

Classic Poetry Series

Sir Walter Scott
- poems -

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Sir Walter Scott(1771-1832)

Walter Scott, born in College Wynd, Edinburgh, was the son of a lawyer. Educated first at Edinburgh High School and then University he was apprenticed to his father and called to the bar in 1792. An avid reader of poetry, history, drama and romances, the young Scott read widely in Italian, Spanish, Latin and German. In his twenties he was influenced particularly by the German Romantics and his first published works were translations of G.A. Bürger and Goethe. These were followed by the collections of border ballads and the narrative poems, written between 1805 and 1815, that first made him famous. By this time he had also married Margaret Charlotte Carpenter, of a French Royalist family, and became sheriff-deputy of Selkirkshire, in 1797 and 1799 respectively.

In 1809 Scott became partners with John Ballantyne in a book-selling business and also, as an ardent political conservative, helped to found the Tory 'Quarterly Review'. In 1811 he built a residence at Abbotsford on the Tweed. By 1815, beginning to feel eclipsed as a poet by Byron, he turned to the novel form for which he is now chiefly famous.

A vast number of these were published, anonymously, over approximately the next fifteen years. In 1820 Scott was made a baronet and seven years later, in 1827, he first gave his name to his works. However, in 1826 the book-selling business became involved in the bankruptcy of another company, leaving Scott with debts of approximately £114,000. It is generally believed that some part at least of the profligacy of his writing is attributed to his desire to pay off these debts personally. His work, and along stay at Naples in 1831, undertaken in an attempt to regain his health, took up the rest of his life.

He is now generally hailed as the inventor of the historical novel. His work was widely read and imitated across the whole of Europe throughout the Nineteenth-Century in particular and his influence is marked even in such writers as Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot and the Brontes.

A Serenade

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 trill'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 hear;
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?

Sir Walter Scott

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, cark and care,
New griefs, which coming hours unfold,
And sad remembrance of the old?
One hour with thee.

One hour with thee! When burning June
Waves his red flag at pitch of noon;
What shall repay the faithful swain,
His labor 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 labors 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Ancient Gaelic Melody

I.

Birds of omen dark and foul,
Night-crow, raven, bat, and owl,
Leave the sick man to his dream -
All night long he heard you scream.
Haste to cave and ruin'd tower,
Ivy tod, or dinged-bower,
There to wink and mop, for, hark!
In the mid air sings the lark.

II.

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.

III.

The moon's wan crescent scarcely gleams,
Ghost-like she fades in morning beams;
Hie hence, each peevish imp and fay
That scarce the pilgrim on his way, -
Quench, kelpy! quench, in bog and fen,
Thy torch, that cheats benighted men;
Thy dance is o'er, thy reign is done,
For Benyieglo hath seen the sun.

IV.

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 darest not face the godlike sun.

Sir Walter Scott

Answer

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Sir Walter Scott

As Lords Their Labourers' Hire Delay

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 man,
And blasphemy to Heaven.

Sir Walter Scott

Bonaparte

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 dearth,
And by destruction bids its fame endure,
Hath not a source more sullen, stagnant, and impure.

Before that Leader strode a shadowy form,
Her limbs like mist, her torch like meteor shew'd;
With which she beckon'd him through fight and storm,
And all he crush'd that cross'd his desp'rate road,
Nor thought, nor fear'd, nor look'd on what he trode;
Realms could not glut his pride, blood not slake,
So oft as e'er she shook her torch abroad—
It was Ambition bade his terrors wake;
Nor deign'd she, as of yore, a milder form to take.

No longer now she spurn'd at mean revenge,
Or stay'd her hand for conquer'd freeman'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 lov'd the fiend unmask'd.

That Prelate mark'd his march—On banners blaz'd
With battles won in many a distant land.
On eagle standards and on arms he gaz'd;
'And hop'st 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.'

The ruthless Leader beckon'd from his train
A wan, paternal shade, and bade him kneel,
And pale his temples with the Crown of Spain,
While trumpets rang, and Heralds cried, 'Castile!'
Not that he lov'd 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 warriors wheel,
That the poor puppet might perform his part,
And be a scepter'd slave, at his stern beck to start.

Sir Walter Scott

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.'
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, etc.

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow;
But the young plants of grace they looked couthie and slee,
Thinking luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, etc.

With sour-featured Whigs the Grass-market was crammed,
As if half the West had set tryst to be hanged;
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watched for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, 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.
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, etc.

He spurred 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.'
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, 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.
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, 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.
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, etc.

'There's brass on the target of barked bull-hide;
There's steel in the scabbard that dangles beside;
The brass shall be burnished, the steel shall flash free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, 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!
<i>Come fill up my cup</i>, etc.

He waved his proud hand, the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clashed and the horsemen rode on,
Till on Ravelston's cliffs and on Clermiston's lee
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.
<i>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! </i>

Sir Walter Scott

Border Ballad

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, then, and march in good order;
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border.

Sir Walter Scott

Breathes There The Man... From The Lay Of The Last Minstrel

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 burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
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, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

Sir Walter Scott

Brignall Banks

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen:
And as I rode by Dalton Hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A Maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily:—

'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 green-wood shalt thou speed
As blithe as Queen of May.'

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green!
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English Queen.

'I read you by your bugle horn
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a Ranger sworn
To keep the King's green-wood.'
'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.'

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.

'And O! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

'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 green-wood 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 flowers there
Would grace a summer queen.

Sir Walter Scott

Bruce And The Abbot

The Abbot on the threshold stood,
And in his hand the holy rood:
Then, cloaking hate with fiery zeal,
Proud Lorn first answered 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 will I grant to end debate,
Thy sainted voice decide his fate.'

The Abbot seemed with eye severe
The hardy chieftain's speech to hear;
Then on King Robert turned the Monk, -
But twice his courage came and sunk,
Confronted with the hero's look;
Twice fell his eye, his accents shook;
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,
Flushed is his brow; through every vein
In azure tide the currents strain,
And undistinguished accents broke
The awful silence ere he spoke.

'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-controlled,
I feel within mine aged breast
A power that will not be repressed.
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'er mastered yet by high behest,
I bless thee, and thou shalt be blessed!
He spoke, and o'er the astonished throng
Was silence, awful, deep, and long.

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 vanquished on the battle plain, -
Thy followers slaughtered, fled, or ta'en, -
A hunted wanderer on the wild,
On foreign shores a man exiled,
Disowned, deserted, and distressed, -
I bless thee, and thou shalt be blessed!
Blessed in the hall and in the field,
Under the mantle as the shield.
Avenger of thy country's shame,
Restorer of her injured fame,
Blessed in thy sceptre and thy sword, -
De Bruce, fair Scotland's rightful Lord,
Blessed in thy deeds and in thy fame,
What lengthened honors 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 blessed thee, and thou shalt be blessed!

Cadyow Castle

Addressed to the Right Hon. Lady Anne Hamilton.

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,
And echoed light the dancer's bound,
As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

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.

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 shagg'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 grey;
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!

'Tis noon - against the knotted oak
The hunters rest the idle spear;
Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
Where yeoman 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,
(Grey Paisley'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 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 foul 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;
Scarce 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 plummy helmet rings -

- Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

'What joy the raptured youth can fell,
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!

Sir Walter Scott

Christmas

The glowing censers, and their rich perfume;
The splendid vestments, and the sounding choir;
The gentle sigh of soul-subduing piety;
The alms which open-hearted charity
Bestows, with kindly glance; and those
Which e'en stern avarice.
Though with unwilling hand,
Seems forced to tender; an offering sweet
To the bright throne of mercy; mark
This day a festival.

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all its 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 holly green;
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.
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.

Sir Walter Scott

Claud Halcro's Song

Farewell to Northmaven,
Grey Hillswicke, farewell!
The storms on thy haven,
The storms on thy fell -
To each breeze that can vary
The mood of thy main,
And to thee, bonny Mary!
We meet not again!

Farewell the wild ferry,
Which Hacon could brave,
When the peaks of the Skerry
Where 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 fling them;
On the quicksand 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Cleveland Lyke-Wake Dirge (Traditional)

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle;
Fire and sleete and candle lighte,
And Christe receive thye saule.

When thou from hence away are paste,
Every nighte and alle;
To Whinny-muir thou comest at laste;
And Christe receive thye saule.

If ever thou gavest hosen and shoon,
Every nighte and alle;
Sit thee down, and put them on;
And Christe receive thye saule.

If hosen and shoon thou ne'er gavest nane,
Every nighte and alle;
The whinnes shall pricke thee to the bare bane,
And Christe receive thye saule.

From Whinny-muir when thou mayst passe,
Every nighte and alle ;
To Brigg o' Dread thou comest at laste,
And Christe receive thye saul

(A stanza wanting)

From Brigg o' Dread when thou mayst passe,
Every nighte and alle;
To purgatory fire thou comest at laste;
And Christ receive thye saule.

If ever thou gavest meat or drinke,
Every nighte and alle;
The fire shall never make thee shrinke;
And Christ receive thye saule.

If meate or drinke thou never gavest nane,
Every nighte and alle;

The fire will burn thee to the bare bane;
And Christe receive thye saule.

This ae nighte, this ae nighte,
Every nighte and alle;
Fire and sleete, and candle lighte,
And Christe receive thye saule.

Sir Walter Scott

Cleveland's Song

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!

Sir Walter Scott

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 corrie,
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!

Sir Walter Scott

Country 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 hear;
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?

Sir Walter Scott

County Guy

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The sun has left the lea,
The orange flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
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Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know--
But where is County Guy?

Sir Walter Scott

Datur Hora Quieti

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!

Sir Walter Scott

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.

Sir Walter Scott

Death Chant

Viewless essence, thin and bare,
Well nigh melted 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 doomed 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 clotted flood,
And every drop cry blood for blood!

Sir Walter Scott

Donald Caird's Come Again

Chorus

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 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!

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Donald Caird's come again!

Sleek the amrie, lock the kist,
Else some gear may weel be mist;
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!

Donald Caird's come again!
Donald Caird's come again!
Dinna let the Shirra ken,
Donald Caird's come again!

On Donald Caird the doom was stern,
Craig to tether, legs to airn;
But Donald Caird wi' mickle study,
Caught the gift to cheat the wuddie;
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!

Sir Walter Scott

Eleu Loro

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.
Eleu loro
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!
Eleu loro
Never, O never!

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;
Eleu loro
There shall he be lying.

Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the falsehearted;
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!
Eleu loro
Never, O never!

Sir Walter Scott

Elsbeth'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 Ronald 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 spear 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 minni ne'er anither.

Sir Walter Scott

Farewell To The Muse

Enchantress, farewell, who so oft hast 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.
Farewell and take with thee thy numbers wild speaking
The language alternate of rapture and woe:
Oh! none but some lover, whose heartstrings 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 tomorrow,
Till forgot in the strain was the grief of today!
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, accents bewailing,
To sing how a warrior I 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'll meet thee no more!

Sir Walter Scott

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.
A stranger commanded "it sunk on the land,
It has frozen each heart, and benumb'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 illumined 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, Glengarry, 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 grey 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 MacShimeil will joy when their chief shall display
The yew-crested bonnet o'er tresses of grey!
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!
MacNeil 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!

Sir Walter Scott

For A' That And A' That

Tho' 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 bra' that.
The Thistle, tho' her leaf be rude,
Yet faith we'll no misca' that,
She sheltered 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 twin'd
Around our wreath we'll draw that,
And he that would the cord unbind,
Shall have it for his gra-vat!

Or if to chock sae puir a sot,
Your pity scorn to thraw that,
The Devil's Elbo' be his lot,
Where he may sit and claw that.
In spite of slight, in spite of might
In spite of brags and a' that,
The lads that battled for the right,
Have won the day, and a' that!

There's ae bit spot I had forgot,
They ca'd America 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 blaw that,
And Yankee loun, 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!

Sir Walter Scott

Frederick And Alice

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 snuffs the air,
Yet no cause of dread appears;
Bristles high the rider's hair,
Struck with strange mysterious fears.

Desperate, as his terror 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 wile!
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!'

Sir Walter Scott

Funeral Hymn

Dust unto 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Gathering Song Of Donald The Black

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 untended 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 targes.

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended,
Come as the waves come, when
Navies 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!

Sir Walter Scott

Glenfinlas; Or, Lord Ronald's Coronach

'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 beltrane tree, *
While youths and maids in 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 grey 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 si'very 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 Chiefs enjoy;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy.

'What lack we here to crown our bliss,

While thus the pulse of joy beats high?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath and melting eye?

'To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.

'Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
And dropp'd the tear, and heaved the sigh;
But vain the lover's wily art,
Beneath a sister's watchful eye.

'But thou mayst teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.

'Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hand on thy notes, twixt tear and smile.

'Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good St. Oran's rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow?'

'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 wo,
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 wo,
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 tomorrow's storm may lour?

'Or false, or sooth, thy words of wo,
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 call'd 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 of 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 fathers' towers o'erhang her side
The castle of the bold Glengyle.

'To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
Our woodland course this morn we bore,
And haply met, while wandering here,
The son of great Macgillianore.

'O aid me, then, to seek the pair
Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost;
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 day.'-

'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 mutter'd 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 but in fragment's 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 vell;
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.

Wo to Moneira's sullen rills!
Wo to Glenfinlas' dreary glen!
There never son of Albin's hills
Shall draw the hunter's shaft agen!

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!

Sir Walter Scott

Harp Of The North, Farewell!

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.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured 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!

Sir Walter Scott

Hellvellyn

I climbed the dark brow of the mighty Hellvellyn,
Lakes and mountains beneath me gleamed misty and wide;
All was still, save by fits, when the eagle was yelling,
And starting around me the echoes replied.
On the right, Striding-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 marked the sad spot where the wanderer had died.

Dark green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain heather,
Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretched in decay,
Like the corpse of an outcast abandoned to weather,
Till the mountain winds wasted the tenantless clay.
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 stretched before him
Unhonoured 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-arched 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, wildered, 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Here's A Health To King Charles

Bring the bowl which you boast,
Fill it up to the brim;
'Tis to him we love most,
And to all who love him.
Brave gallants, stand up,
And avaunt ye, base carles!
Were there death in the cup,
Here's a health to King Charles.

Though he wanders through dangers,
Unaided, unknown,
Dependent on strangers,
Estranged from his own;
Though 'tis under our breath,
Amidst forfeits and perils,
Here's to honor and faith,
And a health to King Charles!

Let such honors abound
As the time can afford,
The knee on the ground,
And the hand on the sword;
But the time shall come round
When, 'mid Lords, Dukes, and Earls,
The loud trumpet shall sound,
Here's a health to King Charles!

Sir Walter Scott

Hunter's Song

The toils are pitched, 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 silently down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned him of the toils below,
O so faithfully, faithfully!

He had an eye, and he could heed,
Ever sing so warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed--
Hunters watch so narrowly.

Sir Walter Scott

Hunting Song

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 greenwood 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 balk,
Staunch as hound and fleet as hawk:
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay!

Sir Walter Scott

It Was An English Ladye Bright

It was an English ladye bright,
 (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
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.

That wine she had not tasted well
 (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
 For Love was still the lord of all!

He pierced her brother to the heart,
 Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:--
So perish all would true love part
 That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
 Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,
And died for her sake in Palestine;
 So Love was still the lord of all.

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!

Sir Walter Scott

Jock Of Hazeldean

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 sown 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 you 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Lines On Captain Wogan. To An Oak Tree

To an Oak Tree, In the Churchyard of --, In the Highlands of Scotland, Said to Mark the Grave of Captain Wogan, Killed in 1649.

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 honoured sod to bloom,
The flowerets 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 'mid storms of Fate opposing,
Still higher swelled 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 resigned),
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 darkened 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Lochinvar

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 I am 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 gailiard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume
And the bridegroom stood dangling 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 Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, 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 dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

Sir Walter Scott

Love

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.

Sir Walter Scott

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;
Speak not when the people listens;
Stop thine ear against the singer;
From the red gold keep thy finger;
Vacant heart and hand and eye,
Easy live and quiet die.

Sir Walter Scott

Lullaby Of An Infant Chief

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, cadul gu lo.

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 drew near to thy bed.
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo,
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo.

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, cadul gu lo,
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo.

Sir Walter Scott

Macgregor's Gathering

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 Grigalach!

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!

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, Grigalach!

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, Grigalach!

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, Grigalach!

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 Grigalach!

Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
O'er the peak of Ben Lomond the galley shall steer,
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 Grigalach!

Sir Walter Scott

Mackrimmon's Lament

MacLeod's wizard flag from the grey castle sallies,
The rowers are seated, unmoor'd are the galleys;
Gleam war-axe and broadsword, clang target and quiver,
As Mackrimmon sings, 'Farewell to Dunvegan for ever!
Farewell to each cliff, on which breakers are foaming;
Farewell, each dark glen, in which red-deer are roaming;
MacLeod may return, but Mackrimmon shall never!

'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!'

Sir Walter Scott

Major Bellenden's Song

And what though winter will pinch severe
Through locks of grey 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 ever wight so starkly made,
But time and years would overthrow?

Sir Walter Scott

March Of The Monks Of Bangor

When the heathen trumpet's clang
Round beleaguer'd Chester rang,
Veiled nun and friar grey
March'd from Bangor's fair Abbaye;
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,
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!

Sir Walter Scott

March, March, Ettrick And Teviotdale

I.

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.

II.

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, then, and march in good order;
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: A Christmas Poem

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 Iol 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 holly 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 to tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.
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 makers 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;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutt'd 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Canto 6 (Excerpt)

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,
Twisel! 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 unharm'd, 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;
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;
 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 their 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; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

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.
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 Huntley, and with Home.

XXVII

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;
Though there the western mountaineer
Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword 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 staid,
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 brawling 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 staunch 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;
 O, think on faith and bliss!--
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 vaward wing,
 Where Huntley, 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,
Mor 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 make 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 serried 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 dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless splash,
 While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
 To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down 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 clench'd within his manly hand,
 Beseem'd the monarch slain.
But, O! how changed since yon blithe night!--
Gladly I turn me from the sight,
 Unto my tale again.

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 martiar 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 carved 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 mista'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 Hollinshed 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!"

Marmion: Canto II. - The Convent

I.

The breeze, which swept away the smoke,
Round Norham Castle rolled,
When all the loud artillery spoke,
With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke,
As Marmion left the hold.

It curled not Tweed alone, that breeze,
For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
It freshly blew, and strong,
Where, from high Whitby's cloistered pile,
Bound to St. Cuthbert's holy isle,
It bore a barque along.

Upon the gale she stooped her side,
And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
As she were dancing home;
The merry seamen laughed to see
Their gallant ship so lustily
Furrow the green sea-foam.
Much joyed they in their honoured 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 greenwood 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 shrieked, because the sea-dog, nigh,
His round black head, and sparkling eye,

Reared o'er the foaming spray;
And one would still adjust her veil,
Disordered by the summer gale,
Perchance lest some more worldly eye
Her dedicated charms might spy;
Perchance, because such action graced
Her fair-turned 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 decked the chapel of the saint,
And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
With ivory and gems embossed.
The poor her convent's bounty blest,
The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reformed on Benedictine school;

Her cheek was pale, her form was spare;
Vigils, and penitence austere,
Had early quenched 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;
Summoned 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 unprofessed,
Lovely and gentle, but distressed.
She was betrothed to one now dead,
Or worse, who had dishonoured 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 withered bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
And seemed to mark the waves below;
Nay, seemed, so fixed 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-scorched desert, waste and bare,
Nor waves nor breezes murmured there;

There saw she, where some careless hand
O'er a dead corpse had heaped 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 distressed -
These charms might tame the fiercest breast;
Harpers have sung, and poets told,
That he, in fury uncontrolled,
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
Prisoned 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.
Monkwearmouth soon behind them lay,
And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
They marked, amid her trees, the hall
Of lofty Seaton-Delaval;
They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
Rush to the sea through sounding woods;
They passed the tower of Widderington,
Mother of many a valiant son;
At Coquet Isle their beads they tell
To the good saint who owned the cell;
Then did the Alne attention claim,

And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name;
And next, they crossed themselves, to hear
The whitening breakers sound so near,
Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
On Dunstanborough's caverned shore;
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, marked 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 reached the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its floodmark 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 sandalled 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 frowned,
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 alleyed walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls the heathen Dane
Had poured 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,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not hut the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And mouldered 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 neared 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-drowned 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,
Rushed emulously through the flood,
To hale the barque to land;
Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
And blessed 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 unhallowed eye,
The stranger sisters roam;
Till fell the evening damp with dew,
And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
For there e'en summer night is chill.
Then, having strayed and gazed their fill,
They closed around the fire;
And all, in turn, essayed 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;
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.
And how, of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone
When holy Hilda prayed;
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,
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;
How, when the rude Dane burned 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 barque 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
Hailed 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.
'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turned the Conqueror back again,
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:
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound:
A deadened 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 worse dungeon cell:
Old Colwulf 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 called 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 reached the upper air,
The hearers blessed themselves, and said,
The spirits of the sinful dead
Bemoaned 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 clue
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 seemed 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,
And she with awe looks pale:
And he, that ancient man, whose sight
Has long been quenched 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 called, 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 professed of Fontevraud,
Whom the church numbered 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, seared 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 visioned 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,
Showed the grim entrance of the porch:
Reflecting back the smoky beam,
The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
Hewn stones and cement were displayed,
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 joyed 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 stopped, because that woful maid,

Gathering her powers, to speak essayed.
Twice she essayed, 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 seemed 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 dawned upon her cheek,
A hectic and a fluttered 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 gathered strength,
And armed 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 listened to a traitor's tale,
I left the convent and the veil;
For three long years I bowed 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 forswore,
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 betrayed for gold,
That loved, or was avenged, like me.

XXVIII.

'The king approved his favourite's aim;
In vain a rival barred his claim,
Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
For he attaints that rival's fame
With treason's charge-and on they came,
In mortal lists to fight.
Their oaths are said,
Their prayers are prayed,
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, gathered voice, and spoke the rest.

XXIX.

'Still was false Marmion's bridal stayed:

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 remained-the King's command
Sent Marmion to the Scottish land:
I lingered here, and rescue planned
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 betrayed,
This packet, to the King conveyed,
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.
Behind, a darker hour ascends!
The altars quake, the crosier bends,
The ire of a despotic king

Rides forth upon destruction's wing;
Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep;
Some traveller then shall find my bones
Whitening amid disjointed stones,
And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
Marvel such relics here should be.'

XXXII.

Fixed was her look, and stern her air:
Back from her shoulders streamed her hair;
The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
Stared up erectly from her head;
Her figure seemed to rise more high;
Her voice, despair's wild energy
Had given a tone of prophecy.
Appalled the astonished conclave sate:
With stupid eyes, the men of fate
Gazed on the light inspired form,
And listened 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 cell
Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

A 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 crossed themselves for terror's sake,
As hurrying, tottering on:
Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
They seemed 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 rolled,
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 couched him down beside the hind,
And quaked among the mountain fern,
To hear that sound so dull and stern.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Canto Iii. - The Inn

I.

The livelong day Lord Marmion rode:
The mountain path the Palmer showed,
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 failed to bar their way.
Oft on the trampling band, from crown
Of some tall cliff, the deer looked down;
On wing of jet, from his repose
In the deep heath, the blackcock 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 passed before
They gained 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 seemed 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 viewed 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 deigned to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, trained 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 fixed 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 yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whispered 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 quelled their hearts, who saw
The ever-varying firelight show
That figure stern and face of woe,
Now called 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 rejoined,
'Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
Ill may we hope to please your ear,
Accustomed 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 lovelorn tune
More sweetly warbles to the moon.
Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
Detains from us his melody,
Lavished 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 ripened ear.
Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
Now a wild chorus swells the song:
Oft have I listened, and stood still,
As it came softened up the hill,

And deemed it the lament of men
Who languished for their native glen;
And thought how sad would be such sound
On Susquehana's swampy ground,
Kentucky's wood-encumbered brake,
Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
Recalled 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, oh, never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, oh, 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, oh, never!

CHORUS.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, oh, 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 plained 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 wished 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
Of 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,
Seemed 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.'

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 controlled,
In camps, the boldest of the bold;
Thought, look, and utterance failed him now -
Fall'n was his glance, and flushed 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 veil their eyes
Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter!-By his aid
Was Constance Beverley betrayed.
Not that he augured 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 deemed 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 deemed the favourite page
Was left behind, to spare his age
Or other if they deemed, 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 deemed her well,
And safe secured in distant cell;
But, wakened 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 betrayed and scorned,
All lovely on his soul returned;
Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
She left her convent's peaceful wall,

Crimsoned 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 steeled her brow, and armed 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 Loch 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, knightlike, 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 filled 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.
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 toiled 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 laboured 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 mustered 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,
Above Norwegian 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 marked 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 marked strange lines upon his face:
Vigil and fast had worn him grim,
His eyesight dazzled seemed 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 seemed 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 fixed or wandering star,
The issues of events afar;
But still their sullen aid withhold,
Save when by mightier force controlled.
Such late I summoned to my hall;
And though so potent was the call,
That scarce the deepest nook of hell
I deemed 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,
Proclaimed 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 honoured brand,
The gift of Coeur-de-Lion's hand,
Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
The demon shall a buffet bide.'
His bearing bold the wizard viewed,
And thus, well pleased, his speech renewed:

'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 armed, 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 wildflowers 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 passed,
Halted, and blew a gallant blast;
And on the north, within the ring,
Appeared 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 manned 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
Compelled 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 brandished war-axe wield,
And strike proud Haco from his car,
While all around the shadowy kings
Denmark's grim ravens cowered their wings.
'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
Remoter visions met his sight,
Foreshowing future conquests far,
When our son's sons wage northern war;
A royal city, tower and spire,
Reddened 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 turned home again,
Headed his host, and quelled the Dane;
But yearly, when returned 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;
And many a knight hath proved his chance,
In the charmed 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 liquors 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,
Their drowsy limbs recline:
For pillow, underneath each head,
The quiver and the targe were laid.
Deep slumbering on the hostel floor,
Oppressed 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 arrayed,
While, whispering, thus the baron said: -

XXIX.

'Didst 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 marked him pace the village road,
And listened to his horse's tramp,
Till by the lessening sound,
He judged that of the Pictish camp
Lord Marmion sought the round.
Wonder it seemed, 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, stirred by idle tale,
Ride forth in silence of the night,
As hoping half to meet a sprite,
Arrayed in plate and mail.
For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
That passions, in contending flow,
Unfix the strongest mind;
Wearied 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, pricked 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,
Returned Lord Marmion.
Down hastily he sprung from selle,
And, in his haste, well-nigh 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 soiled 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Canto Iv. - 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 bugles blew,
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 clamoured loud for armour lost;
Some brawled and wrangled with the host;
'By Becket's bones,' cried one, 'I fear
That some false Scot has stol'n 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 dressed 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.'

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guessed,
Nor wholly understood,
His comrades' clamorous complaints suppressed;

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 marvelled at the wonders told -
Passed them as accidents of course,
And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
Had reckoned 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 trampled to and fro.'
The laughing host looked on the hire -
'Gramercy, gentle southern squire,
And if thou com'st among the rest,
With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow,
And short the pang to undergo.'
Here stayed their talk; for Marmion
Gave now the signal to set on.
The Palmer showing forth the way,
They journeyed all the morning day.

IV.

The greensward 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 overhead
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 damsel 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 damsel kind, from danger freed,
Did grateful pay her champion's meed.'
He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind;
Perchance to show his lore designed;
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 answered nought again.

V.

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
In notes prolonged by wood and hill,
Were heard to echo far:
Each ready archer grasped his bow,
But by the flourish soon they know,
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, showed
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 pressed,
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 quelled,
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,
Embroidered round and round.
The double tressure might you see,
First by Achaius borne,
The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
And gallant unicorn.
So bright the king's armorial coat,

That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
In living colours, blazoned brave,
The lion, which his title gave;
A train, which well beseemed his state,
But all unarmed, 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!

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 crowned,
And on his temples placed the round
Of Scotland's ancient diadem;
And wet his brow with hallowed 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 deemed 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 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 tottered 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,
Quartered 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 ruined stair.
Still rises unimpaired below,
The courtyard'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 showed,
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,
Proffered the baron's rein to hold;
For each man that could draw a sword
Had marched that morning with their lord,
Earl Adam Hepburn-he who died
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 stained 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 marshalled 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 -
Trained 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 walked,
And, by the slowly fading night,
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:
And, closer questioned, thus he told
A tale, which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enrolled: -

XV.

SIR DAVID LINDESAY'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 bells 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,
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 ruthless 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 beaming.
I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
Bedeafened with the jangling knell,
Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
Through the stained casement gleaming;
But, while I marked what next befell,
It seemed as I were dreaming.
Stepped 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 pledged 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,
Seemed to me ne'er did limner paint
So just an image of the Saint,
Who propped the Virgin in her faint -
The loved Apostle John!

XVII.

'He stepped before the monarch's chair,
And stood with rustic plainness there,
And little reverence made:
Nor head, nor body, bowed nor bent,
But on the desk his arm he leant,
And words like these he said,
In a low voice-but never tone
So thrilled 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 warned, beware:
God keep thee as he may!'
The wondering monarch seemed 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 passed:
But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
He vanished from our eyes,
Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
That glances but, and dies.'

XVIII.

While Lindesay told his marvel strange,
The twilight was so pale,
He marked 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 passed the Tweed,
What much has changed my sceptic creed,
And made me credit aught.' He stayed,
And seemed to wish his words unsaid:
But, by that strong emotion pressed,
Which prompts us to unload our breast,
E'en 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.

XIX.

'In vain,' said he, 'to rest I spread
My burning limbs, and couched my head:
Fantastic thoughts returned;
And, by their wild dominion led,
My heart within me burned.
So sore was the delirious goad,
I took my steed, and forth I rode,
And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
Soon reached the camp upon the wold.
The southern entrance I passed 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.

XX.

'Thus judging, for a little space
I listened, 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 mixed affray,
And ever, I myself may say,
Have borne me as a knight;
But when this unexpected foe
Seemed 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 rolled upon the plain.
High o'er my head, with threatening hand,
The spectre took 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 prayed,
The first time e'er I asked his aid,
He plunged it in the sheath;
And, on his courser mounting light,
He seemed to vanish from my sight;
The moonbeam drooped, and deepest night
Sunk down upon the heath.
'Twere long to tell what cause I have
To know his face, that met me there,
Called by his hatred from the grave,
To cumber upper air;
Dead or alive, good cause had he
To be my mortal enemy.'

XXII.

Marvelled Sir David of the Mount;
Then, learned in story, 'gan recount
Such chance had happed 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 trained 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 Auchnaslaid,
Dromunchty, or Glenmore.
And yet whate'er such legends 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 hath such spirit power
To harm, save in the evil hour,
When guilt we meditate within,
Or harbour unrepented sin.'
Lord Marmion turned him half aside,
And twice to clear his voice he tried,
Then pressed Sir David's hand -
But nought at length in answer said,
And here their farther converse stayed,
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 Dunedin'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 their route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid,
They passed the glen and scanty rill,
And climbed the opposing bank, until
They gained the top of Blackford 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 chequered 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 reviewed their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling neigh;
And see the shifting lines advance
While frequent flashed, 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 decayed,
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 tugged to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omened gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Nor marked 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-tailed, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there
O'er the pavilions flew.
Highest and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree strong and straight,
Pitched deeply in a massive stone -
Which still in memory is shown -
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
Whene'er the western wind unrolled,
With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramped in gold.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion viewed the landscape bright -
He viewed it with a chief's delight -
Until within him burned 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 Saint George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal, nor divine.
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimmed their armour's shine
In glorious battle-fray!'
Answered 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 blessed,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall.'

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stayed,
For fairer scene he ne'er surveyed.
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 gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston Bay and Berwick Law:
And, broad between them rolled,
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz Eustace' 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 demivolte 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 repressed his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they looked, 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 tolled 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
Dunedin's leaguered 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Canto V. - 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 shaft, such mighty bows,
So huge, that many simply thought,
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought;
And little deemed their force to feel,
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
When rattling upon Flodden vale,
The clothyard arrows flew like hail.

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
Glance every line and squadron through;
And much he marvelled 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,
The high curvet, that not in vain
The sword sway might descend amain

On foeman's casque below.
He saw the hardy burghers there
March armed, 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 yeomen too, but dressed
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 seemed, 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 joyed 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-armed 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,
Scarce caring who might win the day,
Their booty was secure.
These, as Lord Marmion's train passed by,
Looked on at first with careless eye,
Nor marvelled aught, well taught to know
The form and force of English bow;
But when they saw the lord arrayed
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?
Oh! 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 glistering hide;
Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied
Could make a kirtle rare.'

V.

Next, Marmion marked the Celtic race,
Of different language, form, and face -
Avarious race of man;
Just then the chiefs their tribes arrayed,
And wild and garish semblance made
The chequered trews and belted plaid,
And varying notes the war-pipes brayed
To every varying clan;

Wild through their red or sable hair
Looked out their eyes with savage stare
On Marmion as he passed;
Their legs above the knee were bare;
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
And hardened to the blast;
Of taller race, the chiefs they own
Were by the eagle's plumage known.
The hunted red-deer's undressed hide
Their hairy buskins well supplied;
The graceful bonnet decked 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, oh!
Short was the shaft and weak the bow
To that which England bore.
The Islesmen 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 mixed,
Grumbled and yelled the pipes betwixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they passed,
And reached the city gate at last,
Where all around, a wakeful guard,
Armed burghers kept their watch and ward.
Well had they cause of jealous fear,
When lay encamped, in field so near,
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
As through the bustling streets they go,
All was alive with martial show;
At every turn, with dinning clang,
The armourer's anvil clashed and rang;
Or toiled 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,
Discussed his lineage, told his name,
His following and his warlike fame.
The Lion led to lodging meet,
Which high o'erlooked the crowded street;
There must the baron rest
Till past the hour of vesper tide,
And then to Holyrood 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 Holyrood rung merrily
That night with wassail, mirth, and glee:
King James within her princely bower
Feasted the chiefs of Scotland's power,
Summoned 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 touched a softer string;
With long-eared cap and motley vest
The licensed fool retailed his jest;
His magic tricks the juggler plied;
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;
While some, in close recess apart,
Courtied 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 mixed 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 doffed, to Marmion bending low,
His broidered cap and plume.
For royal was his garb and mien:
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled.
Trimmed 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 buttoned with a ruby rare:
And Marmion deemed 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 curled 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 joyed in banquet bower;
But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often strange
How suddenly his cheer would change,
His look o'er cast 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.
Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
Soon as the passing pang was o'er
Forward he rushed, 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 tightened rein,
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

X.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:
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
Sent him a turquoise 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 planned
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 Holyrood 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 touched 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 pitched her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the king,
And then around the silent ring;
And laughed, and blushed, 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.

Oh! 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 unarmed, and he rode all alone;
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for stone;
He swam the Esk 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 entered 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 -
'Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'

'I long wooed 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 kissed the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked 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 dangling his bonnet and plume:
And the bride's-maidens whispered, 'Twere better by far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croup 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 Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, 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 dauntless 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 whispered praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied,
And ladies winked and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seemed to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too,
A real or feigned disdain:
Familiar was the look, and told

Marmion and she were friends of old.
The king observed their meeting eyes
With something like displeas'd surprise:
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
E'en in a word or smile or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad
Which Marmion's high commission showed:
'Our Borders sacked by many a raid,
Our peaceful liegemen robbed,' he said;
'On day of truce our warden slain,
Stout Barton killed, 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 viewed -
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;
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 e'en that day, at council board,

Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.

XV.

His giant form like ruined tower,
Though fall'n its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seemed 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;
Your host shall be the Douglas bold -
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon o'er his towers displayed;
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
More than to face his country's foes.
And, I bethink me, by Saint 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 Cochrane's soul may say.'
And with the slaughtered 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 swelled well-nigh to break:
He turned 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 whispered 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 viewed
And tampered 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 answered, grave, the royal vaunt:-
'Much honoured 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 turned 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 sailed again
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
Now at Dunedin did they bide,
Till James should of their fate decide;
And soon, by his command,
Were gently summoned to prepare
To journey under Marmion's care,
As escort honoured, 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 feared 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 deemed it hopeless to avoid
The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the king assigned,
To Marmion's, as their guardian, joined;
And thus it fell that, passing nigh,
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
Who warned him by a scroll
She had a secret to reveal
That much concerned 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 moonbeam broke
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
And on the casements played.
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 wooed
Clara de Clare, of Gloucester'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,
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 returned,
Judge how De Wilton's fury burned

For in his packet there were laid
Letters that claimed disloyal aid,
And proved King Henry's cause betrayed.
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;
Else how could guiltless champion quail,
Or how the blessed ordeal fail?

XXII.

'His squire, who now De Wilton saw
As recreant doomed to suffer law,
Repentant, owned in vain,
That while he had the scrolls in care,
A stranger maiden, passing fair,
Had drenched 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 sheltered 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.
And then her heritage;-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 spoiled 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 betrayed
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 betrayed,
And with his squire forged letters laid,
She was, alas! that sinful maid
By whom the deed was done -
Oh! 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 retained
Each proof that might the plot reveal,
Instructions with his hand and seal;
And thus Saint Hilda deigned,
Through sinners' 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, oh! with cautious speed
To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
That he may show them to the king
And for thy well-earned 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 shrieked 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 blazoned banners toss!'

XXV.

Dunedin's Cross, a pillared 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.
Oh! 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 seemed to rise and die,
Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
While nought confirmed 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 soiled 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 passed and gone,
I cite you, at your monarch's throne,
To answer and appear.'

Then thundered 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,
Foredoomed to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name;
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward and Scrivelbaye;
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 marked not, at the scene aghast,
What time, or how, the Palmer passed.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene. The camp doth move;
Dunedin'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-haired 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 altered 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 looked high, as if he planned
Some desperate deed afar.
His courser would he feed and stroke,
And, tucking up his sable frock,
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 governed fair,
A troop escorting Hilda's dame,
With all her nuns and Clare.
No audience had Lord Marmion sought;
Ever he feared 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 fanned by looks and sighs,
And lighted oft at lady's eyes;
He longed 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 loathed to think upon,
Led him, at times, to hate the cause
Which made him burst through honour's laws
If e'er he loved, '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 awhile
Before a venerable pile,
Whose turrets viewed, 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 prayed Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
With her, a loved and honoured guest,
Till Douglas should a barque prepare
To waft her back to Whitby fair.
Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
And thanked the Scottish Prioress;
And tedious were to tell, I ween,
The courteous speech that passed between.
O'erjoyed, 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 obeyed;
And Marmion and the Douglas said
That you must wend with me.
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
Which to the Scottish earl he showed,
Commanding that beneath his care
Without delay you shall repair
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.'

XXX.

The startled Abbess loud exclaimed;
But she at whom the blow was aimed
Grew pale as death, and cold as lead -
She deemed 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 Gloucester'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 blushed with earnest grace;
His faith was painted on his face,
And Clare's worst fear relieved.
The Lady Abbess loud exclaimed
On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
Entreated, threatened, grieved;
To martyr, saint, and prophet prayed,
Against Lord Marmion inveighed,
And called the Prioress to aid,
To curse with candle, bell, and book.
Her head the grave Cistercian shook:
'The Douglas and the King,' she said,
'In their commands will be obeyed;
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 hurled 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;
Saint 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.'

XXXII.

'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.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
When o'er a height they passed,
And, sudden, close before them showed
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 battled 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.

XXXIV.

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 every 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 marvelled Marmion;
And Douglas hoped his monarch's hand
Would soon subdue Northumberland:
But whispered 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 Milfield Plain,
And that brave Surrey many a band
Had gathered in the Southern land,
And marched 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Introduction To Canto I

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 thrilled the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and briar, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
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 passed the heather-bell
That bloomed 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 sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:
In meek despondency they eye
The withered 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 grasped 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,
Oh 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,
Rolled, blazed, destroyed-and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth,
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launched 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,
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strained at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,
The pride he would not crush restrained,
Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws.

Hadst thou but lived, though stripped 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 propped the tottering throne:
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quenched 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, claimed his prey,
With Palinure's unaltered mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
Each call for needful rest repelled,
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 hallowed 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 employed, 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 suppressed,
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 again,
'All peace on earth, goodwill to men;'
If ever from an English heart,
Oh, HERE let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record that Fox a Briton died!
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave

Was bartered by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonour's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch returned,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colours to the mast!
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honoured grave,
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endowed,
How high they soared above the crowd!
Theirs 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,
Looked 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 tombed 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 again?'

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, oh, how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmarked, from northern clime,
Ye heard the Border minstrel's rhyme
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The bard you deigned to praise, your deathless names has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay a while,
My wildered 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 bardlike 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 lonely 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 fall,
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-learned 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 corse;
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 unconfessed,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorned 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,

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 marred the lofty line.

Warmed 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 bunny 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 want of might,
And errant maid on palfrey white.
Around the Genius weave their spells,
Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells;
Mystery, half veiled and half revealed;
And Honour, with his spotless shield;
Attention, with fixed 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
Renewed such legendary strain;
For thou hast sung how he of Gaul,
That Amadis so famed in hall,
For Oriana foiled 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Introduction To Canto II.

The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourished 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 compeers -
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 noontide 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 greenwood.
Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
A thousand vassals mustered 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 falc'ners hold the ready hawk;
And foresters in greenwood 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 arquebuss below;
While all the rocking hills reply,
To hoof-clang, hound, and hunter's cry,
And bugles ringing lightsomely.'

Of such proud huntings many tales
Yet linger in our lonely dales,
Up pathless Etrick 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 Mariott, 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,
Passed by the intermitted space;
For we had fair resource in store,
In Classic and in Gothic lore:
We marked 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 deafened 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 pressed to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I called 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;
Condemned 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 impressed.
'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;
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 scattered pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour:

Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed 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 lain our Lady's chapel low,
Yet still beneath the hallowed soil,
The peasant rests him from his toil,
And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers prayed.

If age had tamed the passion's 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 longed 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 ruined 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;
On which no sunbeam ever shines -
So superstition's creed divines -
Thence view the lake, with sullen roar,
Heave her broad billows to the shore;
And mark the wild swans mount the gale,
Spread wide through mist their snowy sail,
And ever stoop again, to lave
Their bosoms on the surging wave:
Then, when against the driving hail
No longer might my plaid avail,
Back to my lonely home retire,
And light my lamp, and trim my fire;
There ponder o'er some mystic lay,
Till the wild tale had all its sway,
And, in the bittern's distant shriek,
I heard unearthly voices speak,
And thought the wizard-priest was come
To claim again his ancient home!
And bade my busy fancy range,
To frame him fitting shape and strange,
Till from the task my brow I cleared,
And smiled to think that I had feared.

But chief 'twere sweet to think such life
(Though but escape from fortune's strife),
Something most matchless good and wise,
A great and grateful sacrifice;
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 Lochskene.
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 if condemned to lave
Some demon's subterranean cave,
Who, prisoned 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Introduction To Canto Iii.

Like April morning clouds, that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's chequered 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 seemed excuse
For many an error of the muse,
Oft hast thou said, 'If, still misspent,
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 feebler bard,
Still from the grave their voice is heard;

From them, and from the paths they showed,
Choose honoured 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 unrivalled light sublime -
Though martial Austria, and though all
The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
Though banded Europe stood her foes -
The star of Brandenburg arose!
Thou couldst not live to see her beam
For ever quenched 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 snatched the spear, but left the shield!
Valour and skill 'twas thine to try,
And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
Ill had it seemed thy silver hair
The last, the bitterest pang to share,
For princedom reft, 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 honoured life an honoured 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 shattered walls,
Which the grim Turk, besmeared with blood,
Against the invincible made good;
Or that, whose thundering voice could wake
The silence of the polar lake,
When stubborn Russ, and mettled Swede,
On the warped wave their death-game played;
Or that, where vengeance and affright
Howled round the father of the fight,
Who snatched, 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 a hundred years rolled o'er;
When she, the bold enchantress, came,
With fearless hand and heart on flame!
From the pale willow snatched 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,
Deemed their own Shakespeare 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 weighed
That secret power by all obeyed,
Which warps not less the passive mind,
Its source concealed, 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 fitlier termed the sway
Of habit formed in early day?
Howe'er derived, its force confessed
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 whitened 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 weather-beaten hind,
Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
Whose tattered 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 hedgerows spread a verdant screen,
And spires and forests intervene,
And the neat cottage peeps between?
No! not for these would he exchange
His dark Lochaber's boundless range:
Nor for fair Devon's meads forsake
Ben Nevis grey, and Garry's lake.

Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charmed 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 charmed my fancy's wakening hour.

Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sighed no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claimed 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 wallflower grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruined wall.
I deemed such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round surveyed;
And still I thought that shattered tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvelled as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitched my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurred their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, filled the hall
With revel, wassail-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still, with trump and clang,
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features, seamed 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 stretched at length upon the floor,
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war displayed;
And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scattered Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brightened at our evening fire!
From the thatched mansion's grey-haired sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Showed 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-willed imp, a grandame's child;
But, half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caressed.
For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conned task?
Nay, Erskine, nay-On the wild hill
Let the wild heathbell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimmed the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay-Since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigour to my lays;
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flattened 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 unrestrained, my tale!

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Introduction To Canto Iv.

An ancient minstrel sagely said,
'Where is the life which late we led?'
That motley clown in Arden wood,
Whom humorous Jaques with envy viewed,
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 marked, like all below,
With checkered shades of joy and woe;
Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
Marked cities lost, and empires changed,
While here, at home, my narrower ken
Somewhat of manners saw, and men;
Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
Fevered 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 inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
Their vexed boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights, and Ettrick Pen,
Have donned their wintry shrouds again:
And mountain dark, and flooded mead,

Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mixed 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, outstretched the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
Viewed the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumbered o'er his tattered book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessened 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;
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 stiffened 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 kirn'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,
Called 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 chastened by their grief.
And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
When thou, of late, wert doomed to twine -

Just when thy bridal hour was by -
The cypress with the myrtle tie.
Just on thy bride her sire had smiled,
And blessed 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 honoured 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 naught-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 flagged, 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, ycleped the White.
At either's feet a trusty squire,
Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
Jealous, each other's motions viewed,
And scarce suppressed 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 blossomed 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 beamed gay,
And ladies tuned the lovely lay;
And he was held a laggard soul,
Who shunned to quaff the sparkling bowl.
Then he, whose absence we deplore,
Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
The longer missed, bewailed the more;
And thou, and I, and dear-loved Rae,
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 drowned 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Introduction To Canto V.

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 employed no more,
Cumber our parlour's narrow floor;
When in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemned 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 conned o'er,
Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
And darkling politician, crossed
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 renewed 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 stripped 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 garrisoned 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,
Dunedin! Oh, how altered now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sitt'st, like empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
For thy dark cloud, with umbered 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 enrolled,
She for the charmed spear renowned,
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 rolled
Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
They who whilom, in midnight fight,
Had marvelled at her matchless might,
No less her maiden charms approved,
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 charmed at once, and tamed the heart,
Incomparable Britomarte!
So thou, fair city! disarrayed
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 readier 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, trained 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,
Dunedin! that eventful day -
Renowned for hospitable deed,
That virtue much with Heaven may plead
In patriarchal times whose care
Descending angels deigned to share;
That claim may wrestle blessings down
On those who fight for the good town,
Destined in every age to be
Refuge of injured royalty;
Since first, when conquering York arose,
To Henry meek she gave repose,
Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
Great Bourbon's relics, sad she saw.
Truce to these thoughts!-for, as they rise,
How gladly I avert mine eyes,
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 love 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,
Famed Beauclerc called, 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 honoured 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!

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
Be long thy pleasing task-but, oh!
No more by thy example teach -
What few can practise, all can preach -
With even patience to endure
Lingering disease, and painful cure,
And boast affliction's pangs subdued
By mild and manly fortitude.
Enough, the lesson has been given:
Forbid the repetition, Heaven!
Come, listen, then! for thou hast known,
And loved the minstrel's varying tone,
Who, like his Border sires of old,
Waked a wild measure rude and bold,
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 planned,
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.

Sir Walter Scott

Marmion: Introduction To Canto Vi.

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 deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer;
E'en, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol 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 decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer;
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnawed rib and marrow-bone;
Or listened all, in grim delight,
While scalds yelled 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 boist'rous joys of Odin's hall.
And well our Christian sires of old
Loved, when the year its course had rolled,
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 donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;

Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed 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 hailed, with uncontrolled 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,
Scrubbed 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 frowned on high,
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell:
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared 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;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But oh! what maskers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.

'Twas Christmas broached 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-fetched claim
To Southern 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 grandsire came of old,
With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
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 hitched into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast,
That he was loyal to his cost;
The banished 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 loth 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 loftier Latian strain,
Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
To hear the clash of rusty arms:
In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
To jostle conjuror 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;
Aeneas, upon Thracia's shore,
The ghost of murdered Polydore;
For omens, we in Livy cross,
At every turn, locutus 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.'
The Highlander, whose red claymore
The battle turned on Maida's shore,
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If asked to tell a fairy tale:
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 Franchemont,
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,
Amassed through rapine and through wrong,
By the last Lord of Franchemont.
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:
And '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 halloed 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 conjuror'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 opened, 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 clenched the spell,
When Franchemont locked the treasure cell.
A hundred years are past 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 warned, 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?
Hoard, not like theirs whose volumes rest
Like treasures in the Franchemont 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 pilfered 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!

Sir Walter Scott

My Native Land

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, concentred 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 unsung.

Sir Walter Scott

Nora's Vow

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 o 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!

Sir Walter Scott

On Ettrick Forest's Mountains Dun {life In The Forest}

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 grey-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 Alwyn's lordly meal,
Or lowlier board of Ashestiel;
While the gay tapers cheerly shine,
Bickers the fire, and fhws the wine“
Days free from thought, and nights from care,
My blessing on the Forest fair!

Sir Walter Scott

On Leaving Mrs. Brown's Lodgings

So goodbye, Mrs. Brown,
I am going out of town,
Over dale, over down,
Where bugs bite not,
Where lodgers fight not,
Where below your chairmen drink not,
Where beside your gutters stink not;
But all is fresh and clean and gay,
And merry lambkins sport and play,
And they toss with rakes uncommonly short hay,
Which looks as if it had been sown only the other day,
And where oats are twenty-five shillings a boll, they say;
But all's one for that, since I must and will away.

Sir Walter Scott

On Tweed River

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 the 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 Iâ€™ll have my share with the pike and the eel.'

II.

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
There's a golden gleam on the distant height;
There's a silver shadow 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 whereâ€™s Father Philip, should toll the bell?

III.

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 hath lighted his candle of death and of dool:
Look, Father, look, and youâ€™ll laugh to see
How he gapes and he glares with his eyes on thee!

IV.

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 passed,-â€™
'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.'

...

Landedâ€”landed! the black book hath won,
Else had you seen Berwick with morning sun!
Sain ye, and save ye, and blithe mot ye be,
For seldom they land that go swimming with me.

Sir Walter Scott

Patriotism 01 Innominatus

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, concentred 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 unsung.

Sir Walter Scott

Patriotism 02 Nelson, Pitt, Fox

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 hallow'd tomb!

Deep grav'd 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.

Hadst 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 voice is still,
The warder silent on the hill!

O 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 polluted 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 vaults 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!
Theirs 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?'

Sir Walter Scott

Patriotism 1. Innominatus

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Sir Walter Scott

Pibroch Of Donail Dhu

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 Inverlochy.
Come every hill-plaid and
True heart that wears one,
Come every steel blade and
Strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended 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 targes.

Come as the winds come, when
Forests are rended;
Come as the waves come, when
Navies 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!

Sir Walter Scott

Proud Maisie

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 grey-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!'

Sir Walter Scott

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Sir Walter Scott

Rebecca's Hymn

When Israel, of the Lord beloved,
Out from the land of bondage came,
Her father's God before her moved,
An awful Guide, in smoke and flame.
By day, along the astonished lands
The cloudy pillar glided slow;
By night, Arabia's crimsoned sands
Returned 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 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 O, when gathers on our 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Rokeby: Canto II.

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 pace his destined hour
By Brackenbury's dungeon-tower,
These silver mists shall melt away,
And dew the woods with glittering spray.
Then in broad luster 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 gray.

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 sylvan bowers,
Salutes proud Raby's battled towers;
The rural brook of Egliston,
And Balder, named from Odin's son;
And Greta, to whose banks ere 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?
Who, wandering there, hath sought to change
Even for that vale so stern and strange,
Where Cartland's Crag, fantastic rent,
Through her green copse like spires are sent?
Yet, Albin, yet the praise be thine,
Thy scenes and story to combine!
Thou bid'st him, who by Roslin strays,
List to the deeds of other days;
Mid Cartland's Crag 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 sunrise shows from Barnard's height,
But from the towers, preventing day,
With Wilfrid took his early way,

While misty dawn, and moonbeam 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 gray ruins pass'd
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 long renown'd,
Whose votive shrine asserts their claim,
Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,
'Stern sons of war!' sad 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
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 gray
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 gray,
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 swathed their breast,
And wreathed its garland round their crest,
Or from the spires bade loosely flare
Its tendrils in the middle air.
As pensons wont to wave 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 tile 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 further 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 deemed 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,
Have quaked, like aspen leaves in May,
Beneath its universal sway.
Bertram had listed many a tale
Of wonder in his native dale,
That in his secret soul retain'd
The credence they in childhood gain'd:
Nor less his wild adventurous youth
Believed in every legend's truth;
Learn'd when, beneath the tropic gale,
Full swell'd the vessel's steady sail,
And the broad Indian moon her light
Pour'd on the watch of middle night,
When seamen love to hear and tell
Of portent, prodigy, and spell:
What gales are sold on Lapland's shore,
How whistle rash bids tempests roar,
Of witch, of mermaid, and of sprite,
Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light;
Or of that Phantom Ship, whose form
Shoots like a meteor through the storm;
When the dark scud comes driving hard,
And lower'd is every topsail-yard,
And canvas, wove in earthly looms,
No more to brave the storm presumes!
Then, 'mid the war of sea and sky,
Top and top-gallant hoisted high,
Full spread and crowded every sail,
The Demon Frigate braves the gale;
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,

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 Buccaneer,
Whose light-armed shallop anchored 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.

XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child,
Train'd in the mystic and the wild,
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 waylaid?
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 sprung forward, shouting high,
'Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt stand!'

And forth he darted, sword in hand.

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 scal'd 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 scar'd 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 further 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 its tottering bulk it bends,

It sways,...it loosens,...it descends!
And downward holds its headlong way,
Crashing o'er rock and copsewood 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.
'Twas a fair scene! the sunbeam lay
On battled tower and portal gray:
And from the glassy slope he sees
The Greta flow to meet the Tees;
Where, issuing from her darksome 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 bows 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.

'Tt 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;
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 belief 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,
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, of 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 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 unscabbarded 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 disappear'd,
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 coursers' 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 followed now in Wycliffe's train,
An answer for his lord to gain.
His steed, whose arch'd and sable neck
An hundred wreaths of foam 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 huntsmen to his bounds,
'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 route;
With them was Wilfrid, stung 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 eddyng by the moonlight dim,
Imperfectly to sink and swim.
What 'vail'd it, that tile 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 Brignall wood,
The hopeless quest in vain pursued.
O, fatal doom of human race!
What tyrant passions passions chase!
Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone,
Avarice and pride resume their throne;

The pang of instant terror by,
They dictate us 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.
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 Marston'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 â€™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.'

Sir Walter Scott

Rokeby: Canto Iii.

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 sylvan 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 Rookan-edge, and Redswair high,
To bugle rung and bloodhound'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.

â€ˆTwas 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,

Beating each cover while they came,
As if to start the sylvan 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'd every height to look around,
Then rushing on with naked sword,
Each dingle's bosky depths explored.
â€ˆTwas Redmond-by the azure eye;
â€ˆTwas 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 mutterd 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 gray 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 cushat'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.
â€˜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 edding 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,
Came 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 intent,
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 in 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 reckon 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 watch'd 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 waylaid,
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 loath 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 stanch 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 deep 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 Scargill's wave,
E'en now, o'er many a sister cave,
Where, far within the darksome rift,
The wedge and lever ply their thrift.
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 strew'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 summer 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!

XV1II.

'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 reenwood 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 divan,
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 blush'd 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.
Submit 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 turn'd 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 and 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,
For 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 may 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 hardest 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.'

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 fane
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 Stanimore meets Allen-aDale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
The mother, she ask'd of his household and home:
'Though the castle of Richmond stands 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?'
'I have-but two fair stags are near.
I watch'd her, as she slowly stray'd
From Eglistone 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Rokeby: Canto Iv.

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 sylvan 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 Mar's Mount the God Unknown!
Then gray 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 doting 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 imbrued 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 amongst 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 sylvan 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 unransom'd sent them home,

Loaded with many a gift, to prove
A generous foe's respect and love.

VII.

Years speed 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 grants 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 Ferraight 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 Ferraight 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 outspread,
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 renew.
When half was falter'd from his breast,
And half by dying signs express'd,

'Bless the O'Neale!' he faintly said,
And thus the faithful spirit fled.

X.

'Twas long ere soothing might prevail
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,
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 and 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 woods 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 bows 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 explor'd 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 dared 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 sware,
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
Forever to the fight and chase,
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 beseem 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;
Resolv'd 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 last seen me start,
As if a dagger thrill'd my heart,
When it has happ'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 gray 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 enquire
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-aimed;
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 wo 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 armed men in Mortham dell
Beset 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 'scaped 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 wo,
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 ruffian 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 homeward 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 suffrance 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 carbine-I'll show
An art that thou wilt gladly know,
How thou mayst safely quell a foe.'

XXVI.

On hands and knees fierce Bertram 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 carbine 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 undone
Forever, 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 withdrew,
Threaded the woodlands undescried,
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 restrained;
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 ruined 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 safeguard for the wealth,
Intrusted by her kinsman kind,
And for such noble use design'd.
'Was Barnard Castle then her choice,'
Wilfrid inquired 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 ambushade.
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 waylaid,
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.'

XXXI.

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 carbine 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Rokeby: Canto V.

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 awhile 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 of old around its head:
The battlements, the turrets gray,
Seem'd half abandon'd to decay;
On barbican 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,
Lending such strength as might withstand
The insult of marauding band.
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 nightly state,
Dismantled seem'd and desolate.
The moon through transom-shafts of stone,
Which cross'd the latticed oriels, 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 sylvan 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 moonbeams 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,
'Awhile 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
Awhile 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.

VI1.

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, replied,
'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 faithfulness.
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,'
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?'-
'OO, 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 Lysagh's knee,
(The Filea of O'Neale was he,
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;
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's 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 glow 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 bids 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 pansies, 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 blithesome 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 wo-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 wo.'
The harper came; - in youth's first prime
Himself; in mode of olden time
His garb was fashion'd, to express

The ancient English minstrel's dress,
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 minstrel 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, pray'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!

Wo came with war, and want with wo;
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 grey 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 gray,
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 watchword 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 ought supply,
Ere yet I leave my fathers' 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 unguess'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 failing 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 tame.
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,
That lack of sterner guilt supplied,
Could scarce support him when arose
The lay that mourn'd 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 wo,
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; 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
Reft of her honours, power, 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 unclose
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 wo.

XXVII. BALLAD.

'And whither would you lead me then?'
Quoth the Friar of orders-gray;
And the Ruffians 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 gray,
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.

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 gray,
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!' Redmond cried;
'Undo that wicket by thy side!
Bear hence Matilda-gain the wood
The pass may be awhile 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 throbb'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 moonlight
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!
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.
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.
Wo 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 gasped,
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 embrazure,
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 pendant 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 straggling 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 lie 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 undid;
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 Rokeby was no more!

Sir Walter Scott

Rokeby: Canto Vi.

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 sylvan 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,
â€˜Twas there was dealt the weekly dole;
And where yon 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 trod;
Untouch'd appeared the various spoil,
The purchase of his comrades' toil;
Masks and disguises grimed 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!

V.

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 scanty 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.

VI.

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 Baliol'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 wit thy wants supply,
Then fought for Rokeby:-Have I guess'd
My prisoner right?-'At thy behest.'-
He paused awhile, and then went on
With low and confidential tone;
Me, as I judge, not then he saw,
Close nestled in 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 father's 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 loath 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 Eglistone.'

X.

'Of Eglistone!-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-feign'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 cheek 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 jailor'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 clew.

XIV.

'Three days since, was that clew 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;
N'or 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 unhallowed 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 awhile forbore
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.
'Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
The wo 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;
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.

XXI.

'The dawning of my youth, with awe
And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw;
For over Redesdale it came,
As bodeful as their beacon-flame.
Edmund, thy years were scarcely mine,
When, challenging the Clans of Tyne
To bring their best my brand to prove,
O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove;
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 forward child with Bertram's name.
And now, my race of terror run,
Mine be the eve 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 Eglistone,
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 Marshal! 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 Eglistone.
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 Eglistone 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 headsman 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, woful, 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 wildlings 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 bewilder'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?
Krieel, 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 forever 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 meed,
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,
Appall not vengeance and despair.
The murtherer 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 hoof on harden'd ground;
Nearer it came, and yet more near,
The very deaths-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!
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.

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;
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 amongst 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.'

XXXIV.

No more of death and dying pang,
No more of trump and bugle clang,
Though through the sounding woods there come
Banner and bugle, trump and drum.
Arm'd with such powers as well had freed
Young Redmond at his utmost need,
And back'd with such a band of horse,
As might less ample powers enforce;
Possess'd of every proof and sign
That gave an heir to Mortham's line,
And yielded to a father's arms
An image of his Edith's charms,-
Mortham is come, to hear and see
Of this strange morn the history.
What saw he?-not the church's floor
Cumber'd with dead and stain'd with gore;
What heard he?-not the clamorous crowd,
That shout their congratulations loud:
Redmond he saw and heard alone,
Clasp'd him, and sobb'd, 'My son, my son!'

XXXV.

This chanced upon a summer morn,
When yellow waved the heavy corn:
But when brown August o'er the land
Call'd forth the reaper's busy band,
A gladsome sight the sylvan road
From Eglistone to Mortham show'd.
Awhile 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 morrow,
Years of joy for hours of sorrow!
The End.

Sir Walter Scott

Romance Of Dunois

It was Dunois, the young and brave, was bound for Palestine,
But first he made his orisons before Saint 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 followed to the Holy Land the banner of his Lord;
Where, faithful to his noble vow, his war-cry filled the air,
'Be honoured aye the bravest knight, beloved the fairest fair.'

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, 'Honoured be the bravest knight, beloved the fairest fair!'

Sir Walter Scott

Rosabelle

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 lady, 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 forebode that wreck is nigh.

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

'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
Tonight at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my lady-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 moonbeam.

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 Hawthornden.

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 Saint 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 Rosabelle!

And each Saint 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 Rosabelle.

Sir Walter Scott

Saint Cloud

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-â€”
Then give those hours their due,
And rank among the foremost class
Our evenings at Saint Cloud.

Sir Walter Scott

Saxon 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 cloud is low over the thane's castle
The eagle screams - he rides on its bosom.
Scream not, grey 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 thanes 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 he 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!
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 halls!
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.

Sir Walter Scott

Soldier, Rest! Thy Warfare O'Er,

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.

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-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

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.

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 foe man's terror,
Ever are the morning's mirror.

Arm and up - the morning beam
Hath call'd the rustic to his team,
Hath call'd the falc'ner 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
End 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Song -- 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 hear;
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?

Sir Walter Scott

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 grey 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.

Sir Walter Scott

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 Haaf have enough for us all:
There is torsk for the gentle, and skate for the carle,
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 life without mirth is a lamp without oil;
Then, mirth and long life to the bold Magnus Troil!

Sir Walter Scott

Sound, Sound The Clarion

Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Sir Walter Scott

St. Swithin's Chair

On Hallow-Mass Eve, ere yon boune 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 Hollow-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 St. Swithin's Chair,
The dew of the night has damped 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 St. 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 grey mist brought the ghastly form!

Sir Walter Scott

The Bard's Incantation

The Forest of Glenmore is drear,
It is all of black pine, 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 the 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 plough'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 yon 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 Coilgach, first, who rolled 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 hymned the joys of liberty!'

Sir Walter Scott

The Barefooted Friar

I'll give thee, good fellow, a twelvemonth 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 bunny'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 grey 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.

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 Barefooted 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 Barefooted 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 briar,
Is granted alone to the Barefooted Friar.

Sir Walter Scott

The Battle Of Sempach

'Twas when among our linden-trees
The bees had housed in swarms,
(And grey-hair'd peasants say that these
Betoken foreign arms),

Then look'd we down to Willisow,
The land was all in flame;
We knew the Archduke Leopold
With all his army came.

The Austrian nobles made their vow,
So hot their heart and bold,
'On Switzer carles we'll trample now,
And slay both young and old.'

With clarion loud, and banner proud,
From Zurich on the lake,
In martial pomp and fair array,
Their onward march they make.

'Now list, ye lowland nobles all -
Ye seek the mountain strand,
Nor wot ye what shall be your lot
In such a dangerous land.

'I rede ye, shrive ye of your sins,
Before ye farther go;
A skirmish in Helvetian 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
Together 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 dismay'd his rainbow fair
Against a swarthy cloud.

Then heart and pulse throbb'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 mane 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 met-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 hand,
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 meed 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 'whelmed the boat, and as they strove,
He stunn'd 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 naught.'

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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Black Knight's Song

Knight And Wamba

There came three merry men from south, west, and north,
Ever more sing the roundelay;
To win the Widow of Wycombe forth,
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 faine,
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 never was a widow could say him nay.

Sir Walter Scott

The Bridal Of Triermain

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 silvan bridge;
For here, compell'd to disunite,
Round petty isles the runnels glide,
And chafing off their puny spite,
The shallows 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 fine;
So! now, the danger dared at last,
Look back, and smile at perils past!

III.

And now we reach the favourite glade,
Paled in 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 not that 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 guess'd?
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 saw only 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 in a mimic tone.
Ne'er did it sound o'er sainted well,

Nor boasts it aught of Border spell;
It strings no feudal slogan pour,
Its heroes draw no broad claymore;
No shouting clans applauses raise,
Because it sung their father's praise;
On Scottish moor, or English down,
It ne'er was graced with 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 a 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;
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 I.

I.

Where is the maiden of mortal strain
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?
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 a maiden that loves in vain,
Holy as a hermit's vesper strain;
Gentle as a 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 lull 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 a frost-fog grey,
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 harken, 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 Fastwaite 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 the 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 redden'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 Treirmain
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,
Of if t'was but an airy thing,
Such as fantastic slumbers bring,
Fram'd from the rainbow's varying dyes
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 Druid's 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 aspen-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 Saint 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 gulfs 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;
Rock 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 wot
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 his 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, midmost 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 slung,

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 grey walls, no banners crown'd,
Upon the watch-tower's airy round
No warder stood his horn to sound,
No guard beside the drawbridge 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 left him to graze on bank and mead;
And slowly he climb'd the narrow way
That reach'd the entrance grim and grey,
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;
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;
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.

'An hundred torches, flashing bright,
Dispell'd at once the gloomy night
That lour'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 wreath'd them in 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 fling,
Framed of the fairest flowers of spring.
While some of their gentle force unite
Onwards 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 helmit'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 whispered, '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 lovely glens their birth,
Nor knew to pay to stranger worth

And dignity their due;
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
They toys he whisper'd 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 heav'd her bosom's pride.
Slight symptoms these, but shepherds know
How hot the mid-day sun shall glow
From the midst 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 beakers 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 II.

I.

'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 the bosom of his paramour,
Than from a Saxon knight to wrest
The honours of his heathen crest!
Better to wreath, 'mid tresses brown,
The heron's plume her hawk struck down,
Than o'er the alter 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, with fear
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 alters 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 feigned 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 free.

VI.

'Three summer months had scanty 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 humbler 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 rais'd;
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 dewdrop 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 they once 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 a 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:
Rython, the mighty giant, slain
By his good brand, relieved Bretagne:
The Pictish Gillamore in fight,
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 in Arthur's host,
Save that he trode on 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 Galahad 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, Sir Bore,
Sir Carodac the keen,
The gentle Gawain's courteous lore,
Hector de Mares and Pellinore,
And Lancelot, that evermore
Look'd stol'n-wise on the Queen.

XIV.

'When wine and mirth did most abound,
And harpers play'd their blithest round,
A shrilly trumpet shook the ground,
And marshals cleared 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 Saint 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 honor flown.
The knights they busied them so fast,
With buckling spur and belt,
That sigh and look, by ladies cast,
Were neither seen or 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 neighbors' wives,
And one who loved his own.
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 a 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.'

Sir Walter Scott

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 dimm'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 were won
The listed field at Askalon!

"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.
Seest 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.'

Sir Walter Scott

The Dance Of Death

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 prolonged the sway
Of timeless darkness over day;
Whirlwind, thunder-clap, and shower
Marked it a predestined hour.
Broad and frequent through the night
Flashed the sheets of levin-light:
Muskets, glancing lightnings back,
Showed the dreary bivouac
Where the soldier lay,
Chill and stiff, and drenched 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 grey Allan sleepless lay;
Grey Allan, who, for many a day,
Had followed stout and stern,
Where, through battle's rout and reel,
Storm of shot and edge 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 Ardgower,
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.

Lone 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 cloaked patrol their course,
And spurred '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 passed,
When down the destined plain,
'Twixt Britain and the bands of France,
Wild as marsh-borne meteor's glance,
Strange phantoms wheeled a revel dance,
And doomed 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 unchristened Dane.
An indistinct and phantom band,
They wheeled their ring-dance hand in hand,
With gestures wild and dread;
The Seer, who watched 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.
Wheel the wild dance
While lightnings glance,
And thunders rattle loud,
And call the brave
To bloody grave,
To sleep without a shroud.

V.

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, grey Allan's mates with awe
Heard of the visioned sights he saw,
The legend heard him say;

But the Seer's gifted eye was dim,
Deafened 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Dreary Change {the Sun Upon The Weirclaw Hill}

The sun upon the Weirclaw 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, - "â€”
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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Dying Bard

I.

Dinas Emlinn, 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 Emlinn, 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 Taliessin, 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!

Sir Walter Scott

The Dying Gipsy Smuggler

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 snow-drift 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Eve Of St. John

The baron of Smaylho'me 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 Buccleuch,
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 Ancram 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 inbrued,-
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, faint-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 warder 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 warder 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 flod, and Mertoun'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 toss'd 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,
That monk, who speaks to none-
That nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
That monk the bold Baron.

Sir Walter Scott

The Field Of Waterloo

I.

Fair Brussels, thou art far behind,
Though, lingering on the morning wind,
We yet may hear the hour
Pealed over orchard and canal,
With voice prolonged 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,
Strewed on the blighted ground, receives
Nor sun, nor air, nor rain.
No opening glade dawns on our way,
No streamlet, glancing to the ray,
Our woodland path has crossed;
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 hooked staff and shortened 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 disproportioned spire, are thine,
Immortal WATERLOO!

III.

Fear not the heat, though full and high
The sun has scorched 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 shattered 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 softened 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 shattered 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 lightened 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 scorched by flame,
To dress the homely feast they came,
And toiled the kerchiefed 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
Than that which peasant's scythe demands,
Was gathered in by sterner hands,
With bayonet, blade, and spear.
No vulgar crop was theirs to reap,
No stinted harvest thin and cheap!
Heroes before each fatal sweep
Fell thick as ripened grain;
And ere the darkening of the day,
Piled high as autumn shocks, there lay
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 hardened mud
Still shows where, fetlock-deep in blood,
The fierce dragoon, through battle's flood,
Dashed 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 reeks against the sultry beam,
From yonder trenched mound?
The pestilential fumes declare
That Carnage has replenished there

Her garner-house profound.

VII.

Far other harvest-home and feast,
Than claims the boor from scythe released,
On these scorched fields were known!
Death hovered 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 filled the chorus of the fray -
From cannon-roar and trumpet-bray,
From charging squadrons' wild hurra,
From the wild clang that marked 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 rife,
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 attained his height,
And through the war-smoke, volumed high,
Still peals that unremitted 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 turned 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 showed their mangled plight
In token of the unfinished 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 outstretched 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;
'Confront the battery's jaws of flame!
Rush on the levelled gun!

My steel-clad cuirassiers, advance!
Each Hulan forward with his lance,
My Guard-my Chosen-charge for France,
France and Napoleon!'

Loud answered their acclaiming shout,
Greeting the mandate which sent out
Their bravest and their best to dare
The fate their leader shunned to share.
But HE, his country's sword and shield,

Still in the battle-front revealed,
Where danger fiercest swept the field,
Came like a beam of light,
In action prompt, in sentence brief -
'Soldiers, stand firm!' exclaimed the Chief,
'England shall tell the fight!'

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-mouths roared loud,
And from their throats, with flash and cloud,
Their showers of iron threw.
Beneath their fire, in full career,
Rushed on the ponderous cuirassier,
The lancer couched his ruthless spear,
And hurrying as to havoc near,
The cohorts' eagles flew.
In one dark torrent, broad and strong,
The advancing onset rolled along,
Forth harbingered by fierce acclaim,
That, from the shroud of smoke and flame,
Pealed 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 viewed
Changed its proud glance of fortitude,
Nor was one forward footstep stayed,
As dropped the dying and the dead.
Fast as their ranks the thunders tear,
Fast they renewed each serried square;
And on the wounded and the slain
Closed their diminished files again,
Till from their line scarce spears'-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,
Wheeled 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 scattered band
Raged the fierce rider's bloody brand,
Recoiled 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 levelled 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 than canst tell what fortune proved
That Chieftain, who, of yore,
Ambition's dizzy paths essayed
And with the gladiators' aid
For empire enterprised -
He stood the cast his rashness played,
Left not the victims he had made,
Dug his red grave with his own blade,
And on the field he lost was laid,
Abhorred-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 inconsistency 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, swelled 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 displayed
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 brooked thy veterans' wish to hear,
Who, as thy flight they eyed
Exclaimed,-while tears of anguish came,
Wrung forth by pride, and rage, and shame,
'O that he had but died!'
But yet, to sum this hour of ill,
Look, ere thou leav'st 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 ruined peasant's eye,
Objects half seen roll swiftly by,
Down the dread current hurled -
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
Reddened and thawed 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 cleft
So ominous, when, all bereft
Of aid, the valiant Polack left -
Ay, left by thee-found soldiers grave
In Leipsic's corpse-encumbered 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'st 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 wrenched the sword.

XVIII.

Yet, even in yon sequestered 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 marred 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 renewed
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, the State's decree,
The ducal rank, the gartered 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 softened 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 pressed
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!
Oh! 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, suppressed,
Is labouring in a father's breast, -
With no inquiry vain pursue
The cause, but think on Waterloo!

XXI.

Period of honour as of woes,
What bright careers 'twas thine to close! -
Marked on thy roll of blood what names
To Britain'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 watched 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-earned 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 shattered 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 shattered beeches fell
The blended rage of shot and shell,
Though from thy blackened 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,
For many an age remembered long,
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 steamers sport,
And for the prison-ship of guilt and gloom,
The fisher-skiff, and barge that bears a court,
Still wafting 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 maintained 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 arrayed,
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 gleamed beneath its ray,
Where first the soldier, stung with generous shame,

Rivalled the heroes of the watery way,
And washed 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 halt faced, like him, a dragon foe,
And rescued innocence from overthrow,
And trampled down, like him, tyrannic might,
And to the gazing world may'st proudly show
The chosen emblem of thy sainted Knight,
Who quelled 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Gray Brother

The Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
All on Saint Peter's day,
With the power, to him given, by the saints of 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 of 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 abhorr'd,
Recoils each holy thing.

'Up, up, unhappy! haste, arise!
My adjuration fear!
I charge thee not to stop my voice,
Nor longer tarry here!'-

Amid them all a pilgrim kneel'd,
In gown of sackcloth grey;
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 deep,
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,
Dalkeith, 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 grey with red;

And the convent bell did vespers tell,
Newbattle's oaks among,
And mingled with the solemn knell
Our Lady'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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lady Of The Lake: Canto 1 (Excerpt)

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.

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-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping....

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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lady Of The Lake: Canto 3 (Excerpt)

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!

Sir Walter Scott

The Lady Of The Lake: Canto 5 (Excerpt)

"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,
Bonnets and spears and bended bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray 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--"How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,--I am Roderick Dhu!"X

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."
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.
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:
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."--XIII

The Saxon paused:--"I ne'er delay'd,
When foeman 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 foeman'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?

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,
On 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

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
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 I

"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.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
His knee was planted in his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright!--
--But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
Reel'd soul and sense, reel'd brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath

The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lady Of The Lake: Canto Ii. - The Island

I.

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
'T is morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin spring
Of life reviving, with reviving day;
And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way again,
Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel gray,
And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, O white-haired 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 battled line,
Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport!
Where beauty sees the brave resort,
The honored meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
And lost in love's 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 erewhile,
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 reached 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, gray, 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,
Seemed watching the awakening fire;
So still he sat 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 sat and smiled.-
Smiled she to see the stately drake
Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
While her vexed spaniel from the beach
Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?
Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,
Why deepened 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 eve!

VI.

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellen marked him not;
But when he turned 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 e'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,
Watched 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!'
'T was thus upbraiding conscience said,-
'Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phrase of Southern tongue;
Not so had Malcolm strained 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 Graeme!
Scarce from her lip the word had rushed,
When deep the conscious maiden blushed;
For of his clan, in hall and bower,
Young Malcolm Graeme 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 bidst, O noble maid,'
Clasping his withered hands, he said,
'Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!
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 swayed,
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell.'

VIII.

'But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed,
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,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall.
Ere Douglases, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.-
O! 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 shivered shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!

IX.

Soothing she answered him: 'Assuage,
Mine honored 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 resigned
Than yonder oak might give the wind;
The graceful foliage storms may reeve,
'Fine noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me'-she stooped, and, looking round,
Plucked a blue harebell 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 wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway
Wiled the old Harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw,
When angels stoop to soothe their woe
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:
'Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honors, thou hast lost!
O. might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
To see my favorite's step advance
The lightest in the courtly dance,
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!'

XI.

'Fair dreams are these,' the maiden cried,-
Light was her accent, yet she sighed,-
'Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footstep 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 her glee repressed:
'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;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlawed, 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 stricken deer,
Disowned by every noble peer,
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 sorrowed 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 Maronnan's cell;
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.

XIV.

'Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray,-
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?-I grant him brave,
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave;
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 honor, as his daughter ought;
But can I clasp it reeking red
From peasants slaughtered 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 shuddered 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 Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
What time he leagued, no longer foes
His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy hath harbored here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deemed 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 leapt the dance with Malcolm Graeme;
Still, though thy sire the peace renewed
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 hold pibroch from afar.'

XVI.

Far up the lengthened lake were spied
Four darkening specks upon the tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and massed barges grew,
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
Steered full upon the lonely isle;
The point of Brianchoil they passed,

And, to the windward as they cast,
Against the sun they gave to shine
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered Pine.
Nearer and nearer as they bear,
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.
Now might you see the tartars 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 furrowed 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 sounds, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Wailed 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.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And hurrying at the signal dread,
'Fine battered earth returns their tread.
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expressed their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
Condensed, the battle yelled amain:
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,

Retreat borne headlong into rout,
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's congeal-all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain, but slow
Sunk in a moan prolonged 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! fro!'
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX.

Boat Song.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
Honored and blessed be the ever-green 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 bourgeon and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the mountain,

The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moored 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 again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled 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.
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 again,
'Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!'

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine!
O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepest 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 called Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land:

'Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreath a victor's brow?'
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obeyed,
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 scanned,
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 pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 't was an hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked 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.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Marked Roderick landing on the isle;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,

Then dashed with hasty hand away
From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;
And Douglas, as his hand he laid
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 arched gate of Bothwell proud,
While many a minstrel answered 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 marshalled crowd,
Though the waned crescent owned my might,
And in my train trooped lord and knight,
Though Blantyre hymned 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 appeared,
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 his favorite stand,
Closed his dark wing, relaxed 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'erweighed 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 fair, 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,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.
Trained 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 winged with fear,
Outstripped 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 played 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 returned? 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 reft
Were all of Douglas I have left.
I met young Malcolm as I strayed
Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade
Nor strayed I safe, for all around
Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.
This youth, though still a royal ward,
Risky 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 again.'

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Graeme,
Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
Failed aught in hospitality.
In talk and sport they whiled away
The morning of that summer day;
But at high noon a courier light
Held secret parley with the knight,
Whose moody aspect soon declared
That evil were the news he heard.
Deep thought seemed 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 fixed them on the ground,
As studying phrase that might avail
Best to convey unpleasant tale.
Long with his dagger's hilt he played,
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 honored mother;-Ellen,-why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?-
And Graeme, 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 trawl; who came
To share their monarch's sylvan 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 Ettrick 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 sylvan 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 turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.

The hasty color went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcohm Graeme,
But from his glance it well appeared
'T was but for Ellen that he feared;
While, sorrowful, but undismayed,
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 gray 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,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er,'-

XXX.

'No, by mine honor,' Roderick said,
'So help me Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's 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 heat 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 foiled King from pathless glen
Shall bootless turn him home again.'

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,
Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,
Till wakened 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 yawned around,
By crossing terrors wildly tossed,
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 marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,

One instant rushed 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.
'T was 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 darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied
Seemed, by the torch's gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the righted pilgrim's way:
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes that mocked at tears before
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob-so mute were all
Was heard distinctly through the ball.
The son's despair, the mother's look,

III 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! holdst thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas. and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delayed.'
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 fallen so far,
His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil
Of such dishonorable 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 veiled his wrath in scornful word:
Rest safe till morning; pity 't were
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
Nor lackey with his freeborn clan
The pageant pomp of earthly man.
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
Thou canst our strength and passes show.-
Malise, what ho!'-his henchman came:
'Give our safe-conduct to the Graeme.'
Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold:
Fear nothing for thy favorite hold;
The spot an angel deigned to grace
Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.
Thy churlish courtesy for those
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
As safe to me the mountain way
At midnight as in blaze of day,
Though with his boldest at his back
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.-
Brave Douglas,-lovely Ellen,-nay,
Naught here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret but we meet again.-
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,'-
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan followed to the strand -
Such was the Douglas's command-
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 't were 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 rolled,
His ample plaid in tightened fold,
And stripped 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 pressed,-
'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 honored Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare,--
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him naught,
Not tile 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 steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lady Of The Lake: Canto Iv. - The Prophecy

I.

The rose is fairest when 't is budding new,
And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew
And love is loveliest when embalmed 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 bridegroom's tongue.
All while he stripped 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 returned 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 tried 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 called a slumberer by his side,
And stirred him with his slackened 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 foeman?' Norman said.-
'Varying reports from near and far;

This certain,-that a band of war
Has for two days been ready boune,
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 Chieftain'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 called; 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 merrymen Gallangad.
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
His red eye glowed like fiery spark;
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
Sore did he cumber our retreat,

And kept our stoutest kerns in awe,
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
But steep and flinty was the road,
And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
And when we came to Dennan's Row
A child might scathless stroke his brow.

V.

Norman.

'That bull was slain; his reeking hide
They stretched 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.
Couched on a shelf 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, dike a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughtered 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, gleaned 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 endowed 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, unfurled,
The curtain of the future world.
Yet, witness every quaking limb,
My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,
My soul with harrowing anguish torn,
This for my Chieftain have I borne!-
The shapes that sought my fearful couch
A 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 fateful 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-offered 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 clown.

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 marked 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 boune.'
'Then shall it see a meeting stern!
But, for the place,-say, couldst thou learn
Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
Strengthened by them, we well might bide
The battle on Benledi's side.
Thou couldst not?-well! Clan-Alpine's men
Shall man the Trosachs' 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
For maid beloved!-But why
Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omened 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 gray stone

Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,
While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are poured 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 cowed by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats with many a light,
Floating the livelong yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
By the red streamers of the north;
I marked at morn how close they ride,
Thick moored 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 glistened in his eye
Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
My soul, though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturbed 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
Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream
Of Malcolm Graeme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he bowed thine omen aught?

O no' 't was 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 friends' 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 Graeme,-
Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!-
My visioned 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 spot!
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,
Rut 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 word,
As outlaws wont to do.

'O Alice, 't was all for thy locks so bright,
And 't was 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 shear from the slaughtered deer,
To keep the cold away.'

'O Richard! if my brother died,
'T was 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 gray,
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 woned within the hill,-
Like wind in the porch of a ruined 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 yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened man;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For muttered word or ban.

'Lay on him the curse of the withered 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 stilled their singing;
The evening blaze cloth Alice raise,
And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
Before Lord Richard stands,

And, as he crossed and blessed 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 stepped 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 cloth ride by their monarch's side,
With bit and bridle ringing:

'And gayly shines the Fairy-land--
But all is glistening show,
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 snatched away
To the joyless Elfin bower.

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

She crossed him once--she crossed him twice--
That lady was so brave;
The fouler grew his goblin hue,
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

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

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were stayed,
A stranger climbed 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 suppressed 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 marshalled over bank and bourne

The happy path of my return.'
'The happy path!-what! said he naught
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 tartars 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;
et life I hold but idle breath
When love or honor's weighed 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! 't were 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

Outlawed and exiled, under ban;
The price of blood is on his head,
With me 't were 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 bears;
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 sealed her Malcolm's doom
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffered 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 mayst trust yon 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 crossed his brain
He paused, and turned, 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,
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-kissed her hand-and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined 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 Trosachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:
Sudden his guide whooped loud and high-
'Murdoch! was that a signal cry?'-
He stammered forth, 'I shout to scare
Yon raven from his dainty fare.'
He looked-he knew the raven's prey,
His own brave steed: 'Ah! gallant gray!
For thee-for me, perchance-'t were well
We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' 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 tattered weeds and wild array,
Stood on a cliff beside the way,
And glancing round her restless eye,
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy.
Her brow was wreathed 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 shrieked till all the rocks replied;
As loud she laughed when near they drew,
For then the Lowland garb she knew;
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 strained and roughened, still
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.
Song.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
They say my brain is warped 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 drowned 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 gray,
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 forayed Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.-
Hece, brain-sick fool!'-He raised his bow:-
'Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitched a bar!'
'Thanks, champion, thanks' the Maniac cried,
And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
'See the gray 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 stayed,
Wave forth a banner fail 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 greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trilled 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 fixed her apprehensive eye,
Then turned it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

XXV.

'The toils are pitched, 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 hardily, hardily.

'It was there he met with a wounded doe,
She was bleeding deathfully;
She warned 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-tossed,
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 hell speed the Clansman flew,
But in his race his bow he drew.
The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,
And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.-
Murdoch 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 couched upon the heathery moor;
Them couldst thou reach!-it may not be
Thine ambushed 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 fallen with falcon eye,
He grimly smiled to see him die,
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sat beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,
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 dimmed its shine.
I will not tell thee when 't was 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 honored sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
With tartars 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 poured his eyes at pity's claims;
And now, with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murdered 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.'

Barred 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 turned back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength
He couched 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 guessed
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 couch me here till evening gray,
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 aright,
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
Tempered the midnight mountain air,
But every breeze that swept the wold
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.
In dread, in danger, and alone,
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,
A watch-fire close before him burned.

XXX.

Beside its embers red and clear
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;
And up he sprung with sword in hand,-
'Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!'
'A stranger.' 'What cost thou require?'
'Rest and a guide, and food and fire
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost.'
'Art thou a friend to Roderick?' 'No.'
'Thou dar'st 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 recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?
Thus treacherous scouts,-yet sure they lie
Who say thou cam'st 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 mayst 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 hardened flesh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech addressed:-
'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 gathered 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.

Sir Walter Scott

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,
Poor poor Louise.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lay Of The Last Minstrel: Canto 6 (Excerpt)

[ROSABELLE]6-

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 edg'd with white:
To inch and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,
Whose screams forebode 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 Lindesay'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 glar'd 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 Hawthorn-den.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheath'd 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.

Blaz'd battlement and pinnet high,
Blaz'd 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 Rosabelle!

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 Rosabelle.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lay Of The Last Minstrel: Canto I

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 filled 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 timed, 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 bunny'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 wished 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 carls;
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 I.

The feast was over in Branksome tower,
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 staghours, weary with the chase,

Lay stretch'd upon the rusy foor
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall,
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.

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 saddlebow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:-
Such was the custom of Branksome-Hall.

VI

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?-
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying?
They watch to hear the war-horn braying;
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 Warkwork, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall-
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell
How Lord Walter fell.
When startled burghers fled afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin
Saw lances gleam and falchion redden,
And heard the slogan's deadly yell-
Then the Chef of Branksome fell.

VIII

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
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 flowers 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 mode, 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 Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To aerial minstrelry
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!'

XVI

River Spirit

'Tears of an imprisoned 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 throbb'd high with pride:-
'Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!'

XIX

The Lady 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 bore,
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 blood-hounds;

In Eske or Liddell, 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 Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had be 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 Tweedside;
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 hadst 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 Hairibee.'

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.

XXVI

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 Teviotside,
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-craggs 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 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 creased 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 flaming 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 march-man 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 Harwick 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.
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 mistrelsy;
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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lay Of The Last Minstrel: Canto II.

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;
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;
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 very 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.
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 Castille,
The youth in glittering squadrons start;
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-geuille,
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 screen'd 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 foliated tracery combined;
Thou wouldst have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
In many a freakish know, 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 have I 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,
Than 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 they Abbay'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.'-
Slowly moved the Monk to the broad flagstone,
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 haaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd th 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.

XXII

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 cancel 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.

XXIII

'Now, hie thee hence,' the Father said,
'And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!'
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
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.

XXIV

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 he might.

XXV

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 Margarent 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 bloodhound,
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 lady 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 Margarent 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, you 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 a 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.
'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 Carnstoun 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 Lady'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 strem,
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.

The Lay Of The Last Minstrel: Canto Iii.

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 pricking on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay;
His armor 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 foe 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
Pierc'd 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 girthing broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course;
Nor knew-so giddy rolled 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 Brauksome 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 chlsps, 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.

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.

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 dissolv'd the spell,
And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde
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 amaz'd 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 pierc'd 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;
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 overthrew;
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;
She bade the gash be cleans'd 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.
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.
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 lov'd 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 Priest-haughswire;
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,
Elliot 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 clamor dread,

The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coat,
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
Wav'd 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 glanc'd to sight
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,
Haunted by the lonely ean;
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 ceaseles 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.
Ceas'd 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lay Of The Last Minstrel: Canto Iv.

I

Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warrior 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 seiz'd 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 sieg'd 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 therefore!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Serv'd to guide me on my flight;
But I was chas'd the livelong night.
Black John of 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 Fastern'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 gay 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 treasured fleur-de-luce he claims

To wreath 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.

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 Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood 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,
Came trooping down the Todshaw-hill;

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 vere 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 merry men 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

Loudly 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!
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.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Lady 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
Car'd not to face the Lady sage.
He counterfeited childish fear
And shriek'd, and shed full many tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.
The attendants to the Lady told
Some fairy, sure, had chang'd the child,
That wot 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!'

XV

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.

Soon as the palfrey felt the wight
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 chang'd, 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 pierc'd 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 mercenaries, 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 frounc'd 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 fom beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men-at-arms, with glaive and spear,
Brought up the battle's glitterng rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen;
With favor 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 armor 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 breast-plate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He rul'd his eager courser's gait;
Forc'd him, with chasten'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 redes you swith 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 pain.
It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He bunny'd to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,

And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,
And storm and spoil thy garrison:
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred.'

XXV

He ceased-and loud the boy did cry,
And stretch'd his little arms on high;
Implor'd for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment chang'd that Ladye's cheer,
Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gaz'd 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
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave, for his honor's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good,
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford;
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 grey-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 wav'd 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 Lady 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 stay'd,
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 unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland.'

XXXIII

Unconscious of the near relief
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'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.
Clos'd was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclos'd 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.

XIV

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 chaf'd 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 harbor now the hare;
Of manners, long since chang'd and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
So long had slept, that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twin'd 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 smil'd, well-pleas'd; 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-liv'd blaze.

Smil'd then, well pleas'd, the aged man
And thus his tale continued ran.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lay Of The Last Minstrel: Canto V.

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 distill;
Through his lov'd 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,
Liv'd 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 blaz'd 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 armor free,
More fam'd 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 interchang'd 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 chas'd the day;
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands so fair together rang'd,
Those hands, so frankly interchang'd,
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 lattic'd windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
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 clamors 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:
Betimes 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 gaz'd 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 announc'd his tread -
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he rais'd his plumed head -
Bless'd Mary! can it be?
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers
With fearless step and free.
She dar'd not sign, she dar'd 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.
Unchalleng'd thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchalleng'd, 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 mus'd 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 lov'd 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 we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port arous'd 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 Ettric wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast
About the knight each favor'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 armor sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd and crav'd 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, shap'd of buff,
With satin slash'd and lin'd;

Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twin'd;
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 plac'd,
The Dame and she the barriers grac'd.

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 pois'd high,
And measur'd step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI

Ill 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 rais'd the dying man;
Loose wav'd 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 armor 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.
Car'd 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 scar'd the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he lov'd,
Yet, when he saw what hap had prov'd
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 wind,
Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way
And with the bugle rouse the fray!
I'd give the lands of Deloraine
Dark Musgrave were alive again.'

XXX

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowing back to Cumberland.
They rais'd brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levell'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 mountainside 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 skillful hand.

The aged Harper howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Lik'd not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less lik'd he still that scornful jeer
Mispris'd the land he lov'd so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resum'd his minstrel strain.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lord Of The Isles: Canto I.

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 silvan music swell,
The deep-toned cushat, and the redbreast 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 changing 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 moralise 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 and 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 reprov'd,
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.

Canto I.

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 of Inninmore,
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, Hay, 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
Where 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,' grey 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 streamer's 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 with 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 a 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 -
Inviolable in Highland hall)-
Grey Morag sat a space apart,
In Edith's eyes to read her heart.
In vain the attendant's 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,
Or mainland turn, where many a tower
Owns 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 Dunstaffnage 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 warder'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,
Crownlets 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,
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 of 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 Bentella'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 grey
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 veil'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 sigh'd,
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 lea,
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, or 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,
Stream'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 careless 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 galleyes 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 rout,
With tale, and 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 straight and lake;
And midway 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 Inninmore;
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 went 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 gate
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 bonding, forward sprung the ship,
Like greyhound starting from the slip
To seize his flying prey.
Awaked before the rushing prow,
The mimic fires of ocean glow,
Those lightnings of the wave;
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 rout.
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,
So strait, so high, so steep,
With peasant's staff on valiant hand
Might well the dizzy path have mann'd,
'Gainst hundreds arm'd with spear and brand,
And plunged them in the deep.
His bugle then the helmsman wound;
Loud answered 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,
Fear'd lest, amidst these wildering seas,
The darksome night and freshening breeze
Had driven thy bark astray.'-

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
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 whither 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.
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,
Shunn'd by the pilgrim on the wold,
And wanderer on the lea!'

XXVII.

'Bold stranger, no - 'gainst claim like thine,
No bolt revolves by hand of mine,
Though urged in tone that more express'd
A monarch than a suppliant guest.
Be what ye will, Artornish Hall
On this glad eve is free to all.
Though ye had drawn a hostile sword
'Gainst our ally, great England's Lord,
Or mail upon your shoulders borne,
To battle with the Lord of Lorn,
Or, outlaw'd, dwelt by greenwood tree
With the fierce Knight of Ellerslie,
Or aided even the murderous strife,
When Comyn fell beneath the knife
Of that fell homicide The Bruce,
This night had been a term of truce.-

Ho, vassals! give these guests your care,
And show the narrow postern stair.'

XXVIII.

To land these two bold brethren leapt,
(The weary crew their vessel kept),
And, lighted by the torches' flare,
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.

XXIX.

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.

XXX.

And 'Rest ye here,' the Warder bade,
'Till to our Lord your suit is said.-
And, comrades, gaze not on the maid,
And on these men who ask our aid,
As if ye ne'er had seen

A damsel tired of midnight bark,
Or wanderers of a moulding stark,
And bearing martial mien.'
But not for Eachin's reproof
Would page or vassal stand aloof,
But crowded on to stare,
As men of courtesy untaught,
Till fiery Edward roughly caught,
From one, the foremost there,
His chequer'd plaid, and in its shroud,
Involved his sister fair.
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.'

XXXI.

Proud was his tone, but calm; his eye
Had that compelling dignity,
His mien that bearing haught and high,
Which common spirits fear;
Need 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 is 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.

The Lord Of The Isles: Canto II.

I.

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 throes,
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 beaker's 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 doubly 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; 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 tears a seneschal,
To marshal 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,
Life 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
Her motions' 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 her 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?
And if, their winter's exile o'er,
They harbour'd still by Ulster'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 his guess of mine.'
He ceased, and it was silence all,
Until the minstrel waked the hall.

XI.

The Broach of Lorn.

'Whence the broach of burning gold,
That clasps the Chieftain's mantle-fold,
Wrought and chased with rare device,

Studded fair with gems of price,
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?
Did, in Iceland's darksome mine,
Dwarf's swart hands thy metal twine?
Or, mortal-moulded, comest thou here,
From England's love, or France's fear?

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 wert 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 'scaped with scathe and scorn,
Left the pledge with conquering Lorn!

XIII.

Song Continued.

'Vain was then the Douglas brand,
Vain the Campbell's vaunted hand,
Vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk,
Making sure of murder's work;
Barendown fled fast away,
Fled the fiery De la Haye,
When this broach, 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!
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,
And 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 wile 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.'-
'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, and weapon bared,
Each foot advanced, - a surly pause
Still revered 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 marble 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 accents 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 martyr's bay,
And by Columba's stone.
His monks have heard their hymnings high
Sound from the summit of Dun-Y,
To cheer his penance lone,
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 man from sainted isle;
We will his holy doom abide,
The Abbot shall our strife decide.'

XXII.

Scarcely this fair accord was o'er,
When through the wide revolving door
The black-stol'd 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 grey.
'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 may'st 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 nought relax'd his brow of awe.

XXVI.

Then Argentine, in England's name,
So highly urged his sovereign's claim,
He wak'd a spark, that, long suppress'd,
Had smoulder'd in Lord Ronald's breast;
And now, as from the flint of 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,
And done to death by felon hand,

For guarding well his father's land.
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?
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?
And must his word, till dying day,
Be nought but quarter, hang, and slay! -
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 accurs'd,
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 Torquil 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,
Torquil'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;
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-repent'd deed,
Nor censer 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 in his brow, through every vein
In azure tide the currents strain,
And undistinguished 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,
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 he 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lord Of The Isles: Canto Iii.

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-glass 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 grey 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 inbrued
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! - treachery! -
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 Abott'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 feigned 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
Echoed to Lorn's impatient call -
'My horse, my mantle, and my train!
Let none who honours Lorn remain!'-
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 excuse for mirth broke short,
And bade them in Artornish fort
In confidence remain.
Now torch and menial tendance led
Chieftains and knight to bower and bed,
And beads were told, and Aves said,
And soon they sunk away
Into such sleep as wont 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 jarr'd 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.
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,
When that wise will, which masters ours,
Compell'd us to your friendly towers.'

X.

Then Torquil spoke:- 'The time craves 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 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, 'contents 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 counsel gladlier hear;
But, all achieved as soon as plann'd,
Both barks, in secret arm'd and mann'd,
From out the haven bore;
On different voyage forth they ply,
This for the coast of winged 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,
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 Dunsbye;
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;
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, -
'Saint Mary! what a scene is here!
I've traversed many a mountain-strand,
Abroad 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 Glencroe,
And copse 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 drear
Are precipice 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 rifts,
Which seam its shiver'd head?' -
'Coriskin call the dark lake's name,
Coolin the ridge, as bards proclaim,
From old Cuchullin, chief of flame.
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 Torquil 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 Corryvreckin'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 brows 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 on 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;
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 proferr'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 treachery 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! we mix 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;
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 elder said,
'And hard, methinks, to be obey'd.
How say you, if, to wreak the scorn
That pays our kindness harsh return,
'Then say we, that our swords are steel!
And our vow binds us not to fast,
Where gold or force may buy repast.'-
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 grey.

The younger, too, who seem'd his son,
Had that dark look to 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 Woodstocke 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 reft 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 greyish 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 resigned 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 a while, 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 splash 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.
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!
Upwards he cast his dizzy eyes,...
Murmurs his master's name,...and dies!

XXIX.

Not so awoke the King! his hand
Snatch'd from the flame a knotted brand,
The nearest weapon on his wrath;
With this he cross'd the murderer's path.
And venged young Allan well!
The spatter'd brain and bubbling blood
Hiss'd on the half-extinguish'd wood,
The miscreant gasp'd and fell!
Nor rose in peace the Island Lord;
One caitiff died upon his sword,
And one beneath his grasp lies prone,
And one beneath his grasp lies prone,
In mortal grapple overthrown.
But while Lord Ronald's dagger drank
The life-blood from his panting flank,
The Father-ruffian of the band
Behind him rears a coward hand!

- O for a moment's aid,
Till Bruce, who deals no double blow,
Dash to the earth another foe,
Above his comrade laid!-
And it is gain'd - the captive sprung
On the raised arm, and closely clung,
And, ere he shook him loose,
The master'd felon press'd the ground,
And gasp'd beneath a mortal wound,
While o'er him stands the Bruce.

XXX.

'Miscreant! while lasts thy flitting spark,
Give me to know the purpose dark,
That arm'd thy hand with murderous knife,
Against offenceless stranger's life?' -
- 'No stranger thou!' with accent fell,
Murmur'd the wretch; 'I know thee well;
And know thee for the foeman sworn
Of my high Chief, the mighty Lorn.'-
'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.

The 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 Allen's fate been wroke;
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 -
(So 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.

The Lord Of The Isles: Canto Iv.

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, or 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, belongs
My joy o'er Edward's bier;
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,
That pointed yet to Scotland's land,
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 lair
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 favouring 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?'-
'Come weal, 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 the 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 islemen 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 Donagaile.
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 sea-mew,
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
Dunscraith'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 grey,
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 grey.
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 unknown.-
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 grey,
Nor to their hapless tenant pay
The tribute of a sigh!

IX.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark
O'er the broad ocean driven,
Her path by Ronin's mountains dark
The steerman'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 fill'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 Minister to her Maker's praise!
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 the 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
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 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 foeman's watchful fleet,
They held unwonted way;-
Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er,
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 alder 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 Ranza smile.
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 yale, the tree, the tower,
Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,
The beech 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 dyes 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 lover's 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;
Be joy and happiness her lot!-
But she hath fled the bridal-knot,
And Lorn recall'd his promised plight,
In the assembled chieftains' sight.-
When, to fulfil our fathers' band,
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 bear 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 undress'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.
See'st thou not how apart he steals,
Keeps lonely couch and lonely meals?
Fitter by far in yon calm cell
To tend our sister Isabel,
With Father Augustine to share
The peaceful change of convent prayer,
Than wander wild adventures through,
With such a reckless guide as you.'-
'Thanks, brother!' Edward answer'd gay,
'For the high laud thy words convey!
But we may learn some future day,
If thou or I can this poor boy
Protect the best, or best employ.
Meanwhile, our vessel nears the strand;
Launch we the boat, and seek the land.'

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 cheered the laggard hounds,
When waked 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.
Dead were my heart, and deaf mine ear,

If Bruce should call, nor Douglas hear!
Each to Loch Ranza's margin spring;
That blast was winded by the King!

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 brook'd to wield
The heavy sword or bossy shield.
Men too were there, that bore the scars
Impress'd in Albyn's woeful wars,
At Falkirk's fierce and fatal fight,
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.

XXI.

'Tis morning, and the Convent bell
Long time had ceased its matin knell,
Within thy walls, Saint Bride!
An aged Sister sought the cell
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 bade 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 forfend, 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 splendours 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 grey
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,
When raising first thy valiant band
In rescue of thy native land,
Than had fair Fortune set me down
The partner of an empire's crown.
And grieve not that on Pleasure's stream
No more I drive in giddy dream,
For Heaven the erring pilot knew,
And from the gulf the vessel drew,
Tried me with judgements stern and great,
My house's ruin, thy defeat,
Poor Nigel's death, till, tamed, I own,
My hopes are fix'd on Heaven alone;
Nor e'er shall earthly prospects win
My heart to this vain world of sin.'-

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 islemen 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 forbade),
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 Augustine 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
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 would'st 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 uncontroll'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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Lord Of The Isles: Canto V.

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 plied her toil, -
For, wake where'er he may, Man wakes to care and coil.

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 every 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 gentle 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 plight 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 footprints 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
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 Augustine, 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 grey 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 woodland 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 tinted 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 unaccustom'd ears,
A language much unmeet he hears,
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 sides they lave,
And oft the distant fire he eyed,
And closer yet his hauberk tied,
And loosen'd in his sheath his brand.
Edward and Lennox were at hand,
Douglas and Ronald 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 hest of Isabel.
-'Now by Saint Giles,' the Monarch cried,
'This moves me much! - this morning tide,
I spent 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 made,
That Clifford with his merry-men all,
Guards carelessly our father's hall.'-

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 perill'd thus the helpless child.'-
- Offended half, and half submiss,-

'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 expatiate 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 Augustine 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 fight,
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 rowers ply their task with glee,
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 hardy 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,
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 dusk 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 Comyn'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 bear,
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 counsel, 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 Hays 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 beguil'd their sight? -
It ne'er was known - yet grey-hair'd eld
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 spoken,
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken!
Half sooth'd, 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 path 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 wings over land and sea,
And marks a watchful enemy.-
They gain'd the Chase, a wide domain
Left for the castle's silvan 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 to 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 wearied 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!-
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 silvan 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'ertook.

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 how'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,
Some words of woe the musser 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 for her 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 tempests 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'd 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 grisly 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 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 ambushade.
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 abye 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 ambushade!-
'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 yeoman 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 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 warder next his axe's edge
Struck down upon the threshold ledge,
'Twixt door and post and 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.
Unsparring 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's his gore.
But better hap had he of Lorn,
Who, by the foeman 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
Echoed 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 restor'd!
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!

Sir Walter Scott

The Lord Of The Isles: Canto Vi.

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;
And fiery English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale,
And fiery Edward routed stout St. John,
When Randolph's war-cry swell'd the southern gale,
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 wollen scapulare,

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 shores;
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,
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,
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-fast
Forth marshal'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,
Gasconne hath lent her horsemen good,
And Cambria, but of late subdued,
Sent forth her mountain-multitude,
And Connoght pour'd from waste and wood
Her hundred tribes, whose sceptre rude
Dark Eth O'Connor sway'd.

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 a while the threaten'd shower,
Till every peak and summit lower
Round the pale pilgrim's head.
Nor with such pilgrim's started eye
King Robert mark'd the tempest nigh!
Resolved the brunt to bide,
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 father 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;
Dunstaffnage 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 agen?-
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 wile,
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 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 revolving 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, ad 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.
As 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 there 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,
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 Edward 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 bare mace and lance,
And plumes that wave, and helms 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,
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 flight,
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 fearful 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 battled 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?'-
'The tokens on his helmet tell

The Bruce, my Liege: I know him well.'-
'And shall the audacious traitor brave
The presence where our banners wave?'-
'So please my Liege,' said Argentine,
'Were he but horsed on steed like mine,
To give him fair and knightly chance,
I would adventure forth my lance.'-
'In battle-day,' the King replied,
'Nice tourney rules are set aside.
-Still must the rebel dare our wrath?
Set on him - Sweep him from our path!'
And, at King Edward's signal, soon
Dash'd from the ranks Sir Henry Boune.

XV.

Of Hereford's high blood he came,
A race renown'd for knightly fame.
He burn'd before his Monarch's eye
To do some deed of chivalry.
He spurr'd his steed, he couch'd his lance,
And darted on the Bruce at once.
-As motionless as rocks, that bide
The wrath of advancing tide,
The Bruce stood fast. - Each breast beat high,
And dazzled was each gazing eye-
The heart had hardly time to think,
The eyelid scarce had time to wink,
While on the King, like flash of flame,
Spurr'd to full speed the war-horse came!
The partridge may the falcon mock,
If that slight palfrey stand the shock -
But, swerving from the Knight's career,
Just as they met, Bruce shunn'd the spear.
Onward the baffled warrior bore
His course - but soon his course was o'er!-
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.
Sprints 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.

XVII.

'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,
To Bruce, to Scotland, and to all.-
But, hark! some news these trumpets tell;
And in a lower voice he said,
'Be of good cheer - farewell, sweet maid!'-

XVIII.

'What train of dust, with trumpet-sound
And glimmering spears, is wheeling round
Our leftward flank?' - the Monarch cried,
To Moray's Earl who rode beside.
'Lo! round thy station pass the foes!
Randolph, thy wreath hath lost a rose.'
The Earl his visor closed, and said -
'My wreath shall bloom, or life shall fade.-
Follow, my household!' - And they go
Like lightning on the advancing foe.
'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 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.

XIX.

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 the 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 doubtful 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!
Upon 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
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 grey-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 revelry;-
-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!'

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 stage 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!
Broken, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
Pierced through, trod down, by thousands slain,
They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.

XXIV.

The King with scorn beheld their flight,
'Are these,' he said, 'our yeoman wight?
Each braggart churl could boast before,

Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!
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 action, 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 Percy'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 revell'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 Southern 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 ruffian thirst of blood,
From habit some, or hardihood.
But ruffian 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 feebler speeds 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 the
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 reel'd,
And still makes good the line.
Brief strife, but fierce, his efforts raise
A bright but momentary blaze.
Fair Edith heard the Southern 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 Islemen 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 shouted 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 razed 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 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.
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,
A lovely brow, dark locks that wave,
To his bright eyes new lustre gave,
A step as light upon the green,
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 greeted 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 graced 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!

Sir Walter Scott

The Maid Of Neidpath

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 prick'd his ear
She heard her lover's riding;
Ere scarce a distant form was kenn'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 his 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Maid Of Toro

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;
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 woodlands 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,
Scarce could he falter the tidings of sorrow,
And scarce could she hear them, benumb'd with despair:
And when the sun sunk on the sweet lake of Toro,
For ever he set to the Brave and the Fair.

Sir Walter Scott

The Noble Moringer

I.

O, will you hear a knightly tale of old Bohemian day,
It was the noble Moringer 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 Moringer, '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 boune,
And met him there his Chamberlain, with ewer 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 twelve-months 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 twelve-months 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 outstretch'd 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 we 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 woeful 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 warder 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 wellnigh 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-beloved 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, oppress'd 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 cheeks of youth, she left this brow and beard;
One 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, gentles, 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 grey.'

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 grey.'

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 steadfastly 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 before 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 oped my castle gate,
For had I come at morrow tide, I came a day too late.'

Sir Walter Scott

The Norman Horse-Shoe

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 broil,
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 vowed, Caerphili's sod should feel
The Norman charger's spurning 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 toil,
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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Orphan Maid

November's hail-cloud drifts away,
November's sunbeam wan
Looks coldly on the castle grey,
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 bred.'
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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Outlaw

O, Brignall banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen:
And as I rode by Dalton Hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A Maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily:—

'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 green-wood shalt thou speed
As blithe as Queen of May.'

Yet sung she, 'Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are green!
I'd rather rove with Edmund there
Than reign our English Queen.

'I read you by your bugle horn
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a Ranger sworn
To keep the King's green-wood.'
'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.'

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.

'And O! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

'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 green-wood 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 flowers there
Would grace a summer queen.

Sir Walter Scott

The Palmer

'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 reliques 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 hard 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:

For lo, when through the vapours dank,
Morn shone on Ettrick fair,
A corpse amid the alders rank,
The Palmer welter'd there.

Sir Walter Scott

The Reiver's Wedding

O will ye hear a mirthful bourd?
Or will ye hear of courtesie?
Or will ye 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.'-

'I swear by the light of the Michaelmas 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 boune to dine,
But a spur of silver sheen.

Lord William has ta'en his berry brown steed-
A sore shent man was he;
'Wait he, 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 Lochwood
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 pranked 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 grey.

O fast and fast they downwards sped
The moss and briers among,
And in the midst the troopers led
A shackled knight along.

Sir Walter Scott

The Resolve

In Imitation of An Old English Poem

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, a 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.'

Sir Walter Scott

The Return To Ulster

Once again,- but how chang'd since my wand'rings began-
I have heard the deep voice of the Lagan and Bann,
And the pines of Clanbrasil 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.

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 dispers'd in the sunbeam, or melted to dew?
Oh! Would it had been so,- O 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.'

Sir Walter Scott

The Ride To Melrose, From The Lay Of The Last Minstrel.

CANTO I.XIX.

The Lady 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 bore,
Albeit their hearts of rugged mould
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the gray warriors prophesied
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the .

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 called to her William of I.

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 blood-hounds;
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 Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been
By England's King and Scotland's II.

'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 Tweedside;
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 III

'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 hadst thou ne'er been born.'XXIV.
'O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray 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,
Were't my neck-verse at Hairibee.'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 pass'd 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 I.

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 turned him now from Teviotside,
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 II.

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-crag 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 III.

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 IX.

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 daggl'd by the dashing spray:
Yet, through good heart and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gain'd the

Now Bowden Moor the march-man 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 I.

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 gray,
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 II.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 gray.

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;

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;

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.

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;

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 foliated tracery combined;

Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand

'Twixt poplars straight the osier 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,

Show'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 messy nave,

And pile it in heaps above his

'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 I.

'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 II.

'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.'

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 III.

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 messy 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 fiend had shook,

And all unruffled was his face:

They trusted his soul had gotten .

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 unnerv'd 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 I.

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 eye.

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 III.

`Now, hie thee hence,' the father said,

`And when we are on death-bed laid,

O may our dear Ladye and sweet St. John

Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!

The monk returned him to his cell,

And many a prayer and penance sped;

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'IV.

The knight breathed free in the morning wind,

And strove his hardihood to find:

He was glad when he pass'd the tombstones gray

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 gray;

He joy'd to see the cheerful light,

And he said Ave Mary as well as he might.

Sir Walter Scott

The Rover's Adieu

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 ye knew,
My Love!
No more of me ye 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 the bridle-reins a shake,
Said 'Adieu for evermore,
My Love!
And adieu for evermore.'

Sir Walter Scott

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-haired Harald's flag is flying.'

Many a crest in air is streaming,
Many a helmet darkly gleaming,
Many an arm the axe uprears,
Doomed to hew the wood of spears.
All around the crowded ranks,
Horses neigh and armor 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 not for food or slumber,
View not vantage, count not number;
Jolly reapers forward still,
Grow the crop on vale or hill,
Thick or scattered, 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 horsemen,
Charge and fight, and die like Norsemen!'-

Sir Walter Scott

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 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 stoolest 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Troubadour

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 marched 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 hewed 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.'

Sir Walter Scott

The Truth Of Woman

Woman's faith, and woman's trust -
Write the characters in the 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 of the token,
How her faith proved light, and her word was broken:
Again her word and truth she plight,
And I believed them again ere night.

Sir Walter Scott

The Violet

The violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazel 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;
No longer in my false love's eye
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow.

Sir Walter Scott

The Vision Of Don Roderick

Introduction.

I.

Lives there a strain, whose sounds of mounting fire
May rise distinguished o'er the din of war;
Or died it with yon Master of the Lyre
Who sung beleaguered Ilium'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 swelled 'twixt each loud trumpet-change,
That clangs to Britain victory, to Portugal revenge!

II.

Yes! such a strain, with all o'er-pouring measure,
Might melodise 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 crowned,
The female shriek, the ruined peasant's moan,
The shout of captives from their chains unbound,
The foiled oppressor's deep and sullen groan,
A Nation's choral hymn, for tyranny o'erthrown.

III.

But we, weak minstrels of a laggard day
Skilled 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 vanquished 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 Cattræth's glens with voice of triumph rung,
And mystic Merlin harped, and grey-haired Llywarch sung?

V.

Oh! 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 gathered each tradition grey
That floats your solitary wastes along,
And with affection vain gave them new voice in song.

VI.

For not till now, how oft soe'er the task
Of truant verse hath lightened 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!

VII.

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 gathered son to sire
Since our grey cliffs the din of conflict knew,
Or, pealing through our vales, victorious bugles blew.

VIII.

'Decayed our old traditionary lore,

Save where the lingering fays renew their ring,
By milkmaid seen beneath the hawthorn hoar,
Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted spring;
Save where their legends grey-haired 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.

IX.

'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 favoured 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!

X.

'Explore those regions, where the flinty crest
Of wild Nevada ever gleams with snows,
Where in the proud Alhambra's ruined 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.

XI.

'There, of Numantian fire a swarthy spark
Still lightens in the sunburnt 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.

XII.

'And cherished 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 obeyed.

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 outstretched 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 glimmered back, against the moon's fair lamp,
Tissues of silk and silver twisted sheen,
And standards proudly pitched, and warders armed between.

III.

But of their Monarch's person keeping ward,
Since last the deep-mouthed bell of vespers tolled,
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 bedecked with gold,
While 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 murmured at their master's long delay,
And held his lengthened 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 plundered charms to pay?'
Then to the east their weary eyes they cast,
And wished the lingering dawn would glimmer forth at last.

V.

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 uttered 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.

VI.

Full on the Prelate's face, and silver hair,
The stream of failing light was feebly rolled:
But Roderick's visage, though his head was bare,
Was shadowed 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.

VII.

The old man's faded cheek waxed yet more pale,
As many a secret sad the King betrayed;

As sign and glance eked out the unfinished tale,
When in the midst his faltering whisper stayed.
'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.

VIII.

'And if Florinda's shrieks alarmed 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 stayed his speech abrupt-and up the Prelate stood.

IX.

'O hardened 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,
He spare the shepherd, lest the guiltless sheep be lost?'

X.

Then kindled the dark tyrant in his mood,
And to his brow returned 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 essayed,
Low muttered thunders the Cathedral shook,
And twice he stopped, and twice new effort made,
Till the huge bolts rolled back, and the loud hinges brayed.

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty was that vaulted hall;
Roof, walls, and floor were all of marble stone,
Of polished 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 seemed for kings of giant race,
That lived and sinned before the avenging flood;
This grasped a scythe, that rested on a mace;
This spread his wings for flight, that pondering stood,
Each stubborn seemed and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fixed 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.

XVII.

For they might spy, beyond that mighty breach,
Realms as of Spain in visioned prospect laid,
Castles and towers, in due proportion each,
As by some skilful artist's hand portrayed:
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-embrowned by forests huge and high,
Or washed by mighty streams, that slowly murmured by.

XVIII.

And here, as erst upon the antique stage
Passed forth the band of masquers trimly led,
In various forms, and various equipage,
While fitting strains the hearer's fancy fed;
So, to sad Roderick's eye in order spread,
Successive pageants filled that mystic scene,
Showing the fate of battles ere they bled,

And issue of events that had not been;
And, ever and anon, strange sounds were heard between.

XIX.

First shrilled an unrepeated female shriek! -
It seemed as if Don Roderick knew the call,
For the bold blood was blanching in his cheek. -
Then answered kettle-drum and attabal,
Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the ear appal,
The Tecbir war-cry, and the Lelie's yell,
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!

XX.

'They come! they come! I see the groaning lands
White with the turbans of each Arab horde;
Swart Zaarah joins her misbelieving bands,
Alla and Mahomet their battle-word,
The choice they yield, the Koran or the Sword -
See how the Christians rush to arms amain! -
In yonder shout the voice of conflict roared,
The shadowy hosts are closing on the plain -
Now, God and Saint Iago strike, for the good cause of Spain!

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!
But never was she turned 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 visioned form's thine own.'

XXII.

Just then, a torrent crossed the flier's course;
The dangerous ford the Kingly Likeness tried;
But the deep eddies whelmed 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 free-born 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
Echoed, 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-armed Giant turned 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-decked dancer springs,
Bazars resound as when their marts are met,
In tourney light the Moor his jerrid flings,
And on the land as evening seemed to set,
The Imaum's chant was heard from mosque or minaret.

XXVI.

So passed that pageant. Ere another came,
The visionary scene was wrapped in smoke
Whose sulph'rous wreaths were crossed by sheets of flame;

With every flash a bolt explosive broke,
Till Roderick deemed 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.

XXVII.

From the dim landscape rolled the clouds away -
The Christians have regained their heritage;
Before the Cross has waned the Crescent's ray,
And many a monastery decks the stage,
And lofty church, and low-browed 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.

XXVIII.

VALOUR was harnessed like a chief of old,
Armed at all points, and prompt for knightly gest;
His sword was tempered in the Ebro cold,
Morena's eagle plume adorned his crest,
The spoils of Afric's lion bound his breast.
Fierce he stepped forward and flung down his gage;
As if of mortal kind to brave the best.
Him followed 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 renowned,
Honouring his scourge and haircloth, meekly kissed the ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that VALOUR, peerless knight,

Who ne'er to King or Kaiser vailed his crest,
Victorious still in bull-feast or in fight,
Since first his limbs with mail he did invest,
Stooped ever to that Anchoret's behest;
Nor reasoned 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 hurled, -
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 marked 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 prisoned victims mar the lays,
And shrieks of agony confound the quire;
While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the darkened scenes expire.

XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of music heard,
As once again revolved that measured sand;
Such sounds as when, for silvan 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 broidered cap and band,
She of her netted locks and light corsette,
Each tiptoe perched to spring, and shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening scene became;
For VALOUR had relaxed his ardent look,
And at a lady's feet, like lion tame,
Lay stretched, full loath the weight of arms to brook;
And softened BIGOTRY, upon his book,
Pattered 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 stooped 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, bedecked 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 howled aloud:-

XXXVII.

Even so, upon that peaceful scene was poured,
Like gathering clouds, full many a foreign band,
And HE, their Leader, wore in sheath his sword,
And offered peaceful front and open hand,
Veiling the perjured treachery he planned,
By friendship's zeal and honour's specious guise,
Until he won the passes of the land;
Then burst were honour's oath and friendship's ties!

He clutched his vulture grasp, and called 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 checked his course for piety or shame;
Who, trained a soldier, deemed a soldier's fame
Might flourish in the wreath of battles won,
Though neither truth nor honour decked his name;
Who, placed by fortune on a Monarch's throne,
Recked 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 dearth,
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 showed,
With which she beckoned him through fight and storm,
And all he crushed that crossed his desperate road,
Nor thought, nor feared, nor looked 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 deigned she, as of yore, a milder form to take.

XLI.

No longer now she spurned at mean revenge,
Or stayed her hand for conquered foeman's moan;
As when, the fates of aged Rome to change,
By Caesar's side she crossed the Rubicon.
Nor joyed she to bestow the spoils she won,
As when the banded powers of Greece were tasked

To war beneath the Youth of Macedon:
No seemly veil her modern minion asked,
He saw her hideous face, and loved the fiend unmasked.

XLII.

That Prelate marked 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?
Oh! thou hast builded on the shifting sand,
And thou hast tempered it with slaughter's flood;
And know, fell scourge in the Almighty's hand,
Gore-moistened trees shall perish in the bud,
And by a bloody death shall die the Man of Blood!'

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckoned 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 joyed that sullen heart;
Yet round that throne he bade his warriors 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 brooked they long their friendly faith abused;
For, with a common shriek, the general tongue
Exclaimed, '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 the awakening Nazarite his band,
When 'gainst his treacherous foes he clenched his dreadful hand.

XLV.

That Mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye
Upon the Satraps that begirt him round,
Now doffed his royal robe in act to fly,
And from his brow the diadem unbound.

So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle wound,
From Tarik's walls to Bilboa's mountains blown,
These martial satellites hard labour found
To guard awhile his substituted throne -
Light recking of his cause, but battling for their own.

XLVI.

From Alpuhara's peak that bugle rung,
And it was echoed from Corunna's wall;
Stately Seville responsive war-shot flung,
Grenada caught it in her Moorish hall;
Galicia bade her children fight or fall,
Wild Biscay shook his mountain-coronet,
Valencia roused her at the battle-call,
And, foremost still where Valour's sons are met,
First started to his gun each fiery Miquelet.

XLVII.

But unappalled, and burning for the fight,
The Invaders march, of victory secure;
Skilful their force to sever or unite,
And trained 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.

XLVIII.

Proudly they march-but, oh! they march not forth
By one hot field to crown a brief campaign,
As when their Eagles, sweeping through the North,
Destroyed 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,
Remained 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 claimed for blood the retribution due,
Probed the hard heart, and lopped the murd'rous hand;
And Dawn, when o'er the scene her beams she threw
'Midst ruins they had made, the spoilers' corpses knew.

L.

What minstrel verse may sing, or tongue may tell,
Amid the visioned strife from sea to sea,
How oft the Patriot banners rose or fell,
Still honoured in defeat as victory!
For that sad pageant of events to be
Showed 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 bedrenched with blood!

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 shattered ruins knew,
Each art of war's extremity had room,
Twice from thy half-sacked streets the foe withdrew,
And when at length stern fate decreed thy doom,
They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb.

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad city! Though in chains,
Enthralled thou canst not be! Arise, and claim
Reverence from every heart where Freedom reigns,
For what thou worshippes!-thy sainted dame,
She of the Column, honoured 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 blessed 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 darkening where the mine was sprung,
Now briefly lightened by the cannon's flare,
Now arched with fire-sparks as the bomb was flung,
And reddening now with conflagration's glare,
While by the fatal light the foes for storm prepare.

LIV.

While all around was danger, strife, and fear,
While the earth shook, and darkened was the sky,
And wide Destruction stunned the listening ear,
Appalled the heart, and stupefied 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.

Don Roderick turned him as the shout grew loud -
A varied scene the changeful vision showed,
For, where the ocean mingled with the cloud,
A gallant navy stemmed the billows broad.
From mast and stern St. George's symbol flowed,
Blent with the silver cross to Scotland dear;
Mottling the sea their landward barges rowed,
And flashed the sun on bayonet, brand, and spear,
And the wild beach returned the seamen's jovial cheer.

LVI.

It was a dread, yet spirit-stirring sight!
The billows foamed beneath a thousand oars,
Fast as they land the red-cross ranks unite,
Legions on legions bright'ning 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 whirled by rapid steed,
That rivals lightning's flash in ruin and in speed.

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 free-born thoughts which league the Soldier with the Laws.

LIX.

And, oh! loved warriors of the Minstrel's land!
Yonder your bonnets nod, your tartans wave!
The rugged form may mark the mountain band,
And harsher features, and a mien more grave;
But ne'er in battlefield throbb'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 stayed!

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! tameless, 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.

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 hurled,
While kindling nations buckle on their mail,
And Fame, with clarion-blast and wings unfurled,
To Freedom and Revenge awakes an injured World!

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast,
Since Fate has marked 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 vexed 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 whelmed yon red-cross powers!'
Thus, on the summit of Alverca's rock
To Marshal, 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 adamant barrier to his force;
And from its base shall wheel his shattered 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 rolled,
Have seen these wistful myriads eye their prey,
As famished 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 marked their wreckful path!
The peasant butchered in his ruined 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 grasped 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 miscalled 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, {2} as foredoomed the stain
From thy dishonoured 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 portrayed
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-range the rein,
And, at the bloody spear-point headlong driven,
Thy Despot's giant guards fled like the rack of heaven.

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.

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 yon far western isles that hear the Atlantic rave.

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 battle-ground,
With conquest's well-bought wreath were braver victors crowned!

XIV.

O who shall grudge him Albuera's bays,
Who brought a race regenerate to the field,
Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
Tempered their headlong rage, their courage steeled,
And raised fair Lusitania's fallen shield,
And gave new edge to Lusitania's sword,
And taught her sons forgotten arms to wield -
Shivered 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 rolled like mist away,
Was half his self-devoted valour shown, -
He gaged but life on that illustrious day;
But when he toiled 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 dreamed 'mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,
And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyndoch's lovely rill.

XVII.

O hero of a race renowned of old,
Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle-swell,
Since first distinguished in the onset bold,
Wild sounding when the Roman rampart fell!
By Wallace' side it rung the Southron's knell,
Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibber owned its fame,
Tummell's rude pass can of its terrors tell,
But ne'er from prouder field arose the name
Than when wild Ronda learned the conquering shout of GRAEME!

XVIII.

But all too long, through seas unknown and dark,
(With Spenser's parable I close my tale,)
By shoal and rock hath steered 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.

Sir Walter Scott

The Wild Huntsman

The Wildgrave winds his bugle-horn,
To horse, to horse! halloo, halloo!
His fiery courser snuffs 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, called 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 matin-song
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;
Halloo, halloo! 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;
A 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 hilt,
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 herdsman 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 martyr's 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 frown 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!'

Sir Walter Scott

Thomas The Rhymer

Part First

Ancient

True Thomas lay on Huntlie bank;
A ferlie he spied wi' his ee;
And there he saw a lady bright,
Come riding down by the Eildon Tree.

Her skirt was o the grass-green silk,
Her mantle o the velvet fyne,
At ilka tett of her horse's mane
Hang fifty siller bells and nine.

True Thomas he pulld 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 belang 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 bodie I will be!'

'Betide me weal, betide me woe,
That weird sall never daunton me;
Syne he has kissed 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 taen True Thomas up behind,
And aye whenever her bride rung,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on -
The steed gaed swifter than the wind -
Until they reached a desart 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,
Tho 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,
Tho 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 you speak word in Elflyn land,
Ye'll neer get back to your ain countrie.'

O they rade on, and farther on,
And they waded thro 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 thro red blude to the knee;

For a' the blude that's shed an earth
Rins thro 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 the tongue that can never lie.'

'My tongue is mine ain,' True Thomas said,
'A gudely gift ye wad gie 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

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 show to me.'-
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 Flodden'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 yon 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 yon 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 corses there shall be.'-

'But tell me now,' said brave Dunbar,
'True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle of 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.

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 quaighs 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 arm'd 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 Segramore,
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 Leader'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,
Dreamed 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 Fairnalie.

Beneath the moon, with gesture proud,
They stately move, and slow;
Nor scare they at gathering crowd,
Who marvel as they go.

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas startled 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 grey 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.

Soem said to hill, and some to glen,
Their wondrous course had been;
But ne'er in haunts of living men
Again was Thomas seen.

Sir Walter Scott

To A Lady - With Flowers From A Roman Wall

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 the Beauty's hair.

Sir Walter Scott

To A Lock Of Hair

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 prest
The torrid zone of this wild breast,
Whose wrath and hate have sworn to dwell
With the first sin that 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 far 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.

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!

Sir Walter Scott

To The Sub-Prior

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.

'In the name of MY Master,' said the astonished monk, 'that name before which
all things created tremble, I conjure thee to say what thou art that hauntest me
thus?'
The same voice replied,-

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
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.

Sir Walter Scott

Twist Ye, Twine Ye

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 twilingt bending,
Lo, what varied shapes attending!

Passions wild, and follies vain,
Pleasures soon exchanged for pain;
Dount, 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Verses Found In Bothwell'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,
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Then "from the carcass turn away!
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And soothed each wound which pride inflamed:
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If thou hadst lived, and lived to love me!

Sir Walter Scott

Wandering Willie

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' blaw 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.

Sir Walter Scott

Waverly

Late, when the Autumn evening fell
On Mirkwoodâ€™s romantic dell,
The lake return'd, in chaste 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 don'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 blacken'd cheek,
And bade his surge in thunder speak.
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.-â€”
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!

Sir Walter Scott

Where Shall The Lover Rest

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

Chorus.

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 shall thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

Chorus.

Never, O never!

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.,P>

Chorus.

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 dishonor sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it,--
Never, O never!

Chorus

Never, O never!

Sir Walter Scott

Why Sit'st Thou By That Ruin'D Hall?

'Why sit'st thou by that ruin'd hall,
Thou aged carle so stern and grey?
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 shalt part for ever!'

Sir Walter Scott

William And Helen

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,
In 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 judgement, 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 judgement, 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 arraigns 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 footstep 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?'

XXVIII.

'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?'-

XXIX.

'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 boune! 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 boune, 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 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 pebbles 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 grey?'-
'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;
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 tombstones pale
He spurr'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!'

Sir Walter Scott