircher enumerates three different recipes for constructing such lamps; and wisely concludes, that the thing is nevertheless impossible. —Mundus Subterraneus, p. 72.

33. Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,

He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd.

William of Deloraine might be strengthened in this belief by the well-known story of the Cid Ruy Diaz. When the body of that famous Christian champion was sitting in state by the high altar of the cathedral church of Toledo, where it remained for ten years, a certain malicious Jew attempted to pull him by the beard; but he had no sooner touched the formidable whiskers, than the corpse started up, and half unsheathed his sword. The Israelite fled; and so permanent was the effect of his terror, that he became Christian.

34. The Baron's Dwarf his courser held.

The idea of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page is taken from a popular superstition long current on the Borders.

35. But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd a band
Of the best that would ride at her command.

This attempt is really historical. It took place in 1557.

36. Like a book-bosom'd priest.

In the olden times, in the parish of Ewes, the friars were called Book-a-bosomes, from their habit of carrying their mass-books in their bosoms.

37. All was delusion, nought was truth.

Glamour, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality.

38. Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
It was not given by man alive.

Dr. Henry More, in a letter prefixed to Glanville's Saducismus Triumphantus, mentions a similar phenomenon.

"I remember an old gentleman in the country, of my acquaintance, an excellent justice of peace, and a piece of
a mathematician; but what kind of a philosopher he was, you may understand from a rhyme of his own making, which he commended to me at my taking horse in his yard, which rhyme is this:—

"Ens is nothing till sense finds out:
Sense ends in nothing, so naughtit goes about.

"Which rhyme of his was so rapturous to himself, that, on the reciting of the second verse, the old man turned himself about upon his toe as nimbly as one may observe a dry leaf whisked round the corner of an orchard-walk by some little whirlwind. With this philosopher I have had many discourses concerning the immortality of the soul and its distinction; when I have run him quite down by reason, he would but laugh at me, and say this is logic, H. (calling me by my Christian name,) to which I replied, this is reason, father L. (for so I used and some others to call him;) but it seems you are for the new lights, and immediate inspiration, which I confess he was as little for as for the other; but I said so only in the way of drollery to him in those times, but truth is, nothing but palpable experience would move him; and being a bold man, and fearing nothing, he told me he had used all the magical ceremonies of conjuration he could, to raise the devil or a spirit, and had a most earnest desire to meet with one, but never could do it. But this he told me, when he did not so much as think of it, while his servant was pulling off his boots in the hall, some invisible hand gave him such a clap upon the back, that it made all ring again; 'so,' thought he now, 'I am invited to the converse of my spirit,' and therefore, so soon as his boots were off, and his shoes on, out he goes into the yard and next field, to find out the spirit that had given him this familiar clap on the back, but found none neither in the yard nor field next to it.

"But though he did not feel this stroke, albeit he thought it afterwards (finding nothing came of it) a mere delusion; yet not long before his death, it had more force with him than all the philosophical arguments I could use to him, though I could wind him and nonplus him as I pleased; but yet all my arguments, how solid soever, made no impression upon him; wherefore, after several reasonings of this nature, whereby I would prove to him the soul's distinction from the body, and its immortality, when nothing of such subtle consideration did any more execution on his mind than some lightning is said to do, though it melts the sword, on the fuzzy consistency of the scabbard,—'Well,' said I, 'father L., though none of these things move you, I have something still behind, and what yourself has acknowledged to be true, that may do the business:—Do you remember the clap on your back when your servant was pulling off your boots in the hall? Assure yourself, says I, father L., that goblin will be the first to bid you welcome into the other world.' Upon that his countenance changed most sensibly, and he was more confounded with this rubbing up his memory, than with all the rational or philosophical arguments that I could produce."

39. The running stream dissolved the spell.

It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable Tam o' Shanter turns entirely upon such a circumstance. The belief seems to be of antiquity.

40. He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee.

To wound an antagonist in the thigh, or leg, was reckoned contrary to the law of arms.

41. She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood.

See several charms for this purpose in Reginald Scott's Discovery of Witchcraft, p. 273.
42. But she has ta'en the broken lance,
   And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
   And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.

This so-called cure by sympathy was believed in even at the beginning of the 17th century.

43. On Penchryst glows a bale of fire.

   Bale, beacon-fagot. The Border beacons, from their number and position, formed a sort of telegraphic communication with Edinburgh.

44. Our kin, and clan, and friends,
    to raise.

The speed with which the Borderers collected great bodies of horse is a fact familiar to every reader of Border history.

45. On many a cairn's gray pyramid,
    Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid.

The cairns, or piles of loose stones, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, and are found in other remarkable situations, seem usually, though not universally, to have been sepulchral monuments. Six flat stones are commonly found in the centre, forming a cavity of greater or smaller dimensions, in which an urn is often placed.

46. For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
    The peasant left his lowly shed.

The morasses were the usual refuge of the Border herdsman, on the approach of an English army.—(Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, vol. i. p. 393.) Caves, bewed in the most dangerous and inaccessible places, also afforded an occasional retreat. Such caverns may be seen in the precipitous banks of the Teviot at Sunlaws, upon the Ale at Ancram, upon the Jed at Hundalee, and in many other places upon the Border. The banks of the Eske, at Gorton and Hawthorneden, are hollowed into similar recesses.

47. Show'd southern ravage was begun.

Embittered by mutual cruelties, and the personal hatred of the wardens, or leaders, the war waged upon the Borders was not unfrequently of the most sanguinary character.

48. Watt Tinlinn.

This person was, in my younger days, the theme of many a fireside tale. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale.

49. Billhope stag.

There is an old rhyme, which thus celebrates the places in Liddesdale remarkable for game:

   Billhope braes for bucks and raes,
   And Carit haugh for swine,
   And Tarras for the good bull-trout,
   If he be ta'en in time.

The bucks and roes, as well as the old swine, are now extinct; but the good bull-trout is still famous.

50. Belted Will Howard.

Lord William Howard, third son of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, succeeded to Naworth Castle, and a large domain annexed to it, in right of his wife Elizabeth, sister of George Lord Dacre, who died without heirs male, in the 11th of Queen Elizabeth. By a poetical anachronism, he is introduced into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished. He was warden of the Western Marches; and, from the rigour with which he repressed the Border excesses, the name of Belted Will Howard is still famous in our traditions.

51. Lord Dacre.

The well-known name of Dacre is derived from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre, or Ptolemais, under Richard Coeur de Lion.
NOTES.

52. The German hackbut-men.

In the wars with Scotland, Henry VIII. and his successors employed numerous bands of mercenary troops. At the battle of Pinky, there were in the English army six hundred hackbutters on foot, and two hundred on horseback, composed chiefly of foreigners.


Sir John Scott of Thirlestane flourished in the reign of James V., and possessed the estates of Thirlestane, Gamescleuch, etc., lying upon the river of Ettrick, and extending to St. Mary's Loch, at the head of Yarrow. It appears, that when James had assembled his nobility, and their feudal followers, at Fala, with the purpose of invading England, and was, as is well known, disappointed by the obstinate refusal of his peers, this baron alone declared himself ready to follow the King wherever he should lead. In memory of his fidelity, James granted to his family a charter of arms, entitling them to bear a border of fleurs-de-luce, similar to the tressure in the royal arms, with a bundle of spears for the crest; motto, Ready, aye ready.

54. An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,

With many a moss-trooper, came on;
And azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.

The family of Harden are descended from a younger son of the Laird of Buccleuch, who flourished before the estate of Murdieston was acquired by the marriage of one of those chieftains with the heiress, in 1296. Hence they bear the cognisation of the Scotts upon the field; whereas those of the Buccleuch are disposed upon a bend dexter, assumed in consequence of that marriage.

55. Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band.

In this, and the following stanzas, some account is given of the mode in which the property in the valley of Esk was transferred from the Beattisons, its ancient possessors, to the name of Scott.

56. Their gathering word was Bellenden.

Bellenden is situated near the head of Borthwick water, and being in the centre of the possessions of the Scotts, was frequently used as their place of rendezvous and gathering word.—Survey of Selkirkshire, in Macfarlane's JSS., Advocates' Library.

57. The camp their home, their law the sword,

They knew no country, own'd no lord.

The mercenary adventurers, whom, in 1380, the Earl of Cambridge carried to the assistance of the King of Portugal against the Spaniards, mutinied for want of regular pay. At an assembly of their leaders, Sir John Soltier, a natural son of Edward the Black Prince, thus addressed them: "'I counsayle, let us be alle of one alliance, and of one accomde, and let us among ourselves reyse up the banner of St. George, and let us be frendes to God, and enemyes to alle the world; for without we make ourselve to be feared, we gete nothyng.'

"'By my fayth,' quod Sir William Helmon, 'ye saye right well, and so let us do.' They all agreed with one voice, and so regarded among them who shulde be their capitayne. Then they advised in the case how they coude nat have a better capitayne than Sir John Soltier. For they sulde than have good leyser to do yvel, and they thought he was more metelyer thereto than any other. Then they raised up the penon of St. George, and cried, 'A Soltier! a Soltier! the valyaunt bastarde! frendes to God, and enemies to all the world!"—Froissart, vol. i. ch. 393.

58. That he may suffer march-treason pain.

Several species of offences, peculiar to the Border, constituted what was
called march-treason. Among others, was the crime of riding, or causing to ride, against the opposite country during the time of truce.

59. Deloraine
   Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain.

In dubious cases, the innocence of Border criminals was occasionally referred to their own oath. The form of excusing bills, or indictments, by Border-oath, ran thus: “You shall swear by heaven above you, hell beneath you, by your part of Paradise, by all that God made in six days and seven nights, and by God himself, you are whart out sackless of art, part, way, witting, ridd, kenning, having, or recetting of any of the goods and cattels named in this bill. So help you God.”

60. Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword.

The dignity of knighthood, according to the original institution, had this peculiarity, that it did not flow from the monarch, but could be conferred by one who himself possessed it, upon any squire who, after due probation, was found to merit the honour of chivalry. Latterly, this power was confined to generals, who were wont to create knights bannerets after or before an engagement.

61. When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford.

The battle of Ancram Moor, or Penielheuch, was fought A.D. 1545. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers, and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the Laird of Buccleuch and Norman Lesley.

62. For who, in field or foray slack,
    Saw the blanche lion e'er fall back?

This was the cognisance of the noble house of Howard in all its branches.

The crest, or bearing, of a warrior was often used as a nomme de guerre.

63. Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
    In single fight...

It may easily be supposed, that trial by single combat, so peculiar to the feudal system, was common on the Borders.

64. He, the jovial Harper.

The person here alluded to is one of our ancient Border minstrels, called Rattling Roaring Willie. This soubriquet was probably derived from his bullying disposition; being, it would seem, such a roaring boy, as is frequently mentioned in old plays.

65. He knew each ordinance and clause

Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
    In the Old Douglas' day.

The title to the most ancient collection of Border regulations runs thus:—
“Be it remembered, that, on the 18th day of December 1468, Earl William Douglas assembled the whole lords, freeholders, and eldest Borderers, that best knowledge had, at the college of Linclouden; and there he caused these lords and Borderers bodily to be sworn, the Holy Gospel touched, that they, justly and truly, after their cunning, should decrete, decern, deliver, and put in order and writing, the statutes, ordinances, and uses of marche, that were ordained in Black Archibald of Douglas's days, and Archibald his son's days, in time of warfare; and they came again to him advisedly with these statutes and ordinances, which were in time of warfare before. The said Earl William, seeing the statutes in writing decreed and delivered by the said lords and Borderers, thought them right speedful and profitable to the Borders; the which statutes, ordinances, and points of warfare, he took, and the whole lords and Borderers he caused bodily to be sworn, that they should maintain and supply him at their goodly
power, to do the law upon those that should break the statutes underwritten. Also, the said Earl William, and lords, and eldest Borderers, made certain points to be treason in time of warfare to be used, which were not treason before his time, but to be treason in his time, and in all time coming."

66. The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
    Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!

    The chief of this potent race of heroes, about the date of the poem, was Archibald Douglas, seventh Earl of Angus, a man of great courage and activity. The Bloody Heart was the well-known cognisance of the House of Douglas, assumed from the time of good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart, to be carried to the Holy Land.

67. And Swinton laid his lance in rest,
    That tamed of yore the sparkling crest,
    Of Clarence's Plantagenet.

    At the battle of Beaugé, in France, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother to Henry V., was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton of Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet set with precious stones, which he wore around his helmet. The family of Swinton is one of the most ancient in Scotland, and produced many celebrated warriors.

68. And shouting still, A Home! a Home!

    The Earls of Home, as descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March, carried a lion rampant, argent; but, as a difference, changed the colour of the shield from gules to vert, in allusion to Greenlaw, their ancient possession. The slogan, or war-cry, of this powerful family, was, "A Home! a Home!"

69. And some, with many a merry shout,
    In riot, revelry, and rout,
    Pursued the foot-ball play.

    The foot-ball was anciently a very favourite sport all through Scotland, but especially upon the Borders.

70. 'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
    Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
    In the old Border-day.

    Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Borders, and the occasional cruelties which marked the mutual inroads, the inhabitants on either side do not appear to have regarded each other with that violent and personal animosity, which might have been expected.

71. ... on the darkening plain,
    Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
    As bands, their stragglers to regain,
    Give the shrill watchword of their clan.

    Patten remarks, with bitter censure, the disorderly conduct of the English Borderers, who attended the Protector Somerset on his expedition against Scotland.

72. To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
    Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
    And with the bugle rouse the fray.

    The pursuit of Border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the hot-trod. He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom; a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed.

73. She wrought not by forbidden spell.

    Popular belief, though contrary to the doctrines of the Church, made a favourable distinction betwixt magicians, and necromancers, or wizards; the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or
at least to be in league and compact with, those enemies of mankind.

74. A merlin sat upon her wrist
   Held by a leash of silken twist.

A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was actually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, the constant attendant of a knight or baron.

75. And princely peacock's gilded train,
   And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave.

The peacock, it is well known, was considered, during the times of chivalry, not merely as an exquisite delicacy, but as a dish of peculiar solemnity. The boar's head was also a usual dish of feudal splendour.

76. Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill.

The Rutherfords of Hunthill were an ancient race of Border Lairds, whose names occur in history, sometimes as defending the frontier against the English, sometimes as disturbing the peace of their own country. Dickon Draw-the-sword was son to the ancient warrior, called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill, remarkable for leading into battle nine sons, gallant warriors, all sons of the aged champion.

77. Bit his glove.

To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems not to have been considered, upon the Border, as a gesture of contempt, though so used by Shakespeare, but as a pledge of mortal revenge.

78. Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
   When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

A tradition preserved by Scott of Satchells, who published, in 1688, A true History of the Right Honourable name of Scott, gives the following romantic origin of that name. Two brethren, natives of Galloway, having been banished from that country for a riot, or insurrection, came to Rankleburn, in Ettrick Forest, where the keeper, whose name was Brydone, received them joyfully, on account of their skill in winding the horn, and in the other mysteries of the chase. Kenneth MacAlpin, then King of Scotland, came soon after to hunt in the royal forest, and pursued a buck from Ettrick-heugh to the glen now called Buckcleuch, about two miles above the junction of Rankleburn with the river Ettrick. Here the stag stood at bay; and the King and his attendants, who followed on horseback, were thrown out by the steepness of the hill and the morass. John, one of the brethren from Galloway, had followed the chase on foot; and, now coming in, seized the buck by the horns, and, being a man of great strength and activity, threw him on his back, and ran with his burden about a mile up the steep hill, to a place called Cracra-Cross, where Kenneth had halted, and laid the buck at the sovereign's feet.

79. ... old Albert Graeme,
   The Minstrel of that ancient name.

"John Graeme, second son of Malice, Earl of Monteith, commonly surnamed John with the Bright Sword, upon some displeasure risen against him at court, retired with many of his clan and kindred into the English Borders, in the reign of King Henry the Fourth, where they seated themselves; and many of their posterity have continued there ever since.

80. The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall.

This burden is adopted, with some alteration, from an old Scottish song.

81. Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?

The gallant and unfortunate Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time; and his sonnets display beauties which would do honour
to a more polished age. He was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1546; a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII., who could not bear so brilliant a character near his throne.

The song of the supposed bard is founded on an incident said to have happened to the Earl in his travels. Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, showed him, in a looking-glass, the lovely Geraldine, to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclining upon a couch, reading her lover’s verses by the light of a waxen taper.

82. . . . The storm-swept Orcades;
Where erst St. Clairs held
princely sway
O’er isle and islet, strait and bay.

The St. Clairs are of Norman extraction, being descended from William de St. Clair, second son of Walderne Compte de St. Clair, and Margaret, daughter to Richard Duke of Normandy. He was called, for his fair deportment, the Seemly St. Clair; and, settling in Scotland during the reign of Malcolm Caenmore, obtained large grants of land in Mid-Lothian.—These domains were increased by the liberality of succeeding monarchs to the descendants of the family, and comprehended the baronies of Rosline, Pentland, Cowsland, Cardaine, and several others.

83. Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall.

The Castle of Kirkwall was built by the St. Clairs, while Earls of Orkney. It was dismantled by the Earl of Caithness about 1615, having been garrisoned against the government by Robert Stewart, natural son to the Earl of Orkney.

Its ruins afforded a sad subject of contemplation to John, Master of St. Clair, who, flying from his native country, on account of his share in the insurrection, 1715, made some stay at Kirkwall.

84. Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curl’d,
    Whose monstrous circle girds the world.

The jormungandr, or Snake of the Ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the Edda. It was very nearly caught by the god Thor, who went to fish for it with a hook baited with a bull’s head. In the battle betwixt the evil demons and the divinities of Odin, which is to precede the Ragnarockr, or Twilight of the Gods, this Snake is to act a conspicuous part.

85. Of those dread Maids, whose hideous yell.

These were the Valcyriur, or Selectors of the Slain, despatched by Odin from Valhalla, to choose those who were to die, and to distribute the contest. They were well known to the English reader as Gray’s Fatal Sisters.

86. Of Chiefs, who, guided through the gloom
    By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
    Ransack’d the graves of warriors old,
    Their falchions wrench’d from corpses’ hold.

The northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms, and their other treasures.

87. Castle Ravensheuch.

A large and strong castle, now ruinous, situated betwixt Kirkaldy and Dysart, on a steep crag, washed by the Firth of Forth. It was conferred on Sir William St. Clair as a slight compensation for the earldom of Orkney, by a charter of King James III. dated in 1471, and is now the property of Sir James St. Clair Erskine (now Earl of Rosslyn), representative of the family. It was long a principal residence of the Barons of Roslin.
88. Seem'd all on fire within, around,
    Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
    And glimmer'd all the dead
men's mail.

The beautiful chapel of Roslin was
founded in 1446, by William St. Clair,
Prince of Orkney, Duke of Oldenburgh,
Earl of Caithness and Stratherne, Lord
St. Clair, Lord Niddesdale, Lord
Admiral of the Scottish Seas, Lord
Chief Justice of Scotland, Lord Warden
of the three Marches, Baron of Roslin,
Pentland, Pentlandmoor, etc., Knight
of the Cockle, and of the Garter (as is
affirmed), High Chancellor, Chamber-
lain, and Lieutenant of Scotland. This
lofty person, whose titles, says God-
croft, might weary a Spaniard, built
the castle of Roslin, where he resided
in princely splendour, and founded
the chapel, which is in the most rich and
florid style of Gothic architecture.
Among the profuse carving on the
pillars and buttresses, the rose is
frequently introduced, in allusion to the
name, with which, however, the flower
has no connection; the etymology being
Rosslinnhe, the promontory of the linn,
or water-fall. The chapel is said to
appear on fire previous to the death of
any of his descendants. This supersti-
tion, noticed by Slezer, in his Theatrum
Scotiae, and alluded to in the text, is
probably of Norwegian derivation, and
may have been imported by the Earls
of Orkney into their Lothian dominions.
The tomb-fires of the north are men-
tioned in most of the Sagas.

89. For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
    Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in
    Man.

In a ruined church at Peeltown, in
the Isle of Man, it was reported that
a soldier, who had dared to challenge
a spectre which appeared in the form
of a large black spaniel, died in the
extremest agony, without being able to
relate what had happened to him.


This was a favourite saint of the
house of Douglas, and of the Earl of
Angus in particular.

MARMION.

91. As when the Champion of the
    Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
    Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
    Holds converse with the unburied
corse.

Sir Launcelot, the most renowned of
the Knights of the Round Table whose
exploits are recorded in the romance of
Morte Arthur, was the Champion of the
Lake. Some of his adventures, and
his illicit love for Queen Guenever, or
Ganore, are referred to in the text.

92. A sinful man, and unconfess'd,
    He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision
    high,
He might not view with waking
    eye.

One day, when Arthur was holding
a high feast with his Knights of the
Round Table, the Sangreal, or vessel
out of which the last passover was
eaten (a precious relic, which had
long remained concealed from human
eyes, because of the sins of the land),
suddenly appeared to him and all his
chivalry. The consequence of this
vision was, that all the knights took
on them a solemn vow to seek the
Sangreal. But, alas! it could only be
revealed to a knight at once accom-
plished in earthly chivalry, and pure
and guiltless of evil conversation. All
Sir Launcelot's noble accomplishments
were therefore rendered vain by his guilty intrigue with Queen Guenever, or Ganore.

93. And Dryden, in immortal strain,
    Had raised the Table Round again.

Dryden's melancholy account of his projected Epic Poem, blasted by the selfish and sordid parsimony of his patrons, is contained in an "Essay on Satire," addressed to the Earl of Dorset, and prefixed to the Translation of Juvenal.

94. Their theme the merry minstrels made,
    Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold.

The "History of Bevis of Hampton" is abridged by my friend Mr. George Ellis, with that liveliness which extracts amusement even out of the most rude and unpromising of our old tales of chivalry. Ascapart is a most important personage in the romance.

95. Day set on Norham's castled steep,
    And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep, etc.

The ruinous castle of Norham (anciently called Ubbanford) is situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, about six miles above Berwick, and where that river is still the boundary between England and Scotland. The extent of its ruins, as well as its historical importance, shows it to have been a place of magnificence, as well as strength. It was repeatedly taken and retaken during the wars between England and Scotland; and, indeed, scarce any happened, in which it had not a principal share.

96. The battled towers, the donjon keep.

It is perhaps unnecessary to remind my readers, that the donjon, in its proper signification, means the strongest part of a feudal castle; a high square tower, with walls of tremendous thickness, situated in the centre of the other buildings, from which, however, it was usually detached.

97. Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
    In mail and plate of Milan steel.

The artists of Milan were famous in the middle ages for their skill in armoury.

98. Who checks at me, to death is right.

The crest and motto of Marmion are borrowed from the following story:—Sir David de Lindsay, first Earl of Crauford, was, among other gentlemen of quality, attended, during a visit to London, in 1390, by Sir William Dalzell, who was, according to my authority, Bower, not only excelling in wisdom, but also of a lively wit. Chancing to be at the court, he there saw Sir Piers Courtenay, an English knight, famous for skill in tilting, and for the beauty of his person, parading the palace, arrayed in a new mantle, bearing for device an embroidered falcon, with this rhyme,—

    I bear a falcon, fairest of flight,
    Whoso pinches at her, his death is right
    In graith.

The Scottish knight, being a wag, appeared next day in a dress exactly similar to that of Courtenay, but bearing a magpie instead of the falcon, with a motto ingeniously contrived to rhyme to the vaunting inscription of Sir Piers:—

    I bear a pie picking at a piece,
    Whoso picks at her, I shall pick at his nese,
    In faith.

This affront could only be expiated by a just with sharp lances. In the course, Dalzell left his helmet unlaced, so that it gave way at the touch of his antagonist's lance, and he thus avoided the shock of the encounter. This happened twice:—in the third encounter, the handsome Courtenay lost two of his front teeth. As the Englishman complained bitterly of Dalzell's fraud in not fastening his helmet, the Scottishman agreed to run six courses more, each champion staking in the
hand of the King two hundred pounds, to be forfeited, if, on entering the lists, any unequal advantage should be detected. This being agreed to, the wily Scot demanded that Sir Piers, in addition to the loss of his teeth, should consent to the extinction of one of his eyes, he himself having lost an eye in the fight of Otterburn. As Courtenay demurred to this equalisation of optical powers, Dalzell demanded the forfeit; which, after much altercation, the King appointed to be paid to him, saying he surpassed the English both in wit and valour.

99. They hail'd Lord Marmion; They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye, Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye, Of Tamworth tower and town.

Lord Marmion, the principal character of the present romance, is entirely a fictitious personage. In earlier times, indeed, the family of Marmion, Lords of Fontenay, in Normandy, was highly distinguished, but it became extinct in the person of Philip de Marmion, who died in 20th Edward I. without issue male.

100. Largesse, largesse.

This was the cry with which heralds and pursuivants were wont to acknowledge the bounty received from the knights.

101. Sir Hugh the Heron bold, Baron of Twisel, and of Ford, And Captain of the Hold.

Were accuracy of any consequence in a fictitious narrative, this castellan's name ought to have been William; for William Heron of Ford was husband to the famous Lady Ford, whose siren charms are said to have cost our James IV. so dear. Moreover, the said William Heron was, at the time supposed, a prisoner in Scotland, being surrendered by Henry VIII., on account of his share in the slaughter of Sir Robert Ker of Cessford. His wife, represented in the text as residing at the Court of Scotland, was, in fact, living in her own Castle at Ford.

102. "How the fierce Thirwalls, and Ridleys all," etc.

An old Northumbrian ballad.

103. James back'd the cause of that mock prince, Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit, Who on the gibbet paid the cheat. Then did I march with Surrey's power, What time we razed old Ayton tower.

The story of Perkin Warbeck, or Richard, Duke of York, is well known. In 1496, he was received honourably in Scotland; and James IV., after conferring upon him in marriage his own relation, the Lady Catharine Gordon, made war on England in behalf of his pretensions.

104. I trow, Norham can find you guides enow, For here be some have prick'd as far, On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar; Have drunk the monks of St. Bothan's ale, And driven the beeves of Lauderdale; Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods, And given them light to set their hoods.

The garrisons of the English castles of Wark, Norham, and Berwick, were, as may be easily supposed, very troublesome neighbours to Scotland.

105. The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein The wildest war-horse in your train.

This churchman seems to have been akin to Welsh, the vicar of St. Thomas
of Exeter, a leader among the Cornish insurgents in 1549. "This man," says Hollinshed, "had many good things in him. He was of no great stature, but well set, and mightie and compact: He was a very good wrestler; shot well, both in the long-bow and also in the cross-bow; he handled his hand-gun and p persecution very well; he was a very good woodman, and a hardie, and such a one as would not give his head for the polling, or his beard for the washing."

106. ... that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.

"Sante Rosalia was of Palermo, and born of a very noble family, and, when very young, abhorred so much the vanities of this world, and avoided the converse of mankind, resolving to dedicate herself wholly to God Almighty, that she, by divine inspiration, forsook her father's house, and never was more heard of till her body was found in that cleft of a rock, on that almost inaccessible mountain, where now the chapel is built."

107. Friar John ... .
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have mark'd ten aves and two creeds.

Friar John understood the soporific virtue of his beads and breviary, as well as his namesake in Rabelais. "But Gargantua could not sleep by any means, on which side soever he turned himself. Whereupon the monk said to him, 'I never sleep soundly but when I am at sermon or prayers; Let us therefore begin, you and I, the seven penitential psalms, to try whether you shall not quickly fall asleep.' The conceit pleased Gargantua very well; and beginning the first of these psalms, as soon as they came to Beati quorum, they fell asleep, both the one and the other."

108. The summon'd Palmer came in place.

A Palmer, opposed to a Pilgrim, was one who made it his sole business to visit different holy shrines; travelling incessantly, and subsisting by charity: whereas the Pilgrim retired to his usual home and occupations, when he had paid his devotions at the particular spot which was the object of his pilgrimage.

109. To fair St. Andrews bound,
Within the ocean-cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound.

St. Regulus (Scottice, St. Rule), a monk of Patrace, in Achaia, warned by a vision, is said, A.D. 370, to have sailed westward, until he landed at St. Andrews in Scotland, where he founded a chapel and tower. A cave, nearly fronting the ruinous castle of the Archbishops of St. Andrews, bears the name of this religious person.

110. ... Saint Fillan's blessed well,
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore.

There were in Perthshire several wells and springs dedicated to St. Fillan, which were held powerful in cases of madness, and which, even in Protestant times, were places of pilgrimage and offerings.

111. The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourish'd once a forest fair.

Ettrick Forest, now a range of mountainous sheep-walks, was anciently reserved for the pleasure of the royal chase.

112. By lone Saint Mary's silent lake.

This beautiful sheet of water forms the reservoir from which the Yarrow
takes its source. It is connected with a smaller lake, called the Loch of the Lowes, and surrounded by mountains. Near the lower extremity of the lake are the ruins of Dryhope tower, the birthplace of Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and famous by the traditional name of the Flower of Yarrow.

113. ... in feudal strife, a foe,
     Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low.

The chapel of St. Mary of the Lowes (de lacubus) was situated on the eastern side of the lake, to which it gives name. It was injured by the clan of Scott, in a feud with the Cranstouns; but continued to be a place of worship during the seventeenth century. The vestiges of the building can now scarcely be traced, but the burial-ground is still used as a cemetery.

114. ... the Wizard's grave;
     That Wizard Priest's, whose bones are thrust
     From company of holy dust.

At one corner of the burial-ground of the demolished chapel, but without its precincts, is a small mound, called Binram's Corse, where tradition deposits the remains of a necromantic priest, the former tenant of the chaplainry.

115. Some ruder and more savage scene,
     Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene.

Loch-skene is a mountain lake, of considerable size, at the head of the Moffat-water. The character of the scenery is uncommonly savage; and the earn, or Scottish eagle, has, for many ages, built its nest yearly upon an islet in the lake. Loch-skene discharges itself into a brook, which, after a short and precipitate course, falls from a cataract of immense height, and gloomy grandeur, called, from its appearance, the "Gray Mare's Tail." The "Giant's Grave," afterwards mentioned, is a sort of trench, which bears that name, a little way from the foot of the cataract. It has the appearance of a battery, designed to command the pass.

116. ... high Whitby's cloister'd pile.

The Abbey of Whitby, in the Arch-deaconry of Cleaveland, on the coast of Yorkshire, was founded A.D. 657, in consequence of a vow of Oswy, King of Northumberland. It contained both monks and nuns of the Benedictine order; but, contrary to what was usual in such establishments, the abbess was superior to the abbot. The monastery was afterwards ruined by the Danes, and rebuilt by William Percy, in the reign of the Conqueror. There were no nuns there in Henry the Eighth's time, nor long before it. The ruins of Whitby Abbey are very magnificent.

117. ... St. Cuthbert's Holy Isle.

Lindisfarne, an isle on the coast of Northumberland, was called Holy Island, from the sanctity of its ancient monastery, and from its having been the episcopal seat of the see of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity.

118. Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
     How to their house three Barons bold
     Must menial service do.

The following is an account of this curious service: "In the year 1159, the Lord of Uglebarnby, then called William de Bruce; the Lord of Smeaton, called Ralph de Percy; with a gentleman and freeholder called Allatson, did appoint to meet and hunt the wild-boar, in a certain wood belonging to the Abbot of Whitby. Then, these young gentlemen being met, with their hounds and boar-staves, in the place before mentioned, and there having found a great wild-boar, the hounds ran him well near about the chapel and hermitage of Eskdale-side, where was a monk of Whitby, who was an hermit. The boar, being very sorely pursued, and dead-run, took in at the chapel
door, there laid him down, and presently died. The hermit shut the hounds out of the chapel, and kept himself within at his meditations and prayers, the hounds standing at bay without. The gentlemen, in the thick of the wood, being just behind their game, followed the cry of their hounds, and so came to the hermitage, calling on the hermit, who opened the door and came forth; and within they found the boar lying dead: for which, the gentlemen, in a very great fury, because the hounds were put from their game, did most violently and cruelly run at the hermit with their boar-staves, whereby he soon after died. Thereupon the gentlemen, knowing that they were in peril of death, took sanctuary at Scarborough: But at that time the abbot being in very great favour with the King, removed them out of the sanctuary; whereby they came in danger of the law, which was death for death. But the hermit, being a holy and devout man, sent for the abbot, and desired him to send for the gentlemen who had wounded him. The abbot so doing, the gentlemen came; and the hermit, being very sick and weak, said unto them, ‘You and yours shall hold your lands of the Abbot of Whitby, and his successors, in this manner: That, upon Ascension-day, you shall come to the wood of the Stray-heads, which is in Eskdale-side, the same day at sunrising, and there shall the abbot’s officer deliver unto you, William de Bruce, ten stakes, eleven stout stowers, and eleven yethers, to be cut by you, with a knife: and you, Ralph de Percy, shall take twenty-one of each sort, to be cut in the same manner; and you, Allatson, shall take nine of each sort, to be cut as aforesaid, and to be taken on your backs and carried to the town of Whitby, and to be there before nine of the clock the same day before mentioned. At the same hour of nine of the clock, if it be full sea, your labour and service shall cease; and if low water, each of you shall set your stakes to the brim, each stake one yard from the other, and so yether them on each side with your yethers; and so stake on each side with your stout stowers, that they may stand three tides without removing by the force thereof. You shall faithfully do this, in remembrance that you did most cruelly slay me; and that you may the better call to God for mercy, repent unfeignedly of your sins, and do good works. The officer of Eskdale-side shall blow, Out on you! Out on you! Out on you! for this heinous crime. If you, or your successors, shall refuse this service, you or yours shall forfeit your lands to the Abbot of Whitby, or his successors.’ Part of the lands charged with the above service was latterly held by a gentleman of the name of Herbert.’

119. ... in their convent cell

A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelfled.

She was the daughter of King Oswy, who, in gratitude to Heaven, for the great victory which he won in 655, against Penda, the Pagan King of Mercia, dedicated Edelfleda, then but a year old, to the service of God, in the monastery of Whitby, of which St. Hilda was then abbess. She afterwards adorned the place of her education with great magnificence.

120. ... of thousand snakes, each one

Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray’d;
They told, how sea-fowls’ pinions fail,
As over Whitby’s towers they sail.

These two miracles are much insisted upon by all ancient writers who have occasion to mention either Whitby or St. Hilda.

121. His body’s resting-place, of old,

How oft their patron changed, they told.

St. Cuthbert was, in the choice of his sepulchre, one of the most mutable and unreasonable saints in the Calendar. He died A.D. 688, in a hermitage upon the Farne Islands, having resigned
the bishopric of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, about two years before. His body was brought to Lindisfarne, where it remained until a descent of the Danes, about 793, when the monastery was nearly destroyed. The monks fled to Scotland with what they deemed their chief treasure, the relics of St. Cuthbert. They paraded him through Scotland for several years, and came as far west as Whithern, in Galloway, whence they attempted to sail for Ireland, but were driven back by tempests. He at length made a halt at Norham; from thence he went to Melrose, where he remained stationary for a short time, and then caused himself to be launched upon the Tweed, and landed at Tilmouth, in Northumberland. From Tilmouth, Cuthbert wandered into Yorkshire; and at length made a long stay at Chester-le-street, to which the bishop’s see was transferred. At length, the Danes, continuing to infest the country, the monks removed to Rippon for a season; and it was in return from thence to Chester-le-street, that, passing through a forest called Dunholme, the Saint and his carriage became immovable at a place named Wardlaw, or Waridlaw. Here the Saint chose his place of residence; and all who have seen Durham must admit, that, if difficult in his choice, he evinced taste in at length fixing it.

122. Even Scotland’s dauntless king, and heir, etc.
Before his standard fled.

Every one has heard, that when David 1., with his son Henry, invaded Northumberland in 1136, the English host marched against them under the holy banner of St. Cuthbert; to the efficacy of which was imputed the great victory which they obtained in the bloody battle of Northallerton, or Cutonmoor.

123. ‘Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred’s falchion on the Dane,
And turn’d the Conqueror back again.

Cuthbert, we have seen, had no great reason to spare the Danes, when opportunuty offered. Accordingly, I find, in Simeon of Durham, that the Saint appeared in a vision to Alfred, when lurking in the marshes of Glastonbury, and promised him assistance and victory over his heathen enemies; a consolation which, as was reasonable, Alfred, after the victory of Ashedown, rewarded, by a royal offering at the shrine of the Saint. As to William the Conqueror, the terror spread before his army; when he marched to punish the revolt of the Northumbrians, in 1096, had forced the monks to fly once more to Holy Island with the body of the Saint. It was, however, replaced before William left the north; and, to balance accounts, the Conqueror having intimated an indiscreet curiosity to view the Saint’s body, he was, while in the act of commanding the shrine to be opened, seized with heat and sickness, accompanied with such a panic terror, that he fled, and never drew his bridle till he got to the river Tees.

124. Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name.

Although we do not learn that Cuthbert was, during his life, such an artificer as Dunstan, his brother in sanctity, yet, since his death, he has acquired the reputation of forging those Eutrochi which are found among the rocks of Holy Island, and pass there by the name of St. Cuthbert’s Beads.

125. Old Colwulf.
Ceolwulf, or Colwulf, King of Northumberland, flourished in the eighth century. He was a man of some learning; for the venerable Bede dedicates to him his “Ecclesiastical History.” He abdicated the throne about 738, and retired to Holy Island, where he died in the odour of sanctity.

126. Tynemouth’s haughty Prioress.

That there was an ancient priory at Tynemouth is certain. Its ruins are situated on a high rocky point; and, doubtless, many a vow was made to the shrine by the distressed mariners
who drove towards the iron-bound coast of Northumberland in stormy weather. It was anciently a nunnery, but the introduction of nuns at Tynemouth in the reign of Henry VIII. is an anachronism.

127. On those the wall was to enclose.
Alive, within the tomb.

It is well known that the religious, who broke their vows of chastity, were subjected to the same penalty as the Roman vestals in a similar case. A small niche, sufficient to enclose their bodies, was made in the massive wall of the convent; a slender pittance of food and water was deposited in it, and the awful words, Vade in pace, were the signal for immuring the criminal.

128. The village inn.

The Scottish hostelrie, or inn, of the sixteenth century, though the subject of some peculiar enactments of the legislature, appears at best to have afforded but a rude comfort.

129. The death of a dear friend.

Among other omens to which faithful credit is given among the Scottish peasantry, is what is called the "dead-bell," explained by my friend James Hogg, to be that tinkling in the ears which the country people regard as the secret intelligence of some friend's decease.

130. The Goblin-Hall.

A vaulted hall under the ancient castle of Gifford or Yester (for it bears either name indifferently), the construction of which has from a very remote period been ascribed to magic.

131. There floated Haco's banner trim
Above Norwéyan warriors grim.

In 1263, Haco, King of Norway, came into the Firth of Clyde with a powerful armament, and made a descent at Largs, in Ayrshire. Here he was encountered and defeated, on the 2nd October, by Alexander III.

132. The wizard habit strange.

"Magicians, as is well known, were very curious in the choice and form of their vestments. Their caps are oval, or like pyramids, with lappets on each side, and fur within. Their gowns are long, and furred with fox-skins, under which they have a linen garment reaching to the knee. Their girdles are three inches broad, and have many cabalistical names, with crosses, trines, and circles inscribed on them. Their shoes should be of new russet leather, with a cross cut upon them. Their knives are dagger-fashion; and their swords have neither guard nor scabbard."—See these, and many other particulars, in the Discourse concerning Devils and Spirits, annexed to Reginald Scott's Discovery of Witchcraft, edition 1655.

133. Upon his breast a pentacle.

A pentacle is a piece of fine linen, folded with five corners, according to the five senses, and suitably inscribed with characters. This the magician extends towards the spirits which he invokes, when they are stubborn and rebellious, and refuse to be conformable unto the ceremonies and rites of magic.

134. As born upon that blessed night,
When yawning graves, and dying groan,
Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrow'd.

It is a popular article of faith, that those who are born on Christmas, or Good Friday, have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them. The Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Philip II. to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him.

135. Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin warrior doth wield
Upon the brown hill's breast.

The northern champions of old were accustomed peculiarly to search for,
and delight in, encounters with such military spectres.

136. Close to the hut, no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in vain,
The morn may find the stiffen'd swain.

I cannot help here mentioning, that, on the night in which these lines were written, suggested, as they were, by a sudden fall of snow, beginning after sunset, an unfortunate man perished exactly in the manner here described, and his body was next morning found close to his own house. The accident happened within five miles of the farm of Ashestiel.

137. ... Forbes.

Sir William Forbes of Pitsligo, Baronet; unequalled, perhaps, in the degree of individual affection entertained for him by his friends, as well as in the general respect and esteem of Scotland at large. His "Life of Beatie," whom he befriended and patronised in life, as well as celebrated after his decease, was not long published before the benevolent and affectionate biographer was called to follow the subject of his narrative. This melancholy event very shortly succeeded the marriage of the friend, to whom this introduction is addressed, with one of Sir William's daughters.


Alias, "Will o' the Wisp." This personage is a strolling demon, or esprit follet, who, once upon a time, got admittance into a monastery as a scullion, and played the monks many pranks. He was also a sort of Robin Goodfellow, and Jack o' Lantern.

139. Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-arms.

I am uncertain if I abuse poetical licence, by introducing Sir David Lindesay in the character of Lion-Herald, sixteen years before he obtained that office. At any rate, I am not the first who has been guilty of the anachronism; for the author of "Flodden Field" despatches Dalmauont, which can mean nobody but Sir David de la Mont, to France, on the message of defiance from James IV. to Henry VIII. It was often an office imposed on the Lion King-at-arms, to receive foreign ambassadors; and Lindesay himself did this honour to Sir Ralph Sadler, in 1539-40. Indeed, the oath of the Lion, in its first article, bears reference to his frequent employment upon royal messages and embassies.

140. Crichtoun Castle.

A large ruinous castle on the banks of the Tyne, about ten miles from Edinburgh. As indicated in the text, it was built at different times, and with a very differing regard to splendour and accommodation.

141. Earl Adam Hepburn.

He was the second Earl of Bothwell, and fell in the field of Flodden, where he distinguished himself by a furious attempt to retrieve the day.

Adam was grandfather to James, Earl of Bothwell, too well known in the history of Queen Mary.

141a. For that a messenger from heaven,
In vain to James had counsel given.
Against the English war.

This story is told by Pitscottie with characteristic simplicity:--"The King, seeing that France could get no support of him for that time, made a proclamation through all the realm of Scotland, to all manner of men between sixty and sixteen years, that they should be ready, within twenty days, to pass with him, with forty days' victual, and to meet at the Burrow-muir of Edinburgh, and there to pass forward where he pleased. "The King came to Lithgow, where he happened to be for the time at the Council, very sad and dolorous, making
his devotion to God, to send him good chance and fortune in his voyage. In this meantime there came a man, clad in a blue gown, in at the kirk door, and belted about him in a roll of linen cloth; a pair of brothikings on his feet, to the great of his legs; with all other hose and clothes conform thereto: but he had nothing on his head, but syde red yellow hair behind, and on his haffets, which wan down to his shoulders; but his forehead was bald and bare. He seemed to be a man of two-and-fifty years, with a great pike-staff in his hand, and came first forward among the lords, crying and speiring for the King, saying, he desired to speak with him. While, at the last, he came where the King was sitting in the desk at his prayers; but when he saw the King, he made him little reverence or salutation, but leaned down groffling on the desk before him, and said to him in this manner, as after follows: 'Sir King, my mother hath sent me to you, desiring you not to pass, at this time, where thou art purposed; for if thou doest, thou wilt not fare well in thy journey, nor none that passeth with thee. Further, she bade thee meet with no woman, nor use their counsel, nor let them touch thy body, nor thou theirs; for, if thou do it, thou wilt be confounded and brought to shame.'

"By this man had spoken thir words unto the King's grace, the evening-song was near done, and the King paused on thir words, studying to give him an answer; but, in the meantime, before the King's eyes, and in the presence of all the lords that were about him for the time, this man vanished away, and could no ways be seen or comprehended, but vanished away as he had been a blink of the sun, or a whip of the whirlwind, and could no more be seen."

142. The wild-buck bells.

I am glad of an opportunity to describe the cry of the deer by another word than *braying*, although the latter has been sanctified by the use of the Scottish metrical translation of the Psalms. *Bell* seems to be an abbreviation of bellow. This sylvan sound conveyed great delight to our ancestors, chiefly, I suppose, from association. A gentle knight in the reign of Henry VIII., Sir Thomas Wortley, built Wantley Lodge, in Wancliffe Forest, for the pleasure (as an ancient inscription testifies) of "listening to the hart's bell."

143. June saw his father's overthrow.

The rebellion against James III. was signalled by the cruel circumstance of his son's presence in the hostile army. When the King saw his own banner displayed against him, and his son in the faction of his enemies, he lost the little courage he had ever possessed, fled out of the field, fell from his horse as it started at a woman and water-pitcher, and was slain, it is not well understood by whom. James IV., after the battle, passed to Stirling, and hearing the monks of the chapel-royal deploring the death of his father, their founder, he was seized with deep remorse, which manifested itself in severe penances. See a following Note on stanza ix. of canto v. The battle of Sauchie-burn, in which James III. fell, was fought 18th June, 1488.

144. The Borough-moor.

The Borough, or Common Moor of Edinburgh, was of very great extent, reaching from the southern walls of the city to the bottom of Braid Hills.

145. Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there

O'er the pavilions flew.

These various ensigns proclaimed the rank of those who displayed them.

146. . . . in proud Scotland's royal shield,

The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.

The well-known arms of Scotland.

147. Caledonia's Queen is changed.

The Old Town of Edinburgh was secured on the north side by a lake, now drained, and on the south by a wall, which there was some attempt to make defensible even so late as 1715.
The gates, and the greater part of the wall, have been pulled down, in the course of the late extensive and beautiful enlargement of the city.

148. Since first, when conquering York arose,
To Henry meek she gave repose.

Henry VI., with his Queen, his heir, and the chiefs of his family, fled to Scotland after the fatal battle of Towton.

149. ... the romantic strain,
Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
Could win the royal Henry's ear.

Mr. Ellis, in his Introduction to the "Specimens of Romance," has proved, by the concurring testimony of La Ravaillere, Tressan, but especially the Abbé de la Rue, that the courts of our Anglo-Norman Kings, rather than those of the French monarch, produced the birth of Romance literature.

150. The cloth-yard arrows.

This is no poetical exaggeration. In some of the counties of England, distinguished for archery, shafts of this extraordinary length were actually used.

151. To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
And high curvett, that not in vain
The sword sway might descend again
On foeman's casque below.

"The most useful air, as the Frenchmen term it, is territerr; the courbettes, cabrioles, or un pas et un sault, being fitter for horses of parade and triumph than for soldiers: yet I cannot deny but a demirolle with courbettes, so that they be not too high, may be useful in a fight or meslee; for, as Labroue hath it, in his Book of Horsemanship, Monsieur de Montmorency having a horse that was excellent in performing the demirolle, did, with his sword, strike down two adversaries from their horses in a tourney, where divers of the prime gallants of France did meet; for, taking his time, when the horse was in the height of his courbette, and discharging a blow then, his sword fell with such weight and force upon the two cavaliers, one after another, that he struck them from their horses to the ground."—Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Life, p. 48.

152. He saw the hardy burghers there
March arm'd on foot with faces bare.

The Scottish burgesses were, like yeomen, appointed to be armed with bows and sheaves, sword, buckler, knife, spear, or a good axe instead of a bow, if worth £100: their armour to be of white or bright harness. They wore white hats, i.e. bright steel caps, without crest or visor.

153. On foot the yeoman too . . .
Each at his back (a slender store)
His forty days' provision bore,
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear.

When the feudal array of the kingdom was called forth, each man was obliged to appear with forty days' provision. When this was expended, which took place before the battle of Flodden, the army melted away of course. Almost all the Scottish forces, except a few knights, men-at-arms, and the Border-prickers, who formed excellent light cavalry, acted upon foot.

154. A banquet rich, and costly wines,
To Marmion and his train.

In all transactions of great or petty importance, and among whomsoever taking place, it would seem that a present of wine was a uniform and indispensable preliminary.
... his iron-belt,
That bound his breast in pen-
ance pain,
In memory of his father slain.

Few readers need to be reminded of
this belt, to the weight of which James
added certain ounces every year that
he lived.

156. Sir Hugh the Heron’s wife.

It has been already noticed [see note
to stanza xiii. of can to i.], that King
James’s acquaintance with Lady Heron
of Ford did not commence until he
marched into England. Our historians
impute to the King’s infatuated passion
the delays which led to the fatal defeat
of Flodden.

157. The fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquois ring and
glove,
And charged him, as her knight
and love,
For her to break a lance.

A turquois ring, probably this fatal
gift, is, with James’s sword and dagger,
preserved in the College of Heralds,
London.

158. Archibald Bell-the-Cat.

Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus,
a man remarkable for strength of body
and mind, acquired the popular name of
Bell-the-Cat, upon the following
remarkable occasion:—James the
Third, of whom Pitscottie complains,
that he delighted more in music, and
“policies of building,” than in hunting,
hawking, and other noble exercises,
was so ill advised, as to make favourites
of his architects and musicians, whom
the same historian irreverently terms
masons and fiddlers. His nobility,
who did not sympathise in the King’s
respect for the fine arts, were extremely
incensed at the honours conferred on
those persons, particularly on Cochrane,
a mason, who had been created Earl
of Mar; and, seizing the opportunity,
when, in 1482, the King had convoked
the whole array of the country to march
against the English, they held a mid-
night council in the church of Lauder,
for the purpose of forcibly removing
these minions from the King’s person.
When all had agreed on the propriety
of this measure, Lord Gray told the
assembly the apologue of the Mice,
who had formed a resolution, that it
would be highly advantageous to their
community to tie a bell round the
cat’s neck, that they might hear her
approach at a distance; but which
public measure unfortunately mis-
carried, from no mouse being willing
to undertake the task of fastening the
bell. “I understand the moral,” said
Angus, “and, that what we propose
may not lack execution, I will bell-
the-cat.”

159. Against the war had Angus
stood,
And chafed his royal Lord.

Angus was an old man when the
war against England was resolved
upon. He earnestly spoke against
that measure from its commencement;
and, on the eve of the battle of
Flodden, remonstrated so freely upon
the impolicy of fighting, that the King
said to him, with scorn and indigna-
tion, “if he was afraid he might go
home.” The Earl burst into tears at
this insupportable insult, and retired
accordingly, leaving his sons George,
Master of Angus, and Sir William of
Glenbervie, to command his followers.

160. Tantallon Hold.

The ruins of Tantallon Castle occupy
a high rock projecting into the German
Ocean, about two miles east of North
Berwick.

161. Their motto on his blade.

A very ancient sword, in possession
of Lord Douglas, bears, among a great
deal of flourishing, two hands pointing
to a heart, which is placed betwixt
them, and the date 1329, being the
year in which Bruce charged the Good
Lord Douglas to carry his heart to
the Holy Land.
162. Martin Swart.

A German general, who commanded the auxiliaries sent by the Duchess of Burgundy with Lambert Simnel. He was defeated and killed at Stokefield. The name of this German general is preserved by that of the field of battle, which is called, after him, Swart-moor.

163. Perchance some form was unobserved;
Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved.

It was early necessary for those who felt themselves obliged to believe in the divine judgment being enunciated in the trial by duel, to find salves for the strange and obviously precarious chances of the combat.

164. ... The Cross.

The Cross of Edinburgh was an ancient and curious structure. The lower part was an octagonal tower, sixteen feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet high. Above this rose the proper Cross, a column of one stone, upwards of twenty feet high, surmounted with a unicorn. The Magistrates of Edinburgh, in 1756, with consent of the Lords of Session (proh pudor!), destroyed this curious monument, under a wanton pretext that it encumbered the street. From the tower of the Cross, so long as it remained, the heralds published the acts of Parliament.

165. This awful summons came.

This supernatural citation is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was, probably, like the apparition at Linlithgow, an attempt, by those averse to the war, to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV.

166. One of his own ancestry
Drove the Monks forth of Coventry.

This relates to the catastrophe of a real Robert de Marmion, in the reign of King Stephen. This Baron, having expelled the Monks from the church of Coventry, was not long of experiencing the divine judgment, as the same monks, no doubt, termed his disaster. Having waged a feudal war with the Earl of Chester, Marmion’s horse fell, as he charged in the van of his troop, against a body of the Earl’s followers: the rider’s thigh being broken by the fall, his head was cut off by a common footsoldier, ere he could receive any succour.

167. ... the savage Dane
At lo! more deep the mead did drain.

The lo! of the heathen Danes (a word still applied to Christmas in Scotland) was solemnised with great festivity. The humour of the Danes at table displayed itself in pelting each other with bones.

168. On Christmas eve.

In Roman Catholic countries, mass is never said at night, except on Christmas eve.

169. Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery.

It seems certain, that the Mummers of England, who (in Northumberland at least) used to go about in disguise to the neighbouring houses, bearing the then useless ploughshare; and the Guisards of Scotland, not yet in total disuse, present, in some indistinct degree, a shadow of the old mysteries, which were the origin of the English drama.

170. Where my great-grand sire came of old,
With amber beard and flaxen hair.

The reference is to a cadet of the Harden family, whose veneration for the exiled house of Stuart was so great that he swore he would not shave his beard until they were restored.
NOTES.

171. The spirit's Blasted Tree.

This passage finds illustration in "Ceubren yr Ellyll, or The Spirit's Blasted Tree," a legendary tale, by the Reverend George Warrington.

172. The Highlander . . . .

Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If ask'd to tell a fairy tale.

The belief in the existence of the Dāvine shi", or Men of Peace, is deeply impressed on the Scottish Highlanders, who think they are particularly offended at mortals who talk of them, who wear their favourite colour green, or in any respect interfere with their affairs. This is especially to be avoided on Friday, when, whether as dedicated to Venus, with whom, in Germany, this subterranean people are held nearly connected, or for a more solemn reason, they are more active, and possessed of greater power.

173. The towers of Franchémont.

The journal of the friend to whom the Fourth Canto of the Poem is inscribed, furnished the material for the legend that follows.

174. The very form of Hilda fair,
Hovering upon the sunny air,
And smiling on her votaries' prayer.

"I shall only produce one instance more of the great veneration paid to Lady Hilda, which still prevails even in these our days; and that is, the constant opinion that she rendered, and still renders, herself visible, on some occasions, in the Abbey of Streanshalh or Whitby, where she so long resided. At a particular time of the year (viz. in the summer months), at ten or eleven in the forenoon, the sunbeams fall in the inside of the northern part of the choir; and 'tis then that the spectators, who stand on the west side of Whitby churchyard, so as just to see the most northerly part of the abbey pass the north end of Whitby church, imagine they perceive, in one of the highest windows there, the resemblance of a woman arrayed in a shroud. Though we are certain this is only a reflection caused by the splendour of the sunbeams, yet fame reports it, and it is constantly believed among the vulgar, to be an appearance of Lady Hilda in her shroud, or rather in a glorified state; before which, I make no doubt, the Papists, even in these our days, offer up their prayers with as much zeal and devotion as before any other image of their most glorified saint."—CHARLTON'S History of Whitby.

175. . . . the huge and sweeping brand
Which went of yore, in battle fray,
His foeman's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.

The Earl of Angus had strength and personal activity corresponding to his courage.

176. And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
No! by St. Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms!—
What, Warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall.

This ebullition of violence in the potent Earl of Angus is not without its example in the real history of the house of Douglas, whose chieftains possessed the ferocity, with the heroic virtues of a savage state.

177. A letter forged!—Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed!

Lest the reader should partake of the Earl's astonishment, and consider the crime as inconsistent with the manners of the period, I have to remind him of the numerous forgeries (partly executed by a female assistant) devised by Robert of Artois, to forward his suit against the Countess Matilda; which, being detected, occasioned his flight into
England, and proved the remote cause of Edward the Third's memorable wars in France. John Harding, also, was expressly hired by Edward VI. to forge such documents as might appear to establish the claim of fealty asserted over Scotland by the English monarchs.

178. Lennel's convent.

This was a Cistertian house of religion, now almost entirely demolished.

179. Twisel Bridge.

On the evening previous to the memorable battle of Flodden, Surrey's head-quarters were at Barmoor Wood, and King James held an inaccessible position on the ridge of Flodden-hill, one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot. The Till, a deep and slow river, winded between the armies. On the morning of the 9th September 1513, Surrey marched in a north-westerly direction, and crossed the Till, with his van and artillery, at Twisel-bridge, nigh where that river joins the Tweed, his rearguard column passing about a mile higher, by a ford.

180. Hence might they see the full array,
Of either host, for deadly fray.

The reader cannot here expect a full account of the battle of Flodden; but, so far as is necessary to understand the romance, I beg to remind him, that, when the English army, by their skilful countermarch, were fairly placed between King James and his own country, the Scottish monarch resolved to fight; and, setting fire to his tents, descended from the ridge of Flodden to secure the neighbouring eminence of Brankstone, on which that village is built. Thus the two armies met, almost without seeing each other. The English army advanced in four divisions. On the right, which first engaged, were the sons of Earl Surrey, namely, Thomas Howard, the Admiral of England, and Sir Edmund, the Knight Marshal of the army. Their divisions were separated from each other; but, at the request of Sir Edmund, his brother's battalion was drawn very near to his own. The centre was commanded by Surrey in person; the left wing by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Lancashire, and of the palatinate of Chester. Lord Dacres, with a large body of horse, formed a reserve. When the smoke, which the wind had driven between the armies, was somewhat dispersed, they perceived the Scots, who had moved down the hill in a similar order of battle, and in deep silence. The Earls of Huntley and of Home commanded their left wing; and charged Sir Edmund Howard with such success as entirely to defeat his part of the English right wing. Sir Edmund's banner was beaten down, and he himself escaped with difficulty to his brother's division. The Admiral, however, stood firm; and Dacre advancing to his support with the reserve of cavalry, probably between the interval of the divisions commanded by the brothers Howard, appears to have kept the victors in effectual check. Home's men, chiefly Borderers, began to pillage the baggage of both armies; and their leader is branded by the Scottish historians with negligence or treachery. On the other hand, Huntley, on whom they bestow many encomiums, is said by the English historians to have left the field after the first charge. Meanwhile the Admiral, whose flank these chiefs ought to have attacked, availed himself of their inactivity, and pushed forward against another large division of the Scottish army in his front, headed by the Earls of Crawford and Montrose, both of whom were slain, and their forces routed. On the left, the success of the English was yet more decisive; for the Scottish right wing, consisting of undisciplined Highlanders, commanded by Lennox and Argyle, was unable to sustain the charge of Sir Edward Stanley, and especially the severe execution of the Lancashire archers. The King and Surrey, who commanded the respective centres of their armies, were meanwhile engaged in close and dubious conflict. James, surrounded by the flower of his kingdom, and impatient of the galling discharge of arrows, supported also by his
reserve under Bothwell, charged with such fury, that the standard of Surrey was in danger. At that critical moment, Stanley, who had routed the left wing of the Scottish, pursued his career of victory, and arrived on the right flank, and in the rear of James's division, which, throwing itself into a circle, disputed the battle till night came on. Surrey then drew back his forces; for the Scottish centre not having been broken, and their left wing being victorious, he yet doubted the event of the field. The Scottish army, however, felt their loss, and abandoned the field of battle in disorder, before dawn. They lost, perhaps, from eight to ten thousand men; but that included the very prime of their nobility, gentry, and even clergy. The English lost also a great number of men, perhaps within one-third of the vanquished, but they were of inferior note.

The spot from which Clara views the battle must be supposed to have been on a hillock commanding the rear of the English right wing, which was defeated, and in which conflict Marnion is supposed to have fallen.

181. ... Brian Tunstall, stainless knight.

Sir Brian Tunstall, called in the romantic language of the time, Tunstall the Undeñiled, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden.

182. Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
    And fell on Flodden plain:
    And well in death his trusty brand,
    Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
    Beseem'd the monarch slain.

There can be no doubt that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed, says the curious French Gazette, within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey. An unhewn column marks the spot where James fell, still called the King's Stone.

183. The fair cathedral storm'd and took.

This storm of Lichfield cathedral, which had been garrisoned on the part of the King, took place in the Great Civil War. Lord Brook, who, with Sir John Gill, commanded the assailants, was shot with a musket-ball through the visor of his helmet. The royalists remarked, that he was killed by a shot fired from St. Chad's cathedral, and upon St. Chad's Day, and received his death-wound in the very eye with which, he had said, he hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in England.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

184. ... the heights of Uam-Var,
    And roused the cavern, where
    'tis told,
    A giant made his den of old.

Ua-var, as the name is pronounced, or more properly Uaighmor, is a mountain to the north-east of the village of Callender in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said, by tradition, to have been the abode of a giant.

185. Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
    Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed.

"The hounds which we call Saint Hubert's hounds are commonly all blacke, yet nevertheless, the race is so mingled at these days, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the abbots of St. Hubert have always kept some of their race or kind, in honour or remembrance of the
saint, which was a hunter with S. Eustace."

186. For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whin-yard drew.

When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon, and killing or disabling the desperate animal. At certain times of the year this was held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horn being then deemed poisonous, and more dangerous than one from the tusks of a boar.

187. And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.

Until the present road was made through the romantic pass which I have presumptuously attempted to describe in the preceding stanzas, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trosachs, except by a sort of ladder, composed of the branches and roots of trees.

188. To meet with Highland plunderers here,
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.

The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine, were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their Lowland neighbours.

189. A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent,
Was on the vision'd future bent.

If force of evidence could authorise us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of the Second-sight. It is called in Gaelic Taishitaraugh, from Taish, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of the faculty are called Taishatrin, which may be aptly translated visionaries.

190. Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually, in the most retired spot of their domains, some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which, as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut, in a strong and secluded situation.

191. My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus or Ascabart.

These two sons of Anak flourished in romantic fable. The first is well known to the admirers of Ariosto, by the name of Ferrau. Ascapart, or Ascabart, makes a very material figure in the History of Bevis of Hampton, by whom he was conquered.

192. Though all unask'd his birth and name.

The Highlanders, who carried hospitality to a punctilious excess, are said to have considered it as churlish, to ask a stranger his name or lineage, before he had taken refreshment.

193. ... and still a harp unseen,
Fill'd up the symphony between.

"The harp and clarschoes are now only heard of in the Highlands in ancient song. At what period these instruments ceased to be used, is not on record; and tradition is silent on this head. But, as Irish harpers occasionally visited the Highlands and Western Isles till lately, the harp might have been extant so late as the middle of the last century. How it happened that the noisy and unharmonious bagpipe banished the soft and expressive harp, we cannot say; but certain it is,
NOTES.

that the bagpipe is now the only instrument that obtains universally in the Highland districts."—CAMPBELL'S journey through North Britain.

194. Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey.

That Highland chieftains, to a late period, retained in their service the bard, as a family officer, admits of very easy proof.

195. ... The Græme.

The ancient and powerful family of Graham (which, for metrical reasons, is here spelt after the Scottish pronunciation) held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in the Scottish annals. Sir John the Græme, the faithful and undaunted partaker of the labours and patriotic warfare of Wallace, fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk, in 1293. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realised his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity, was the second of these worthies. And, notwithstanding the severity of his temper, and the rigour with which he executed the oppressive mandates of the princes whom he served, I do not hesitate to name as a third, John Græme of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, whose heroic death in the arms of victory may be allowed to cancel the memory of his cruelty to the non-conformists, during the reigns of Charles II. and James II.

196. This harp, which erst Saint Modan sway'd.

I am not prepared to show that Saint Modan was a performer on the harp. It was, however, no unsaintly accomplishment; for Saint Dunstan certainly did play upon that instrument, which retaining, as was natural, a portion of the sanctity attached to its master's character, announced future events by its spontaneous sound.

197. Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven, Were exiled from their native heaven.

The downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus during the reign of James V. is the event alluded to in the text.

198. In Holy-Rood a knight he slew.

This was by no means an uncommon occurrence in the Court of Scotland; nay, the presence of the sovereign himself scarcely restrained the ferocious and inveterate feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility.

199. The Douglas, like a stricken deer, Disown'd by every noble peer.

The exile state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and subsequent passages. The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate, that numerous as their allies were, and disregarded as the regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise. James Douglas, son of the banished Earl of Angus, afterwards well known by the title of Earl of Morton, lurked, during the exile of his family, in the north of Scotland, under the assumed name of James Innes.

200. ... Maronnan's cell.

The parish of Kilmaronock, at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, derives its name from a cell or chapel, dedicated to Saint Maronock, or Mar- nock, or Maronnan.

201. ... Bracklinn's thundering wave.

This is a beautiful cascade made by a mountain stream called the Keltie, at a place called the Bridge of Bracklinn.
NOTES.

202. For Tine-man forged by fairy lore.

Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of Tine-man, because he tined, or lost, his followers in every battle which he fought.

203. Did, self-unscabbarded, fore-show
The footstep of a secret foe.

The ancient warriors, whose hope and confidence rested chiefly in their blades, were accustomed to deduce omens from them, especially from such as were supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill, of which we have various instances in the romances and legends of the time.

204. Those thrilling sounds that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.

The connoisseurs in pipe-music affect to discover in a well-composed pibroch, the imitative sounds of march, conflict, flight, pursuit, and all the "current of a heady fight."

205. Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ierœ!

Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt, or Arsaces to those of Parthia. This name was usually a patronymic, expressive of his descent from the founder of the family. But besides this title, which belonged to his office and dignity, the chieftain had usually another peculiar to himself, which distinguished him from the chieftains of the same race. This was sometimes derived from complexion, as dhu or roy; sometimes from size as beg or more; at other times from some peculiar exploit, or from some peculiarity of habit or appearance. The line of the text therefore signifies,

Black Roderick the descendant of Alpine.

206. The best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.

The Lennox, as the district is called, which encircles the lower extremity of Loch Lomond, was peculiarly exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers, who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses at the upper end of the lake, and the neighbouring district of Loch Katrine. These were often marked by circumstances of great ferocity.

207. . . . The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side.

In 1529, James V. made a convention at Edinburgh for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers, who, during the license of his minority, and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances. Accordingly, he assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick Forest, where he hanged over the gate of his own castle, Piers Cockburn of Henderland, who had prepared, according to tradition, a feast for his reception. He caused Adam Scott of Tushielaw also to be executed, who was distinguished by the title of King of the Border. But the most noted victim of justice, during that expedition, was John Armstrong of Gilnockie, who, confiding in his own supposed innocence, met the King, with a retinue of thirty-six persons, all of whom were hanged at Carlenrig, near the source of the Teviot.

208. What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.

James was in fact equally attentive to restrain rapine and feudal oppression in every part of his dominions.
209. Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
Such cheek should feel the midnight air.

Hardihood was in every respect so essential to the character of a Highlander, that the reproach of effeminacy was the most bitter which could be thrown upon him.

210. ... his henchman came.

This officer is a sort of secretary, and is to be ready, upon all occasions, to venture his life in defence of his master; and at drinking-bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from whence his title is derived, and watches the conversation, to see if any one offends his patron.

211. And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.

When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross, also Crean Tarigh, or the Cross of Shame, because disobedience to what the symbol implied, inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal dispatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal.

212. That monk, of savage form and face.

The state of religion in the middle ages afforded considerable facilities for those whose mode of life excluded them from regular worship, to secure, nevertheless, the ghostly assistance of confessors, perfectly willing to adapt the nature of their doctrine to the necessities and peculiar circumstances of their flock. Robin Hood, it is well known, had his celebrated domestic chaplain, Friar Tuck.

213. Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.

The legend which follows is not of the author’s invention, but is transcribed, with the variation of a very few words, from the geographical collections made by the Laird of Macfarlane.

214. Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear.

The snood, or riband, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character.

215. The desert gave him visions wild,
Such as might suit the spectre's child.

In adopting the legend concerning the birth of the Founder of the Church of Kilmalie, the author has endeavoured to trace the effects which such a belief was likely to produce, in a barbarous age, on the person to whom it related. It seems likely that he must have become a fanatic or an impostor, or that mixture of both which forms a more frequent character than either of them, as existing separately. In truth, mad persons are frequently more anxious to impress upon others a faith in their visions, than they are themselves confirmed in their reality; as, on the other hand, it is difficult for the most cool-headed impostor long to personate an enthusiast, without in
some degree believing what he is so eager to have believed. It was a natural attribute of such a character as the supposed hermit, that he should credit the numerous superstitions with which the minds of ordinary Highlanders are almost always imbued. A few of these are slightly alluded to in this stanza.

216. The fatal Ben-Shie’s boding scream.

Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic spirit, attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated, by its wailings, any approaching disaster. The Ban-Schie implies a female Fairy, whose lamentations were often supposed to precede the death of a chieftain of particular families.

217. Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow’s shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne’er might ride.

A presage of the kind alluded to in the text, is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M‘Lean of Lochbuy. The spirit of an ancestor slain in battle is heard to gallop along a stony bank, and then to ride thrice around the family residence, ringing his fairy bridle, and thus intimating the approaching calamity.

218. Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
Their shadow o’er Clan-Alpine’s grave.

Inch-Cailliach, the Isle of Nuns, or of Old Women, is a most beautiful island at the lower extremity of Loch Lomond. The church belonging to the former nunnery was long used as the place of worship for the parish of Buchanan.

219. ... the dun deer’s hide
On fleeter foot was never tied.

The present brogue of the Highlanders is made of half-dried leather, with holes to admit and let out the water; for walking the moors dry-shod is a matter altogether out of the question. The ancient buskin was still ruder, being made of undressed deer’s hide, with the hair outwards; a circumstance which procured the Highlanders the well-known epithet of Red-shanks.

220. The dismal coronach.

The Coronach of the Highlanders, like the Ulalatus of the Romans, and the Ululoo of the Irish, was a wild expression of lamentation, poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend.

221. Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.

Inspection of the provincial map of Perthshire, or any large map of Scotland, will trace the progress of the signal through the small district of lakes and mountains, which, in exercise of my poetical privilege, I have subjected to the authority of my imaginary chieftain, and which, at the period of my romance, was really occupied by a clan who claimed a descent from Alpine; a clan the most unfortunate, and most persecuted, but neither the least distinguished, least powerful, nor least brave, of the tribes of the Gael.

The first stage of the Fiery Cross is to Duncraggan, a place near the Brigg of Turk, where a short stream divides Loch Achray from Loch Vennachar. From thence, it passes towards Callender, and then, turning to the left up the pass of Leny, is consigned to Norman at the chapel of Saint Bride, which stood on a small and romantic knoll in the middle of the valley, called Strath-Ire. Tombea and Armandave, or Ardmandave, are names of places in the vicinity. The alarm is then supposed to pass along the lake of Lubnaig, and through the various glens in the district of Balquidder, including the neighbouring tracts of Glenfinlas and Strathgartney.
222. Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze.

It may be necessary to inform the southern reader, that the heath on the Scottish moorlands is often set fire to, that the sheep may have the advantage of the young herbage produced, in room of the tough old heather plants.

223. No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

The deep and implicit respect paid by the Highland clansmen to their chief rendered this both a common and a solemn oath.

224. ... a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung.

This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue, overhanging the southeastern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch-trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil. A dale in so wild a situation, and amid a people whose genius bordered on the romantic, did not remain without appropriate deities. The name literally implies the Corri, or Den, of the Wild or Shaggy men.

225. The wild pass of Beal-nam-bo.

Bealach-nam-bo, or the pass of cattle, is a most magnificent glade, overhung with aged birch-trees, a little higher up the mountain than the Coir-nan-Uriskin, treated of in a former note. The whole composes the most sublime piece of scenery that imagination can conceive.

226. A single page, to bear his sword,
Alone attended on his lord.

A Highland chief, being as absolute in his patriarchal authority as any prince, had a corresponding number of officers attached to his person. He had his body-guards, called Luichttach, picked from his clan for strength, activity, and entire devotion to his person. These, according to their deserts, were sure to share abundantly in the rude profusion of his hospitality.

227. The Taghaim call'd; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.

The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the Taghaim, mentioned in the text.

228. The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry-men Gallagad.

I know not if it be worth observing, that this passage is taken almost literally from the mouth of an old Highland Kern or Ketteran, as they were called.

229. ... That huge cliff, whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.

There is a rock so named in the Forest of Glenfinlas, by which a tumultuary cataract takes its course.

230. Raven . . . . . .
That, watching while the deer is broke,
His morsel claims with sullen croak?

Broke—Quartered.—Everything belonging to the chase was matter of solemnity among our ancestors; but nothing was more so than the mode of cutting up, or, as it was technically called, breaking, the slaughtered stag. The forester had his allotted portion; the hounds had a certain allowance; and, to make the division as general as possible, the very birds had their share also.
231. “Which spills the foremost foe-
man’s life,
That party conquers in the strife.”

Though this be in the text described
as a response of the Taghairm, or
Oracle of the Hide, it was of itself an
augury frequently attended to. The
fate of the battle was often anticipated
in the imagination of the combatants,
by observing which party first shed
blood. It is said that the Highlanders
under Montrose were so deeply imbued
with this notion, that, on the morning
of the battle of Tippermoor, they
murdered a defenceless herdsman,
whom they found in the fields, merely
to secure an advantage of so much
consequence to their party.

232. Alice Brand.

This little fairy tale is founded upon
a very curious Danish ballad, which
occurs in the *Kæmpe Viser*, a collection
of heroic songs, first published in 1591,
and reprinted in 1695, inscribed by
Anders Sofrensen, the collector and
editor, to Sophia, Queen of Denmark.

233. . . . the moody Elfin King.

The *Daoine Shi*, or Men of Peace
of the Highlanders, though not absolutely
malevolent, are believed to be a peevish,
repining race of beings, who, possessing
themselves but a scanty portion of
happiness, are supposed to envy mankind
their more complete and substantial
enjoyments. They are supposed
to enjoy in their subterraneous recesses
a sort of shadowy happiness,—a tinsel
grandeur; which, however, they would
willingly exchange for the more solid
joys of mortality.

234. Why sounds yon stroke on beech
and oak,
Our moonlight circle’s screen?
Or who comes here to chase the
deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?

It has been already observed, that
fairies, if not positively malevolent, are
capricious, and easily offended. They
are, like other proprietors of forests,
peculiarly jealous of their rights of *vert*
and *venison*.

235. . . . Who may dare on wold
to wear
The fairies’ fatal green?

As the *Daoine Shi*, or Men of Peace,
wore green habits, they were supposed
to take offence when any mortals ven-
tured to assume their favourite colour.
Indeed, from some reason which has
been, perhaps, originally a general
superstition, *green* is held in Scotland
to be unlucky to particular tribes and
counties.

236. For thou wert christen’d man.

The elves were supposed greatly to
envy the privileges acquired by Christian
initiation, and they gave to those
mortals who had fallen into their power
a certain precedence, founded upon this
advantageous distinction.

237. And gaily shines the Fairy-
land—
But all is glistening show.

No fact respecting Fairy-land seems
to be better ascertained than the fan-
tastic and illusory nature of their
apparent pleasure and splendour.

238. . . . I sunk down in a sinful
fray,
And, ’twixt life and death, was
snatch’d away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

The subjects of Fairy-land were
recruited from the regions of humanity
by a sort of crimping system, which
extended to adults as well as to infants.
Many of those who were in this world
supposed to have discharged the debt
of nature, had only become denizens of
the “Londe of Faery.”

239. Who ever reck’d, where, how,
or when,
The prowling fox was trapp’d
or slain?

St. John actually used this illustration
when engaged in confuting the plea of
law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford: "It was true, we gave laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase; but it was never accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey. In a word, the law and humanity were alike; the one being more fallacious, and the other more barbarous, than in any age had been vented in such an authority."—CLAREN- DON'S History of the Rebellion.

240. . . his Highland cheer,
The harden'd flesh of mountain deer.

The Scottish Highlanders in former times had a concise mode of cooking their venison, or rather of dispensing with cooking it, which appears greatly to have surprised the French whom chance made acquainted with it. The Vidame of Charters, when a hostage in England, during the reign of Edward VI., was permitted to travel into Scotland, and penetrated as far as to the remote Highlands (au fin fond des Sauvages). After a great hunting party, at which a most wonderful quantity of game was destroyed, he saw these Scottish Savages devour a part of their venison raw, without any farther preparation than compressing it between two batons of wood, so as to force out the blood, and render it extremely hard. This they reckoned a great delicacy; and when the Vidame partook of it, his compliance with their taste rendered him extremely popular.

241. Not then claim'd sovereignty his due;
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command.

There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V.

242. The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.

The Gael, great traditional historians, never forgot that the Lowlands had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach.

243. . . I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

This incident, like some other passages in the poem, illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exertions of generosity, and of cruel revenge and perfidy.

244. On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.

The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor, called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence, called the Dun of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some intrenchments, which have been thought Roman.

245. See here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand.

The duellists of former times did not always stand upon those punctilios respecting equality of arms, which are now judged essential to fair combat. It is true, that in former combats in the lists the parties were, by the judges of a field, put as nearly as possible in
the same circumstances. But in private duel it was often otherwise.

246. Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
For train'd abroad his arms to wield
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.

A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops, they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside, and used the broadsword against the encumbered soldier. In the civil war of 1745, most of the front rank of the clans were thus armed.

247. Thy threats, thy mercy I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die.

Duels even more desperate than that of the text might easily be found in the records of the Highland chieftains.

248. Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound.

An eminence on the north-east of the Castle, where state criminals were executed. Stirling was often polluted with noble blood.

The fate of William, eighth Earl of Douglas, whom James II. stabbed in Stirling Castle with his own hand, and while under his royal safe-conduct, is familiar to all who read Scottish history. Murdack Duke of Albany, Duncan Earl of Lennox, his father-in-law, and his two sons, Walter and Alexander Stuart, were executed at Stirling, in 1425.

249. The burghers hold their sports to-day.

Every burgh of Scotland, of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn play, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period. Stirling, a usual place of royal residence, was not likely to be deficient in pomp upon such occasions, especially since James V. was very partial to them.

250. Robin Hood.

The exhibition of this renowned outlaw and his band was a favourite frolic at such festivals as we are describing.

251. Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

The Douglas of the poem is an imaginary person, a supposed uncle of the Earl of Angus. But the King's behaviour during an unexpected interview with the Laird of Kilspindie, one of the banished Douglasses, under circumstances similar to those in the text, is imitated from a real story told by Hume of Godscroft. I would have availed myself more fully of the simple and affecting circumstances of the old history, had they not been already woven into a pathetic ballad by my friend Mr. Finlay.

252. Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring.

The usual prize of a wrestling was a ram and a ring, but the animal would have embarrassed my story.

253. Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.

The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them, for military service by themselves and their tenants. The patriarchal influence
exercised by the heads of clans in the Highlands and Borders was of a different nature, and sometimes at variance with feudal principles. It flowed from the *Patria Potestas*, exercised by the chieftain as representing the original father of the whole name, and was often obeyed in contradiction to the feudal superior.

254. Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!

Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,

The leader of a juggler band.

The jongleurs, or jugglers, as we learn from the elaborate work of the late Mr. Strutt, on the sports and pastimes of the people of England, used to call in the aid of various assistants, to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant.

255. That stirring air that peals on high.

There are several instances, at least in tradition, of persons so much attached to particular tunes, as to require to hear them on their deathbed. Such an anecdote is mentioned by the late Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, in his collection of Border tunes, respecting an air called the "Dandling of the Bairns," for which a certain Gallovidian laird is said to have evinced this strong mark of partiality.

256. Battle of Beal’ an Duine.

A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V.

257. And Snowdoun’s Knight is Scotland’s King.

This discovery will probably remind the reader of the beautiful Arabian tale of *Il Bondocani*. Yet the incident is not borrowed from that elegant story, but from Scottish tradition. James V., of whom we are treating, was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons*. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises. The two excellent comic songs, entitled, "the Gaberlunzie man," and "We’ll gae nae mair a roving," are said to have been founded upon the success of his amorous adventures when travelling in the disguise of a beggar. The latter is perhaps the best comic ballad in any language.

258. Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims.

William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle Snowdoun.

---

**THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.**

259. And Cattrath’s glens with voice of triumph rung,

And mystic Merlin harp’d, and gray-hair’d Llywarch sung!

This locality may startle those readers who do not recollect that much of the ancient poetry preserved in Wales refers less to the history of the Principality to which that name is now limited, than to events which happened in the north-west of England, and south-west of Scotland, where the Britons for a long time made a stand against the Saxons. The battle of Cattrath, lamented by the celebrated Aneurin, is supposed, by the learned Dr. Leyden, to have been fought on the skirts of Ettrick
NOTES.

905

Forest. Llywarch, the celebrated bard and monarch, was Prince of Argood, in Cumberland; and his youthful exploits were performed upon the Border, although in his age he was driven into Powys by the successes of the Anglo-Saxons. As for Merlin Wylt, or the Savage, his name of Caledonia, and his retreat into the Caledonian wood, appropriate him to Scotland.

260. Minchmore's haunted spring.

A belief in the existence and nocturnal revels of the fairies still lingers among the vulgar in Selkirkshire.

261. ... The rude villager, his labour done,
In verse spontaneous chants some favour'd name.

The flexibility of the Italian and Spanish languages, and perhaps the liveliness of their genius, renders these countries distinguished for the talent of improvisation, which is found even among the lowest of the people.

262. Kindling at the deeds of Græme.

Over a name sacred for ages to heroic verse, a poet may be allowed to exercise some power. I have used the freedom, here and elsewhere, to alter the orthography of the name of my gallant countryman, in order to apprise the Southern reader of its legitimate sound; —Grahame being, on the other side of the Tweed, usually pronounced as a dissyllable.

263. What! will Don Roderick here till morning stay,
To wear in shift and prayer the night away?
And are his hours in such dull penance past,
For fair Florinda's plunder'd charms to pay?

Almost all the Spanish historians, as well as the voice of tradition, ascribe the invasion of the Moors to the forcible violation committed by Roderick upon Florinda, called by the Moors, Caba or Cava. She was the daughter of Count Julian, one of the Gothic monarch's principal lieutenants, who, when the crime was perpetrated, was engaged in the defence of Ceuta against the Moors. In his indignation at the ingratitude of his sovereign, and the dishonour of his daughter, Count Julian forgot the duties of a Christian and a patriot, and, forming an alliance with Musa, then the Caliph's lieutenant in Africa, he countenanced the invasion of Spain by a body of Saracens and Africans, commanded by the celebrated Tarik; the issue of which was the defeat and death of Roderick, and the occupation of almost the whole peninsula by the Moors.

264. And guide me, Priest, to that mysterious room.

The transition of an incident from history to tradition, and from tradition to fable and romance, becoming more marvellous at each step from its original simplicity, is not ill exemplified in the account of the "Fated Chamber" of Don Roderick, as given by his namesake, the historian of Toledo, contrasted with subsequent and more romantic accounts of the same subterranean discovery.

265. The Tecbir war-cry, and the Lelie's yell.

The Tecbir (derived from the words Alla acbar, God is most mighty) was the original war-cry of the Saracens. The Lelie, well known to the Christians during the crusades, is the shout of Alla illa Alla, the Mahomedan confession of faith.

266. By Heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians yield!—
Their coward leader gives for flight the sign!
The sceptred craven mounts to quit the field—
Is not yon steed Orelia?—Yes, 'tis mine!

Count Julian, the father of the injured Florinda, with the connivance and assistance of Oppas, Archbishop of Toledo, invited, in 713, the Saracens
into Spain. A considerable army arrived under the command of Tarik, or Tarif. He was joined by Count Julian, ravaged Andalusia, and took Seville. In 714, they returned with a still greater force, and Roderick marched into Andalusia at the head of a great army, to give them battle. The field was chosen near Xeres, and the action resulted in the defeat and flight of the king.

267. When for the light bolero ready stand,
   The mozo blithe, with gay muchacha met.

   The bolero is a very light and active dance, much practised by the Spaniards, in which castanets are always used. Mozo and muchacha are equivalent to our phrase of lad and lass.

268. While trumpets rang, and heralds cried "Castile!"

   The heralds, at the coronation of a Spanish monarch, proclaim his name three times, and repeat three times the word Castilla, Castilla, Castilla; which, with all other ceremonies, was carefully copied in the mock inauguration of Josephi Bonaparte.

269. High blazed the war, and long, and far, and wide.

   Those who were disposed to believe that mere virtue and energy are able of themselves to work forth the salvation of an oppressed people, surprised in a moment of confidence, deprived of their officers, armies, and fortresses, who had every means of resistance to seek in the very moment when they were to be made use of, and whom the numerous treasons among the higher orders deprived of confidence in their natural leaders,—those who entertained this enthusiastic but delusive opinion may be pardoned for expressing their disappointment at the protracted warfare in the Peninsula. There are, however, another class of persons, who, having themselves the highest dread or veneration, or something allied to both, for the power of the modern Attila, will nevertheless give the

heroical Spaniards little or no credit for the long, stubborn, and unsubdued resistance of three years to a power before whom their former well-prepared, well-armed, and numerous adversaries fell in the course of as many months. While these gentlemen plead for deference to Bonaparte, it may not be altogether unreasonable to claim some modification of censure upon those who have been long and to a great extent successfully resisting this great enemy of mankind.

270. They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb.

   The defence of Zaragoza is one of the most heroic incidents in modern history. The inhabitants, led by Palafox, offered the most determined resistance, some 60,000 in all perishing.

271. The Vault of Destiny.

   Before finally dismissing the enchanted cavern of Don Roderick, it may be noticed, that the legend occurs in one of Calderon's plays, entitled, La Virgin del Sagrario. The scene opens with the noise of the chase, and Reisundo, a predecessor of Roderick upon the Gothic throne, enters pursuing a stag. The animal assumes the form of a man, and defies the king to enter the cave, which forms the bottom of the scene, and engage with him in single combat. The king accepts the challenge, and they engage accordingly, but without advantage on either side, which induces the Genie to inform Reisundo, that he is not the monarch for whom the adventure of the enchanted cavern is reserved, and he proceeds to predict the downfall of the Gothic monarchy, and of the Christian religion, which shall attend the discovery of its mysteries. Reisundo, appalled by these prophecies, orders the cavern to be secured by a gate and bolts of iron. In the second part of the same play, we are informed that Don Roderick had removed the barrier, and transgressed the prohibition of his ancestor, and had been apprised by the prodigies which he discovered of the approaching ruin of his kingdom.
272. The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
    With horror paused to view
    the havoc done,
    Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch forlorn.

Even the unexampled gallantry of
the British army in the campaign of
1810-11, although they never fought
but to conquer, will do them less honour
in history than their humanity, attentive
to soften to the utmost of their power
the horrors which war, in its mildest
aspect, must always inflict upon the
defenceless inhabitants of the country
in which it is waged, and which, on
this occasion, were tenfold augmented
by the barbarous cruelties of the
French.

273. Vainglorious fugitive!

The French conducted this memor-
able retreat with much of the fum-
fâronade proper to their country, by
which they attempt to impose upon
others, and perhaps on themselves, a
belief that they are triumphing in the
very moment of their discomfiture. On
the 30th March 1811, their rear-guard
was overtaken near Pega by the British
cavalry. Being well posted, and con-
ceiving themselves safe from infantry
(who were indeed many miles in the
rear), and from artillery, they indulged
themselves in parading their bands of
music, and actually performed "God
save the King." Their minstrelsy was,
however, deranged by the undesired
accompaniment of the British horse-
artillery, on whose part in the concert
they had not calculated. The surprise
was sudden, and the rout complete;
for the artillery and cavalry did execu-
tion upon them for about four miles,
pursuing at the gallop as often as they
got beyond the range of the guns.

274. Vainly thy squadrons hide
    Assuava's plain,
    And front the flying thunders as
    they roar,
    With frantic charge and ten-
    fold odds, in vain!

In the severe action of Fuentes
d'Honoró, upon 5th May, 1811, the
grand mass of the French cavalry
attacked the right of the British posi-
tion, covered by two guns of the horse-
artillery, and two squadrons of cavalry.
After suffering considerably from the
fire of the guns, which annoyed them
in every attempt at formation, the
enemy turned their wrath entirely to-
towards them, distributed brandy among
their troopers, and advanced to carry
the field-pieces with the desperation
of drunken fury. They were in no-
wise checked by the heavy loss which
they sustained in this daring attempt,
but closed, and fairly mingled with the
British cavalry, to whom they bore
the proportion of ten to one. Captain
Ramsay, who commanded the two
guns, dismissed them at the gallop,
and putting himself at the head of the
mounted artillerists, ordered them to
fall upon the French, sabre-in-hand.
This very unexpected conversion of
artillerymen into dragoons, contributed
greatly to the defeat of the enemy
already disconcerted by the reception
they had met from the two British
squadrons: and the appearance of
some small reinforcements, notwithstanding the immense disproportion
of force, put them to absolute rout.

275. And what avails thee that, for
    Cameron slain,
        Wild from his plaided ranks
    the yell was given.

The gallant Colonel Cameron was
wounded mortally during the desperate
contest in the streets of the village
called Fuentes d'Honoró. He fell at
the head of his native Highlanders, the
71st and 79th, who raised a dreadful
shriek of grief and rage. They charged,
with irresistible fury, the finest body
of French grenadiers ever seen, being
a part of Bonaparte's selected guard.
The officer who led the French, a man
remarkable for stature and symmetry,
was killed on the spot. The French-
man who stepped out of his rank to
take aim at Colonel Cameron was also
bayoneted, pierced with a thousand
wounds, and almost torn to pieces by
the furious Highlanders, who, under
the command of Colonel Cadogan,
bore the enemy out of the contested
ground at the point of the bayonet.

276. But you, ye heroes of that well-
 fought day, etc.

The *Edinburgh Review* criticised
severely the omission of the name of
Sir John Moore from this part of the
poem.

277. O who shall grudge him
Albuera's bays,
Who brought a race regenerate
to the field,
Roused them to emulate their
fathers' praise,
Temper'd their headlong rage,
their courage steeld,
And raised fair Lusitania's
fallen shield.

278. . . . a race renown'd of old,
Whose war-cry oft has waked
the battle-swell.

. . . . . . .
. . . the conquering shout of
Graeme.

This stanza alludes to the various
achievements of the warlike family of
Graeme, or Grahame.

ROKEBY.

279. On Barnard's towers, and Tees's
stream, etc.

"Barnard Castle," saith old Leland,
"standeth stately upon Tees." It is
founded upon a very high bank, and its
ruins impend over the river, including
within the area a circuit of six acres
and upwards. This once magnificent
fortress derives its name from its
founder, Barnard Baliol, the ancestor
of the short and unfortunate dynasty
of that name, which succeeded to the
Scottish throne under the patronage of
Edward I. and Edward III. Baliol's
Tower, afterwards mentioned in the
poem, is a round tower of great size,
situated at the western extremity of the
building. The prospect from the top
of Baliol's Tower commands a rich and
magnificent view of the wooded valley
of the Tees.

280. . . . no human ear,
Unsharpen'd by revenge and
fear,
Could e'er distinguish horse's
clank.

Nothing during the war of Portugal
seems more deserving of praise, than
the self-devotion of Field-Marshal
Beresford, who was contented to under-
take all the hazard of obloquy which
might have been founded upon any
miscarriage in the highly important
experiment of training the Portugu-
uese troops to an improved state of
discipline.

281. The morion's plumes his visage
hide,
And the buffcoat, in ample
fold,
Mantles his form's gigantic
mould.

The use of complete suits of armour
was fallen into disuse during the Civil
War, though they were still worn by
leaders of rank and importance.

282. On his dark face a scorching
clime,
And toil, had done the work of
time.

Death had he seen by sudden
blow,
By wasting plague, by tortures
slow.
In this character, I have attempted to sketch one of those West Indian adventurers, who, during the course of the seventeenth century, were popularly known by the name of Bucaniers.

283. ... On Marston heath
    Met, front to front, the ranks of death.

The well-known and desperate battle of Long-Marston Moor, which terminated so unfortunately for the cause of Charles, seems to have commenced with every prospect of success for the Royalist forces.

284. Monckton and Mitton told the news,
    How troops of roundheads choked the Ouse,
    And many a bonny Scot, aghast,
    Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
    Cursing the day when zeal or need
    First lured their Lesley o'er the Tweed.

Monckton and Mitton are villages near the field of battle. The particulars of the action were violently disputed.

285. With his barb'd horse, fresh tidings say,
    Stout Cromwell has redeem'd the day.

Cromwell, with his regiment of cuirassiers, had a principal share in turning the fate of the day at Marston Moor.

286. Do not my native dales prolong
    Of Percy Rede the tragic song,
    Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
    By Girsonfield, that treacherous Hall?

In a poem, entitled "The Lay of the Reedwater Minstrel," Newcastle, 1809, this tale, with many others peculiar to the valley of the Reed, is commemorated:—"The particulars of the traditional story of Parcey Reed of Troughend, and the Halls of Girsonfield, the author had from a descendant of the family of Reed. From his account, it appears that Percival Reed, Esquire, a keeper of Reedsdale, was betrayed by the Halls (hence denominated the false-hearted Ha's) to a band of moss-troopers of the name of Crosier, who slew him at Batinghope, near the source of the Reed.

287. And near the spot that gave me name,
    The moated mound of Risingham,
    Where Reed upon her margin sees
    Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,
    Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
    An outlaw's image on the stone.

Risingham, upon the river Reed, near the beautiful hamlet of Woodburn, is an ancient Roman station, formerly called Habitancum. About half a mile distant from Risingham, upon an eminence covered with scattered birch-trees and fragments of rock, there is cut upon a large rock, in alto relievo, a remarkable figure, called Robin of Risingham, or Robin of Reedsdale. It presents a hunter, with his bow raised in one hand, and in the other what seems to be a hare. There is a quiver at the back of the figure, and he is dressed in a long coat, or kirtle, coming down to the knees, and meeting close, with a girdle bound round him. Dr. Horseley, who saw all monuments of antiquity with Roman eyes, inclines to think this figure a Roman archer: and certainly the bow is rather of the ancient size than of that which was so formidable in the hand of the English archers of the middle ages. But the rudeness of the whole figure prevents our founding strongly upon mere inaccuracy of proportion. The popular tradition is, that it represents a giant, whose brother resided at Woodburn, and he himself at Risingham. It adds, that they subsisted by hunting, and that one of them, finding the game become too scarce to support them, poisoned his companion, in whose memory the monument was engraved.

288. ... Do thou revere
    The statues of the Bucanier.

The "statutes of the Bucaniers" were, in reality, more equitable than
could have been expected from the state of society under which they had been formed. They chiefly related, as may readily be conjectured, to the distribution and the inheritance of their plunder.

289. The course of Tees.

The view from Barnard Castle commands the rich and magnificent valley of Tees. Immediately adjacent to the river, the banks are thickly wooded; at a little distance they are more open and cultivated; but, being interspersed with hedge-rows and isolated trees of great size and age, they retain the richness of woodland scenery.

290. Egliston’s grey ruins.

The ruins of this abbey or priory are beautifully situated upon the angle, formed by a little dell called Thorsgill, at its junction with the Tees.

291. ... the mound, Raised by that Legion long renoun’d, Whose votive shrine asserts their claim, Of pious, faithful, conquering fame.

Close behind the George Inn at Greta Bridge, there is a well-preserved Roman encampment, surrounded with a triple ditch, lying between the river Greta and a brook called the Tutta. Very many Roman altars and monuments have been found in the vicinity. Among others is a small votive altar, with the inscription, LEG. VI. VIC. P. F. F., which has been rendered, Legio. Sexta. Victrix. Pia. Fortis. Fidelis.

292. Rokeby’s turrets high.

This ancient manor long gave name to a family by whom it is said to have been possessed from the Conquest downward, and who are at different times distinguished in history. The Rokeby, or Rokesby family, continued to be distinguished until the great Civil War, when, having embraced the cause of Charles I., they suffered fines and confiscations. The estate then passed to the family of the Robinsons, from whom it was purchased by the father of the present proprietor.

293. A stern and lone, yet lovely road, As e’er the foot of Minstrel trode.

What follows is an attempt to describe the romantic glen, or rather ravine, through which the Greta finds a passage between Rokeby and Mortham; the former situated upon the left bank, the latter on the right, about half a mile nearer to its junction with the Tees.

294. How whistle rash bids tempests roar.

That this is a general superstition, is well known to all who have been on ship-board, or who have conversed with seamen.

295. Of Erick’s cap and Elmo’s light.

“This Ericus, King of Sweden, in his time was held second to none in the magical art; and he was so familiar with the evil spirits, which he exceedingly adored, that which way soever he turned his cap, the wind would presently blow that way. From this occasion he was called Windy Cap; and many men believed that Regnerus, King of Denmark, by the conduct of this Ericus, who was his nephew, did happily extend his piracy into the most remote parts of the earth, and conquered many countries and fenced cities by his cunning; and at last was his coadjutor; that by the consent of the nobles, he should be chosen King of Sweden, which continued a long time with him very happily, until he died of old age.”

296. The Demon Frigate.

This is an allusion to a well-known nautical superstition concerning a fantastic vessel, called by sailors the Flying Dutchman, supposed to be seen about the Cape of Good Hope.

297. ... By some desert isle or key.

What contributed much to the security of the Bucaniers about the Windward
Islands, was the great number of little islets, called in that country keys. Such little uninhabited spots afforded the pirates good harbours, either for refitting or ambush; they were occasionally the hiding-place of their treasure.

298. Before the gate of Mortham stood.

The castle of Mortham is a picturesque tower, surrounded by buildings of different ages, now converted into a farm-house and offices. The battlements of the tower itself are singularly elegant, the architect having broken them at regular intervals into different heights; while those at the corners of the tower project into octagonal turrets. They are also from space to space covered with stones laid across them, as in modern embrauses, the whole forming an uncommon and beautiful effect. At some distance is most happily placed, between the stems of two magnificent elms, the monument alluded to in the text. It is said to have been brought from the ruins of Egliston Priory, and, from the armoury with which it is richly carved, appears to have been a tomb of the Fitz-Hughs.

299. There dig, and tomb your precious heap,

And bid the dead your treasure keep.

If time did not permit the Bucaniers to lavish away their plunder in their usual debaucheries, they were wont to hide it, with many superstitious solemnities, in the desert islands and keys which they frequented, and where much treasure, whose lawless owners perished without reclaiming it, is still supposed to be concealed. The most cruel of mankind are often the most superstitious; and these pirates are said to have had recourse to a horrid ritual, in order to secure an unearthly guardian to their treasures. They killed a Negro or Spaniard, and buried him with the treasure, believing that his spirit would terrify away all intruders.

300. The power —

That unsubdued and lurking lies

To take the felon by surprise,

And force him, as by magic spell,

In his despite his guilt to tell.

All who are conversant with the administration of criminal justice must remember many occasions in which malefactors appear to have conducted themselves with a species of infatuation, either by making unnecessary confidences respecting their guilt, or by sudden and involuntary allusions to circumstances by which it could not fail to be exposed.

301. ... Brackenbury's dismal tower.

This tower has been already mentioned. It is situated near the north-eastern extremity of the wall which encloses Barnard Castle, and is traditionally said to have been the prison.

302. Nobles and knights, so proud of late,

Must fine for freedom and estate.

Right heavy shall his ransom be,

Unless that maid compound with thee!

After the battle of Marston Moor, the Earl of Newcastle retired beyond sea in disgust, and many of his followers laid down their arms, and made the best composition they could with the Committees of Parliament. Fines were imposed upon them in proportion to their estates and degrees of delinquency. In some circumstances the oppressed cavaliers were fain to form family alliances with some powerful person among the triumphant party.

303. The Indian, prowling for his prey,

Who hears the settlers track his way.

The patience, abstinence, and ingenuity, exerted by the North American Indians, when in pursuit of plunder or vengeance, is the most distinguished feature in their character; and the
NOTES.

activity and address which they display in their retreat is equally surprising.

304. In Redesdale his youth had heard
Each art her wily dalesmen dared,
When Rooken-edge, and Redswair high,
To bugle rung and bloodhound’s cry.

Redswair is on the very edge of the Carter-fell, which divides England from Scotland. The Rooken is a place upon Reedwater. Bertram, being described as a native of these dales, where hostile depredation long survived the union of the crowns, may have been, in some degree, prepared for a similar trade in the wars of the Bucaniers.

305. Hiding his face, lest foemen spy
The sparkle of his swarthy eye.

After one of the recent battles, in which the Irish rebels were defeated, one of their most active leaders was found in a bog, up to the shoulders, while his head was concealed by a ledge of turf. Being detected and seized, he became solicitous to know how his retreat had been discovered. “I caught,” answered the Sutherland Highlander, by whom he was taken, “the sparkle of your eye.” Those who are accustomed to mark hares upon their form usually discover them by the same circumstance.

306. Here stood a wretch, prepared to change
His soul’s redemption for revenge!

It is agreed by all the writers upon magic and witchcraft, that revenge was the most common motive for the pretended compact between Satan and his vassals.

307. Of my marauding on the clowns
Of Calverley and Bradford downs.

The troops of the King, when they first took the field, were as well disciplined as could be expected. But as the circumstances of Charles became less favourable, and his funds decreased, habits of military license prevailed among them in greater excess.

308. . . Brignall’s woods, and Scargill’s, wave,
E’en now, o’er many a sister cave.

The banks of the Greta, below Rutherford Bridge, abound in seams of greyish slate, which are wrought in some places to a very great depth under ground, thus forming artificial caverns, which are gradually hidden by the underwood. In times of public confusion, they might be well adapted to the purposes of banditti.

309. When Spain waged warfare with our land.

There was a short war with Spain in 1625-6, which will be found to agree with the chronology of the poem.

310. . . Our comrades’ strife.

The laws of the Bucaniers, and their successors the Pirates, however severe and equitable, were, like other laws, often set aside by the stronger party. Their quarrels about the division of the spoil fill their history, and they as frequently arose out of mere frolic, or the tyrannical humour of their chiefs.

311. . . my rangers go,
Even now to track a milk-white doe.

The reference, of course, is to Matilda.

312. Song . . . Adieu for evermore.

The last verse of this song is taken from an old Scottish ballad, of which I only recollected two verses when the first edition of Rokeby was published.

313. Rere-cross on Stanmore.

This is a fragment of an old cross, with its pediment, surrounded by an intrenchment, upon the very summit of the waste ridge of Stanmore, near a small house of entertainment called the Spittal. The situation of the cross, and the pains taken to defend it, seem to indicate that it was intended for a landmark of importance.
314. Hast thou lodged our deer?
The duty of the ranger, or pricker, was first to lodge or harbour the deer; i.e. to discover his retreat.

315. When Denmark's raven soar'd on high,
Triumphant through Northumbrian sky,
Till, hovering near, her fatal croak
Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke.

About the year of God 866, the Danes, under their celebrated leaders Inguar (more properly Agnar) and Hubba, sons, it is said, of the still more celebrated Regnar Lodbrog, invaded Northumberland, bringing with them the magical standard, so often mentioned in poetry, called Reafen, or Rumfan, from its bearing the figure of a raven.

316. Beneath the shade the Northmen came,
Fix'd on each vale a Runic name.
The heathen Danes have left several traces of their religion in the upper part of Teesdale. Balder-garth, which derives its name from the unfortunate son of Odin, is a tract of waste land on the very ridge of Stanmore; and a brook, which falls into the Tees near Barnard Castle, is named after the same deity. A field upon the banks of the Tees is also termed Woden-Croft, from the supreme deity of the Edda.

317. Who has not heard how brave O'Neale
In English blood imbru'd his steel?
The O'Neale here meant, for more than one succeeded to the chieftainship during the reign of Elizabeth, was Hugh, the grandson of Con O'Neale, called Con Bacco, or the Lame. His father, Matthew O'Kelly, was illegitimate, and, being the son of a blacksmith's wife, was usually called Matthew the Blacksmith. His father, nevertheless, destined his succession to him; and he was created, by Elizabeth, Baron of Dungannon. Upon the death of Con Bacco, this Matthew was slain by his brother. Hugh narrowly escaped the same fate, and was protected by the English. Shane O'Neale, his uncle, called Shane Dymas, was succeeded by Turlough Lynog O'Neale; after whose death Hugh, having assumed the chieftainship, became nearly as formidable to the English as any by whom it had been possessed. He rebelled repeatedly, and as often made submissions, of which it was usually a condition that he should not any longer assume the title of O'Neale; in lieu of which he was created Earl of Tyrone.

318. But chief arose his victor pride,
Whenthat brave Marshal fought and died.
The chief victory which Tyrone obtained over the English was in a battle fought near Blackwater, while he besieged a fort garrisoned by the English, which commanded the passes into his country. Tyrone is said to have entertained a personal animosity against the knight-marshall Sir Henry Bagnal, whom he accused of detaining the letters which he sent to Queen Elizabeth, explanatory of his conduct, and offering terms of submission.

319. The Tanist he to great O'Neale.
The Tanist of O'Neale was the heir-apparent of his power.

320. His plaited hair in elf-locks spread, etc.
There is here an attempt to describe the ancient Irish dress.

321. With wild majestic port and tone,
Like envoy of some barbarous throne.
The Irish chiefs, in their intercourse with the English, and with each other, were wont to assume the language and style of independent royalty.

322. His foster-father was his guide.
There was no tie more sacred among the Irish than that which connected the foster-father, as well as the nurse herself, with the child they brought up.
323. Great Nial of the Pledges Nine.
Neal Naighvallach, or Of the Nine Hostages, is said to have been Monarch of all Ireland, during the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century.

324. Shane-Dymas wild.
This Shane-Dymas, or John the Wanton, held the title and power of O’Neale in the earlier part of Elizabeth’s reign, against whom he rebelled repeatedly. When reduced to extremity, this Shane-Dymas fled to Clandeboy, then occupied by a colony of Scottish Highlanders of the family of MacDonell. He was at first courteously received; but by degrees they began to quarrel about the slaughter of some of their friends whom Shane-Dymas had put to death, and advancing from words to deeds, fell upon him with their broadswords, and cut him to pieces.

325. ... Geraldine.
The O’Neales were closely allied with this powerful and warlike family; for Henry Owen O’Neale married the daughter of Thomas Earl of Kildare, and their son Con-More married his cousin-german, a daughter of Gerald Earl of Kildare.

326. He chose that honour’d flag to bear.
Lacy informs us, in the old play already quoted, how the cavalry raised by the country gentlemen for Charles’s service were usually officered. “You, cornet, have a name that’s proper for all cornets to be called by, for they are all beardless boys in our army. The most part of our horse were raised thus:—The honest country gentleman raises the troop at his own charge; then he gets a Low-country lieutenant to fight his troop safely; then he sends for his son from school to be his cornet: and then he puts off his child’s coat to put on a buff-coat: and this is the constitution of our army.”

327. ... his page, the next degree
In that old time to chivalry.
Originally, the order of chivalry embraced three ranks:—1. The Page; 2. The Squire; 3. The Knight;—a gradation which seems to have been imitated in the mystery of freemasonry. But, before the reign of Charles I., the custom of serving as a squire had fallen into disuse, though the order of the page was still, to a certain degree, in observance. This state of servitude was considered as the regular school for acquiring every quality necessary for future distinction.

328. Seem’d half abandon’d to decay.
The ancient castle of Rokeby stood exactly upon the site of the present mansion, by which a part of its walls is enclosed.

329. Rokeby’s lords of martial fame,
I can count them by name.
The pedigree of this once powerful family can be traced back to Norman times.

330. ... The Felon Sow.
The ancient minstrels had a comic as well as a serious strain of romance; and although the examples of the latter are by far the most numerous, they are, perhaps, the less valuable. One of the very best, which has no small portion of comic humour, is the Hunting of the Felon Sow of Rokeby by the Friars of Richmond.

331. The Filea of O’Neale was he.
The Filea, or Ollamh Re Dan, was the proper bard, or, as the name literally implies, poet. Each chieftain of distinction had one or more in his service, whose office was usually hereditary. There were itinerant bards of less elevated rank, but all were held in the highest veneration.

332. Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
Slieve-Donard’s oak shall light no more.
Clandeboy is a district of Ulster, formerly possessed by the sept of the O’Neales, and Slieve-Donard, a romantic mountain in the same province. The clan was ruined after Tyrone’s great rebellion, and their places of abode laid desolate. The ancient Irish, wild and uncultivated in
other respects, did not yield even to their descendants in practising the most free and extended hospitality.

333. M'Curtin's harp.

"MacCurtin, hereditary Ollamh of North Munster, and Filea to Donough, Earl of Thomond, and President of Munster. This nobleman was amongst those who were prevailed upon to join Elizabeth's forces. Soon as it was known that he had basely abandoned the interests of his country, MacCurtin presented an adulatory poem to MacCarthy, chief of South Munster, and of the Eugenian line, who, with O'Neil, O'Donnel, Lacy, and others, were deeply engaged in protecting their violated country.

334. The ancient English minstrel's dress.

Among the entertainments presented to Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle, was the introduction of a person designed to represent a travelling minstrel, who entertained her with a solemn story out of the Acts of King Arthur. Of this person's dress and appearance Mr. Laneham has given us a very accurate account, transferred by Bishop Percy to the preliminary Dissertation on Minstrels, prefixed to his Reiques of Ancient Poetry, vol. i.

335. Littlecote Hall.

The ballad is founded on old traditions.

336. As thick a smoke these hearths have given
At Hallow-tide or Christmas-even.

Such an exhortation was, in similar circumstances, actually given to his followers by a Welsh chieftain.

337. O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove.

Well on in the eighteenth century, this custom was still prevalent among the Redesdale and Tynedale Borderers.

338. A Horseman arm'd, at headlong speed.

This, and what follows, is taken from a real achievement of Major Robert Philipson, called, from his desperate and adventurous courage, Robin the Devil.

THE BRIDAL OF TRIERMAIN.

339. Like Collins, thread the maze of Fairy land.

Collins, according to Johnson, loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of enchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens.

340. The Baron of Triermain.

Triermain was a fief of the Barony of Gilsland, in Cumberland.

341. He pass'd red Penrith's Table Round.

A circular intrenchment, about half a mile from Penrith, is thus popularly termed. It has been conjectured that the enclosure was designed for the solemn exercise of feats of chivalry.

342. Mayburgh's mound and stones of power.

Higher up the river Eamont than Arthur's Round Table is a prodigious enclosure of great antiquity, formed by a collection of stones upon the top of a gently sloping hill, called Mayburgh. In the plain which it encloses there stands erect an unhewn stone of twelve feet in height. Two similar masses are said to have been destroyed during the memory of man. The whole appears to be a monument of Druidical times.

343. The Monarch, breathless and amazed,
Back on the fatal castle gazed—
Nor tower nor donjon could he spy,
Darkening against the morning sky.
In the Vale of St. John's is a massive pile of rocks, which at a distance has so much the real form and resemblance of a castle that it bears the name of the Castle Rocks of St. John.

344. The flower of Chivalry.

The characters named are more or less distinguished in the romances of King Arthur and his Round Table, and their names are strung together according to the established custom of minstrels upon such occasions.

345. Lancelot that ever more
Look'd stolen-wise on the Queen.

An allusion to the guilty intrigue between Sir Lancelot and Guenever, wife of King Arthur.

346. There were two who loved their neighbours' wives,
And one who loved his own.

In which booke (La Morte d'Arthur) they be counted the noblest knightes that do kill most men without any quarrell, and commit fowlst adulteries by sutlest shiftes; as Sir Launcelot, with the wife of King Arthur, his master; Sir Tristram, with the wife of King Marke, his uncle; Sir Lamerocke, with the wife of King Lote, that was his own aunt. This is good stuffe for wise men to laugh at; or honest men to take pleasure at; yet I know when God's Bible was banished the Court, and La Morte d'Arthur received into the Prince's chamber." — Ascham's Schoolmaster.

THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

347. Thy rugged halls, Artornish! rung.

The ruins of the Castle of Artornish are situated upon a promontory, on the Morven, or mainland side of the Sound of Mull, a name given to the deep arm of the sea which divides that island from the continent. The situation is wild and romantic in the highest degree. In former days, it was a place of great consequence, being one of the principal strongholds of the Lords of the Isles, during the period of their stormy independence.

It is only further necessary to say of the Castle of Artornish that it is almost opposite to the Bay of Aros, in the Island of Mull, where there was another castle, the occasional residence of the Lords of the Isles.

348. Rude Heiskar's seal through surges dark,
Will long pursue the minstrel's bark.

The seal displays a taste for music, which could scarcely be expected from his habits and local predilections. They will long follow a boat in which any musical instrument is played.

349. ... a turret's airy head,
Slender and steep, and battled round,
O'erlook'd, dark Mull! thy mighty Sound.

The Sound of Mull, which divides that island from the continent of Scotland, is one of the most striking scenes which the Hebrides afford to the traveller. Many ruinous castles, situated generally upon cliffs overhanging the ocean, add interest to the scene.

350. ... "these seas behold,
Round twice a hundred islands roll'd,
From Hirth, that bears their northern roar,
To the green Ilay's fertile shore."

The number of the western isles of Scotland exceeds two hundred, of which St. Kilda is the most northerly, anciently called Hirth, or Hirt, probably from "earth," being in fact the whole globe to its inhabitants. Ilay is by far the most fertile of the Hebrides. This was in ancient times the principal abode of the Lords of the Isles, being, if not the largest, the most important island of their archipelago.
The phenomenon called by sailors Sea-fire, is one of the most beautiful and interesting which is witnessed in the Hebrides. At times the ocean appears entirely illuminated around the vessel, and a long train of lambent coruscations are perpetually bursting upon the sides of the vessel, or pursuing her wake through the darkness.

355. Awaked before the rushing prow,
The mimic fires of ocean glow,  
Those lightnings of the wave.

It must be remembered by all who have read the Scottish history, that after he had slain Comyn at Dumfries, and asserted his right to the Scottish
crown, Robert Bruce was reduced to the greatest extremity by the English and their adherents.

361. The Brooch of Lorn.

It has been generally mentioned in the preceding notes, that Robert Bruce, after his defeat at Methven, being hard pressed by the English, endeavoured, with the dispirited remnant of his followers, to escape from Breadalbane and the mountains of Perthshire into the Argyleshire Highlands. But he was encountered and repulsed, after a very severe engagement, by the Lord of Lorn. Bruce's personal strength and courage were never displayed to greater advantage than in this conflict. There is a tradition in the family of the Mac-Dougals of Lorn, that their chieftain engaged in personal battle with Bruce himself, while the latter was employed in protecting the retreat of his men; that Mac-Dougall was struck down by the king, whose strength of body was equal to his vigour of mind, and would have been slain on the spot, had not two of Lorn's vassals, a father and son, whom tradition terms Mac-Keoch, rescued him, by seizing the mantle of the monarch, and dragging him from above his adversary. Bruce rid himself of these foes by two blows of his redoubted battle-axe, but was so closely pressed that he was forced to abandon the mantle and brooch in the dying grasp of the Mac-Keochs.

362. Wrought and chased with fair device,
           Studded fair with gems of price.

Great art and expense was bestowed upon the *fibula*, or brooch, which secured the plaid, when the wearer was a person of importance.

363. Vain was then the Douglas brand—
           Vain the Campbell's vaunted hand.

The gallant Sir James, called the Good Lord Douglas, the most faithful and valiant of Bruce's adherents, was wounded at the battle of Dalry. Sir Nigel, or Neil Campbell, was also in that unfortunate skirmish. He married Marjorie, sister to Robert Bruce, and was among his most faithful followers.

364. Vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk,
           Making sure of murder's work.

Every reader must recollect that the proximate cause of Bruce's asserting his right to the crown of Scotland, was the death of John, called the Red Comyn. The causes of this act of violence, equally extraordinary from the high rank both of the perpetrator and sufferer, and from the place where the slaughter was committed, are variously related by the Scottish and English historians.

365. Barendown fled fast away,
           Fled the fiery De la Haye.

These knights are enumerated by Barbour among the small number of Bruce's adherents, who remained in arms with him after the battle of Methven.

366. Well hast thou framed, Old Man, thy strains,
           To praise the hand that pays thy pains.

The character of the Highland bards, however high in an earlier period of society, seems soon to have degenerated. The Irish affirm, that in their kindred tribes severe laws became necessary to restrain their avarice.

367. Was't not enough to Ronald's bower
           I brought thee, like a paramour.

It was anciently customary in the Highlands to bring the bride to the house of the husband.

368. Since matchless Wallace first had been
           In mock'ry crown'd with wreaths of green.

There is something singularly doubtful about the mode in which Wallace was taken. That he was betrayed to the English is indubitable; and popular fame charges Sir John Menteith with the indelible infamy. But John de Menteith was all along a zealous favourer of the English interest, and
was governor of Dumbarton Castle by commission from Edward the First; and therefore, as the accurate Lord Hailes has observed, could not be the friend and confidant of Wallace, as tradition states him to be. The truth seems to be, that Menteith, thoroughly engaged in the English interest, pursued Wallace closely, and made him prisoner through the treachery of an attendant, whom Peter Langtoft calls Jack Short.

369. Where's Nigel Bruce? and De la Haye, And valiant Seton—where are they? Where Somerville, the kind and free? And Fraser, flower of chivalry?

The fate of all these companions-in-arms was unfortunate. Nigel Bruce, the younger brother of the king, Seton, and Fraser, were executed. De la Haye and Somerville were made prisoners after the Battle of Methven, but were not executed.

370. Was not the life of Athole shed, To soothe the tyrant's sickened bed.

John de Strathbogie, Earl of Athol, had attempted to escape out of the kingdom, but a storm cast him upon the coast, where he was taken, sent to London, and executed. Matthew of Westminster tells us that King Edward, then extremely ill, received great ease from the news that his relative was apprehended.

371. And must his word, till dying day, Be nought but quarter, hang, and slay.

The allusion is to an order of Edward I., while in his mortal sickness at Burgh-upon-Sands, to hang and draw certain Scottish prisoners, who had surrendered upon condition that they should be at King Edward's disposal.

372. While I the blessed cross advance, And expiate this unhappy chance, In Palestine, with sword and lance.

Bruce uniformly professed, and probably felt compunction for having violated the sanctuary of the church by the slaughter of Comyn; and finally, in his last hours, in testimony of his faith, penitence, and zeal, he requested James Lord Douglas to carry his heart to Jerusalem, to be there deposited in the Holy Sepulchre.

373. De Bruce! I rose with purpose dread To speak my curse upon thy head.

So soon as the notice of Comyn's slaughter reached Rome, Bruce and his adherents were excommunicated.

374. I feel within mine aged breast A power that will not be repress'd.

See Numbers, xxiii. 14-20.

375. A hunted wanderer on the wild, On foreign shores a man exiled.

This is not metaphorical. The echoes of Scotland did actually

... "ring With the bloodhounds that bayed for her fugitive king."

376. For, glad of each pretext for spoil, A pirate sworn was Cormac Doil.

A sort of persons common in the isles until the introduction of civil polity.

377. "Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time," Answer'd the Bruce, "must bear the crime, Since, guiltier far than you, Even I"—he paused; for Falkirk's woes Upon his conscious soul arose.

I have followed the vulgar and inaccurate tradition, that Bruce fought against Wallace at the battle of Falkirk.

378. These are the savage wilds that lie North of Strathnardill and Dunskye.
The extraordinary piece of scenery which I have here attempted to describe is, I think, unparalleled in any part of Scotland, at least in any which I have happened to visit.

379. Men were they all of evil mien,
    Down-look'd, unwilling to be seen.

The story of Bruce's meeting the banditti is copied, with such alterations as the fictitious narrative rendered necessary, from an incident told by Barbour.

380. And mermaid's alabaster grot,
    Who bathes her limbs in sunless well
    Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.

Imagination can hardly conceive anything more beautiful than the extraordinary grotto discovered not many years since upon the estate of Strathaird.

381. Yet to no sense of selfish wrongs,
    Bear witness with me, Heaven, belongs
    My joy o'er Edward's bier.

The generosity which does justice to the character of an enemy, often marks Bruce's sentiments, as recorded by the faithful Barbour. He seldom mentions a fallen enemy without praising such good qualities as he might possess.

382. Such hate was his on Solway's strand,
    When vengeance clench'd his palsied hand,
    That pointed yet to Scotland's land.

To establish his dominion in Scotland had been a favourite object of Edward's ambition, and nothing could exceed the pertinacity with which he pursued it, unless his inveterate resentment against the insurgents, who so frequently broke the English yoke when he deemed it most firmly riveted.

383. . . Canna's tower, that, steep and gray,
    Like falcon-nest o'erhangs the bay.

The little island of Canna, or Cannay, adjoins to those of Rum and Muick, with which it forms one parish. In a pretty bay opening towards the east, there is a lofty and slender rock detached from the shore. Upon the summit are the ruins of a very small tower, scarcely accessible by a steep and precipitous path. Here, it is said, one of the kings, or Lords of the Isles, confined a beautiful lady, of whom he was jealous. The ruins are of course haunted by her restless spirit, and many romantic stories are told by the aged people of the island concerning her fate in life, and her appearances after death.

384. And Ronin's mountains dark
    have sent Their hunters to the shore.

Ronin (popularly called Rum, a name which a poet may be pardoned for avoiding if possible) is a very rough and mountainous island, adjacent to those of Eigg and Cannay.

385. On Scooreigg next a warning light
    Summon'd her warriors to the fight;
    A numerous race, ere stern Macleod
    O'er their bleak shores in vengeance strode.

Scoor-Eigg is a high peak in the centre of the small Isle of Eigg, or Egg. It is well known to mineralogists, as affording many interesting specimens, and to others whom chance or curiosity may lead to the island, for the astonishing view of the mainland and neighbouring isles, which it commands.

386. . . that wondrous dome,
    Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
    By skill of earthly architect,
    Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
    A Minster to her Maker's praise!

It would be unpardonable to detain the reader upon a wonder so often described, and yet so incapable of being understood by description.
387. Scenes sung by him who sings no more.

The ballad, entitled "Macphail of Colonsay, and the Mermaid of Corrievrekin," was composed by John Leyden, from a tradition which he found while making a tour through the Hebrides about 1801.

388. Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er.

The peninsula of Cantire is joined to South Knapdale by a very narrow isthmus, formed by the western and eastern Loch of Tarbat. These two saltwater lakes, or bays, encroach so far upon the land, and the extremities come so near to each other, that there is not above a mile of land to divide them.

389. The sun, ere yet he sunk behind Ben-Ghoil, "the Mountain of the Wind;"
Gave his grim peaks a greeting kind,
And bade Loch Ranza smile.

Loch Ranza is a beautiful bay, on the northern extremity of Arran, opening towards East Tarbat Loch. Ben-Ghaoil, "the mountain of the winds," is generally known by its English, and less poetical name, of Goatfield.

390. Each to Loch Ranza's margin spring;
That blast was winded by the King!

The passage in Barbour, describing the landing of Bruce, and his being recognised by Douglas and those of his followers who had preceded him, by the sound of his horn, is in the original singularly simple and affecting.

391. . . . his brother blamed,
But shared the weakness, while ashamed,
With haughty laugh his head he turn'd,
And dash'd away the tear he scorn'd.

Edward Bruce is depicted by Barbour as a man of kind yet fiery character.

392. A woman in her last distress.

This incident illustrates happily the chivalrous generosity of Bruce's character.

393. O'er chasms he pass'd, where fractures wide
Craved wary eye and ample stride.

The interior of the island of Arran abounds with beautiful Highland scenery. The hills, being very rocky and precipitous, afford some cataracts of great height, though of inconsiderable breadth.

394. He cross'd his brow beside the stone
Where Druids erst heard victims groan.

The isle of Arran, like those of Man and Anglesea, abounds with many relics of heathen, and probably Druidical, superstition.

395. Old Brodick's gothic towers were seen,
From Hastings, late their English lord,
Douglas had won them by the sword.

Brodick or Brathwick Castle, in the Isle of Arran, is an ancient fortress, near an open roadstead called Brodick-Bay, and not far distant from a tolerable harbour, closed in by the Island of Lamlash. This important place had been assailed a short time before Bruce's arrival in the island.

396. Oft, too, with unaccustom'd ears,
A language much unmeet he hears.

Barbour, with great simplicity, gives an anecdote, from which it would seem that the vice of profane swearing, afterwards too general among the Scottish nation, was, at this time, confined to military men. As Douglas, after Bruce's return to Scotland, was riding about the mountainous country of Tweeddale, near the water of Line, he chanced to hear some persons in a farm-house say "the devil." Concluding, from this hardy expression, that
the house contained warlike guests, he immediately assailed it, and had the good fortune to make prisoners Thomas Randolph, afterwards the famous Earl of Murray, and Alexander Stuart, Lord Boukle. Both were then in the English interest, and had come into that country with the purpose of driving out Douglas. They afterwards ranked among Bruce's most zealous adherents.

397. For, see! the ruddy signal made,
That Clifford, with his merry-men all,
Guards carelessly our father's hall.

The remarkable circumstances by which Bruce was induced to enter Scotland, under the false idea that a signal-fire was lighted upon the shore near his maternal castle of Turnberry—the disappointment which he met with, and the train of success which arose out of that very disappointment, are elaborately narrated by Barbour.

398. Now ask you whence that wondrous light,
Whose fairy glow beguiled their sight?—
It ne'er was known.

In Carrick, the belief was long entertained that the fire seen by Bruce from the Isle of Arran was really the work of supernatural power, unassisted by the hand of any mortal being; and that, for several centuries, the flame rose yearly on the same hour of the same night of the year, on which the king first saw it from the turrets of Brodick Castle.

399. They gain'd the Chase, a wide domain
Left for the Castle's silvan reign.

The Castle of Turnberry, on the coast of Ayrshire, was the property of Robert Bruce, in right of his mother.

400. The Bruce hath won his father's hall!

I have followed the flattering and pleasing tradition, that the Bruce, after his descent upon the coast of Ayrshire, gained possession of his maternal castle. But the tradition is not accurate.

401. "Bring here," he said, "the mazers four,
My noble fathers loved of yore."

These mazers were large drinking-cups, or goblets.

402. Arouse old friends, and gather new.

As soon as it was known in Kyle, says ancient tradition, that Robert Bruce had landed in Carrick, with the intention of recovering the crown of Scotland, the Laird of Craigie, and forty-eight men in his immediate neighbourhood, declared in favour of their legitimate prince.

403. When Bruce's banner had victorious flow'd,
O'er Loudoun's mountain, and in Ury's vale.

The first important advantage gained by Bruce, after landing at Turnberry, was over Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, the same by whom he had been defeated near Methven. They met at Loudonhill, in the west of Scotland. Pembroke sustained a defeat; and from that time Bruce was at the head of a considerable flying army.


The "good Lord James of Douglas," during these commotions, often took from the English his own castle of Douglas, but being unable to garrison it, contented himself with destroying the fortifications, and retiring into the mountains. As a reward to his patriotism, it is said to have been prophesied, that how often soever Douglas Castle should be destroyed, it should always again arise more magnificent from its ruins.

405. And fiery Edward routed stout St. John.

"John de St. John, with 15,000 horsemen, had advanced to oppose the inroad of the Scots. By a forced march he endeavoured to surprise them, but intelligence of his motions was timeously received. The courage of Edward Bruce, approaching to temerity, frequently enabled him to achieve what men of more judicious valour would
never have attempted. He ordered the infantry, and the meeker sort of his army, to intrench themselves in strong narrow ground. He himself, with fifty horsemen well harnessed, issued forth under cover of a thick mist, surprised the English on their march, attacked and dispersed them."

—Dalrymple's *Annals of Scotland.*

406. When Randolph's war-cry swell'd the southern gale.

Thomas Randolph, Bruce's sister's son, a renowned Scottish chief, was in the early part of his life not more remarkable for consistency than Bruce himself. He espoused his uncle's party when Bruce first assumed the crown, and was made prisoner at the fatal battle of Methven, in which his relative's hopes appeared to be ruined. Randolph accordingly not only submitted to the English, but took an active part against Bruce; appeared in arms against him; and, in the skirmish where he was so closely pursued by the bloodhound, it is said his nephew took his standard with his own hand. But Randolph was afterwards made prisoner by Douglas in Tweeddale, and brought before King Robert. Some harsh language was exchanged between the uncle and nephew, and the latter was committed for a time to close custody. Afterwards, however, they were reconciled, and Randolph was created Earl of Moray about 1312. After this period he eminently distinguished himself, first by the surprise of Edinburgh Castle, and afterwards by many similar enterprises, conducted with equal courage and ability.

407. . . Stirling's towers, Beleaguer'd by King Robert's powers: And they took term of truce.

When a long train of success, actively improved by Robert Bruce, had made him master of almost all Scotland, Stirling Castle continued to hold out. The care of the blockade was committed by the king to his brother Edward, who concluded a treaty with Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor, that he should surrender the fortress, if it were not succoured by the King of England before St. John the Baptist's day. The King severely blamed his brother for the impolicy of a treaty, which gave time to the King of England to advance to the relief of the castle with all his assembled forces, and obliged himself either to meet them in battle with an inferior force, or to retreat with dishonour.

408. To summon prince and peer, At Berwick-bounds to meet their Liege.

There is printed in Rymer's *Fœdera* the summons issued upon this occasion to the sheriff of York; and he mentions eighteen other persons to whom similar ordinances were issued.

409. And Cambria, but of late subdued, Sent forth her mountain-multipitude.

Edward the First, with the usual policy of a conqueror, employed the Welsh, whom he had subdued, to assist him in his Scottish wars, for which their habits, as mountaineers, particularly fitted them. But this policy was not without its risks. Previous to the battle of Falkirk, the Welsh quarrelled with the English men-at-arms, and after bloodshed on both parts, separated themselves from his army, and the feud between them, at so dangerous and critical a juncture, was reconciled with difficulty. Edward II. followed his father's example in this particular, and with no better success.

410. And Connoght pour'd from waste and wood Her hundred tribes, whose sceptre rude Dark Eth O'Connor sway'd.

There is in the *Fœdera* an invitation to Eth O'Connor, chief of the Irish of Connaught, setting forth that the king was about to move against his Scottish rebels, and therefore requesting the attendance of all the force he could muster, either commanded by himself in person, or by some nobleman of his race. These auxiliaries were to be commanded by Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster.
NOTES.

411. Their chief, Fitz-Louis.
Fitz-Louis, or Mac-Louis, otherwise called Fullarton, is a family of ancient descent in the Isle of Arran. They attached themselves to Bruce upon his first landing.

412. In battles four beneath their eye,
The forces of King Robert lie.
The arrangements adopted by King Robert for the decisive battle of Bannockburn, are given very distinctly by Barbour, and form an edifying lesson to tacticians.

413. Beyond, the Southern host appears.
Upon the 23rd June, 1314, the alarm reached the Scottish army of the approach of the enemy. Douglas and the Marshal were sent to reconnoitre with a body of cavalry.
The two Scottish commanders were cautious in the account which they brought back to their camp. To the king in private they told the formidable state of the enemy; but in public reported that the English were indeed a numerous host, but ill commanded, and worse disciplined.

414. With these the valiant of the Isles
Beneath their chieftains rank'd their files.
The men of Argyle, the islanders, and the Highlanders in general, were ranked in the rear. They must have been numerous, for Bruce had reconciled himself with almost all their chieftains, excepting the obnoxious MacDougals of Lorn.

415. The Monarch rode along the van.
The English vanguard, commanded by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, came in sight of the Scottish army upon the evening of the 23rd of June. Bruce was then riding upon a little palfrey, in front of his foremost line, putting his host in order. It was then that the personal encounter took place betwixt him and Sir Henry de Bohun, a gallant English knight, the issue of which had a great effect upon the spirits of both armies.

416. What train of dust, with trumpet sound,
And glimmering spears, is wheeling round
Our leftward flank?
While the van of the English army advanced, a detached body attempted to relieve Stirling.

417. Responsive from the Scottish host,
Pipe-clang and bugle-sound were toss'd.
The tradition that a certain old Scottish tune was Bruce's march at Bannockburn has been the means of securing to Scotland one of the finest lyrics in the language, the celebrated war-song of Burns,—"Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled."

418. Now onward, and in open view,
The countless ranks of England drew.
Upon the 24th of June, the English army advanced to the attack. The narrowness of the Scottish front, and the nature of the ground, did not permit them to have the full advantage of their numbers, nor is it very easy to find out what was their proposed order of battle. The vanguard, however, appeared a distinct body, consisting of archers and spearmen on foot, and commanded, as already said, by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford.

419. See where you barefoot Abbot stands,
And blesses them with lifted hands.
"Maurice, abbot of Inchaffray, placing himself on an eminence, celebrated mass in sight of the Scottish army. He then passed along the front bare-footed, and bearing a crucifix in his hands, and exhorting the Scots, in few and forcible words, to combat for their rights and their liberty. The Scots kneeled down. 'They yield,' cried Edward; 'see, they implore mercy.'—'They do,' answered Ingelram de Umfraville, 'but not ours. On that field they will be victorious, or die.'"
420. Forth, Marshal, on the peasant foe!
   We'll tame the terrors of their bow,
   And cut the bow-string loose!

   The English archers commenced the attack with their usual bravery and dexterity. But against a force, whose importance he had learned by fatal experience, Bruce was provided. A small but select body of cavalry were detached from the right, under command of Sir Robert Keith. They rounded, as I conceive, the marsh called Miltown bog, and, keeping the firm ground, charged the left flank and rear of the English archers. As the bowmen had no spears nor long weapons fit to defend themselves against horse, they were instantly thrown into disorder, and spread through the whole English army a confusion from which they never fairly recovered.

421. Each braggart churl could boast before,
   Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!

   Roger Ascham quotes a similar Scottish proverb, "whereby they give the whole praise of shooting honestly to Englishmen, saying thus, "that every English archer beareth under his girdle twenty-four Scottes."

422. Down! down! in headlong overthrow,
   Horseman and horse, the foremost go.

   It is generally alleged by historians that the English men-at-arms fell into the hidden snare which Bruce had prepared for them.

423. And steeds that shriek in agony.

   I have been told that this line requires an explanatory note; and, indeed, those who witness the silent patience with which horses submit to the most cruel usage, may be permitted to doubt, that, in moments of sudden and intolerable anguish, they utter a most melancholy cry. It was my fortune, upon one occasion, to hear a horse, in a moment of agony, utter a thrilling scream, which I still consider the most melancholy sound I ever heard.

424. Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
   Is firm as Ai'sa Rock;
   Rush on with Highland sword and targe,
   I, with my Carrick spearmen charge.

   When the engagement between the main bodies had lasted some time, Bruce made a decisive movement by bringing up the Scottish reserve. It is traditionally said that at this crisis he addressed the Lord of the Isles in a phrase used as a motto by some of his descendants, "My trust is constant in thee."

425. To arms they flew,—axe, club,
   Or spear,—
   And mimic ensigns high they rear.

   The followers of the Scottish camp observed, from the Gillies' Hill in the rear, the impression produced upon the English army by the bringing up of the Scottish reserve, and, prompted by the enthusiasm of the moment, or the desire of plunder, assumed, in a tumultuary manner, such arms as they found nearest, fastened sheets to tentpoles and lances, and showed themselves like a new army advancing to battle.

426. O! give their hapless prince his due.

   Edward II., according to the best authorities, showed, in the fatal field of Bannockburn, personal gallantry not unworthy of his great sire and greater son. He remained on the field till forced away by the Earl of Pembroke, when all was lost. He then rode to the Castle of Stirling and demanded admittance; but the governor remonstrating upon the imprudence of shutting himself up in that fortress, which must so soon surrender, he assembled around his person five hundred men-at-arms, and, avoiding the field of battle and the victorious army, fled towards Linlithgow, pursued by Douglas with about sixty horse.
427. Nor for De Argentine alone,
Through Ninian’s church these
torchés shone,
And rose the death-prayer’s
awful tone.

Besides this renowned warrior, there
fell many representatives of the noblest
houses in England, which never sus-
tained a more disastrous defeat. Bar-
bour says two hundred pairs of gilded
spurs were taken from the field.

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO.

428. The peasant, at his labour
blithe,
Plies the hook’d staff and
shorten’d scythe.
The reaper in Flanders carries in his
left hand a stick with an iron hook, with
which he collects as much grain as he
can cut at one sweep with a short
scythe, which he holds in his right hand.

429. Pale Brussels! then what
thoughts were thine.
It was affirmed by the prisoners of
war, that Bonaparte had promised his
army, in case of victory, twenty-four
hours’ plunder of the city of Brussels.

430. “On! On!” was still his stern
exclaim.
The characteristic obstinacy of
Napoleon was never more fully dis-
played than in what we may be per-
mitted to hope will prove the last of his
fields. He would listen to no advice,
and allow of no obstacles.

431. The fate their leader shunn’d to
share.
It has been reported that Bonaparte
charged at the head of his guards, at
the last period of this dreadful conflict.
This, however, is not accurate. He
came down indeed to a hollow part of
the high road, leading to Charleroi,
within less than a quarter of a mile
of the farm of La Haye Sainte, one of
the points most fiercely disputed. Here
he harangued the guards, and informed
them that his preceding operations had
destroyed the British infantry and
cavalry, and that they had only to
support the fire of the artillery, which
they were to attack with the bayonet.
This exhortation was received with
shouts of Vive l’Empereur, which were
heard all over our line, and led to an
idea that Napoleon was charging in
person. But the guards were led on by
Ney; nor did Bonaparte approach
nearer the scene of action than the spot
already mentioned.

432. England shall tell the fight!
In riding up to a regiment which was
hard pressed, the Duke called to the men,
“Soldiers, we must never be beat,—
what will they say in England?” It is
needless to say how this appeal was
answered.

433. As plies the smith his clanging
trade.
A private soldier of the 95th regiment
compared the sound which took place
immediately upon the British cavalry
mangling with those of the enemy, to
“a thousand tinkers at work mending
pots and kettles.”

434. The British shock of levell’d
steel.
No persuasion or authority could pre-
vail upon the French troops to stand the
shock of the bayonet. The Imperial
Guards, in particular, hardly stood till
the British were within thirty yards of
them, although a French author has
put into their mouths the magnanimous
sentiment, “The Guards never yield—
they die.”

GLENFINLAS.

435. How blazed Lord Ronald’s
beltane-tree.
The fires lighted by the Highlanders,
on the first of May, in compliance with
a custom derived from the Pagan
times, are termed The Beltane-tree.
It is a festival celebrated with various
superstitious rites, both in the north of
Scotland and in Wales.
436. The seer’s prophetic spirit found.
   I can only describe the second sight, by adopting Dr. Johnson’s definition, who calls it “An impression, either by the mind upon the eye, or by the eye upon the mind, by which things distant and future are perceived and seen as if they were present.”

437. Will good St. Oran’s rule prevail?
   St. Oran was a friend and follower of St. Columba, and was buried at Icolmkill. His pretensions to be a saint were rather dubious. According to the legend, he consented to be buried alive, in order to propitiate certain demons of the soil, who obstructed the attempts of Columba to build a chapel. The chapel, however, and the cemetery, was called Relig Ouran; and in memory of his rigid celibacy, no female was permitted to pay her devotions, or be buried in that place. This is the rule alluded to in the poem.

438. And thrice St. Fillan’s powerful prayer.
   St. Fillan has given his name to many chapels, holy fountains, etc., in Scotland. He was, according to Cama- rarius, an Abbot of Pittenweem, in Fife; from which situation he retired, and died a hermit in the wilds of Glenurchy, A.D. 649.

THE EVE OF ST. JOHN.

439. Battle of Ancram Moor.
   Lord Evers, and Sir Brian Latoun, during the year 1544, committed the most dreadful ravages upon the Scottish frontiers, compelling most of the inhabitants, and especially the men of Liddesdale, to take assurance under the King of England.

440. That nun who ne’er beholds the day.
   The circumstance of the nun, “who never saw the day,” is not entirely imaginary. About fifty years ago, an unfortunate female wanderer took up her residence in a dark vault, among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, which, during the day, she never quitted. When night fell, she issued from this miserable habitation, and went to the house of Mr. Haliburton of Newmains, the Editor’s great-grandfather, or to that of Mr. Erskine of Shiefel, two gentlemen of the neighbourhood. From their charity, she obtained such necessaries as she could be prevailed upon to accept. At twelve, each night, she lighted her candle, and returned to her vault, assuring her friendly neighbours that, during her absence, her habitation was arranged by a spirit, to whom she gave the uncouth name of Fallips; describing him as a little man, wearing heavy iron shoes, with which he trampled the clay floor of the vault, to dispel the damps. The cause of her adopting this extraordinary mode of life she would never explain. It was, however, believed to have been occasioned by a vow, that, during the absence of a man to whom she was attached, she would never look upon the sun. Her lover never returned.

CADYOW

441. . . . sound the pryse!
   Pryse—The note blown at the death of the game.

442. Stern Claud replied.
   Lord Claud Hamilton, second son of the Duke of Chatelherault, and commenator of the Abbey of Paisley, acted a distinguished part during the troubles of Queen Mary’s reign, and remained unalterably attached to the cause of that unfortunate princess. He led the van of her army at the fatal battle of Langside, and was one of the commanders at the Raid of Stirling, which had so nearly given complete success to the Queen’s faction. He was ancestor of the present Marquis of Abercorn.

CASTLE.

443. Woodhouselee.
   This barony, stretching along the banks of the Esk, near Auchendinny, belonged to Bothwellhaugh, in right of his wife. The ruins of the mansion,
from whence she was expelled in the brutal manner which occasioned her death, are still to be seen in a hollow glen beside the river.

444. Drives to the leap his jaded steed.

Birrel informs us, that Bothwellhaugh, being closely pursued, "after that spur and wand had failed him, he drew forth his dagger, and strock his horse behind, whilk caused the horse to leap a very brode stanke [i.e. ditch], by whilk means he escapit, and gat away from all the rest of the horses."

445. From the wild Border's humbled side.

Murray's death took place shortly after an expedition to the Borders.

446. With hackbut bent.

*Hackbut bent*—Gun cock'd.

447. The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.

This clan of Lennox Highlanders were attached to the Regent Murray.

448. Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh.

The Earl of Glencairn was a steady adherent of the Regent. George Douglas of Parkhead was a natural brother of the Earl of Morton, whose horse was killed by the same ball by which Murray fell.

449. ... haggard Lindesay's iron eye,

That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

Lord Lindsay, of the Byres, was the most ferocious and brutal of the Regent's faction, and, as such, was employed to extort Mary's signature to the deed of resignation presented to her in Lochleven castle. He discharged his commission with the most savage rigour; and it is even said that when the weeping captive, in the act of signing, averted her eyes from the fatal deed, he pinched her arm with the grasp of his iron glove.

450. So close the minions crowded nigh.

Not only had the Regent notice of the intended attempt upon his life, but even of the very house from which it was threatened. With that infatuation at which men wonder, after such events have happened, he deemed it would be a sufficient precaution to ride briskly past the dangerous spot. But even this was prevented by the crowd; so that Bothwellhaugh had time to take a deliberate aim.

**THE GRAY**

451. By blast of bugle free.

The barony of Pennycuik, the property of Sir George Clerk, Bart., is held by a singular tenure; the proprietor being bound to sit upon a large rocky fragment called the Buckstane, and wind three blasts of a horn, when the King shall come to hunt on the Borough Muir, near Edinburgh. Hence the family have adopted as their crest a demi-forester proper, winding a horn, with the motto, *Free for a Blast.*

452. And classic Hawthornden.

Hawthornden, the residence of the poet Drummond. A house of more modern date is enclosed, as it were, by the ruins of the ancient castle, and overhangs a tremendous precipice upon the banks of the Eske, perforated by winding caves, which in former times were a refuge to the oppressed patriots of Scotland. Here Drummond received Ben Jonson, who journeyed from London on foot in order to visit him. The beauty of this striking scene has been much injured of late years by the indiscriminate use of the axe. The traveller now looks in vain for the leafy bower.
PR Scott, (Sir) Walter
5305 Poetical works
F00a

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY