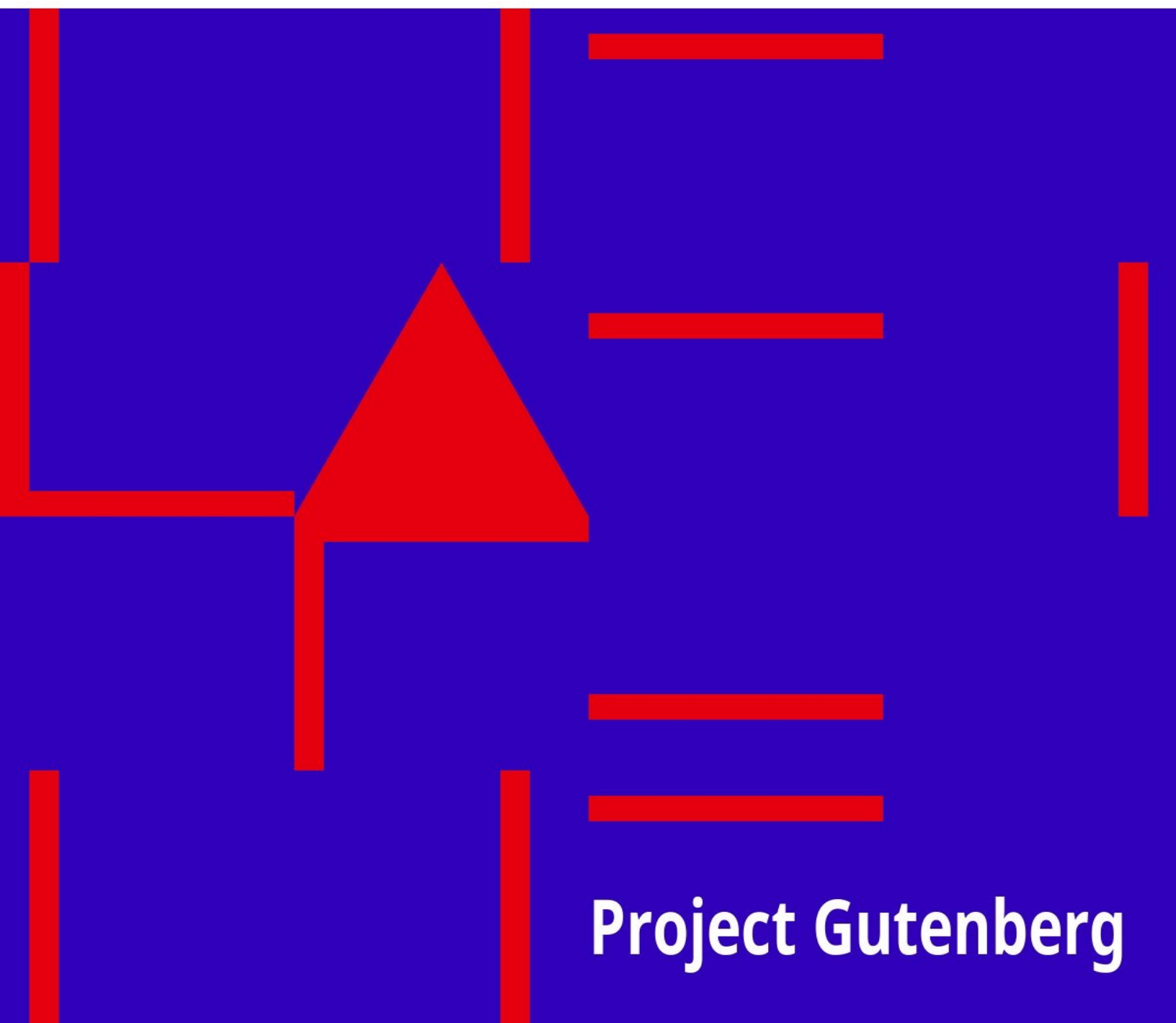


The Lady of the Lake

Walter Scott and William Vaughn Moody



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Transcriber's Notes:

Obvious mistakes and punctuation errors have been corrected, but inconsistent spelling, punctuation and hyphenation has been retained. At the end of the text there is a [list](#) of the corrections that were made.

The footnotes in the introduction have been moved to the end of the chapter, and have been renumbered for clarity.

Note links for the poem have been added to this version.

The Lake English Classics

REVISED EDITION WITH HELPS TO STUDY

THE LADY OF THE LAKE

BY
SIR WALTER SCOTT

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE
BY
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Map of the area where the poem takes place
THE SCENE OF "THE LADY OF THE LAKE"



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I. LIFE OF SCOTT

I

Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771, of an ancient Scotch clan numbering in its time many a hard rider and good fighter, and more than one of these petty chieftains, half-shepherd and half-robber, who made good the winter inroads into their stock of beeves by spring forays and cattle drives across the English Border. Scott's great-grandfather was the famous "Beardie" of Harden, so called because after the exile of the Stuart sovereigns he swore never to cut his beard until they were reinstated; and several degrees farther back he could point to a still more famous figure, "Auld Wat of Harden," who with his fair dame, the "Flower of Yarrow," is mentioned in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The first member of the clan to abandon country life and take up a sedentary profession, was Scott's father, who settled in Edinburgh as Writer to the Signet, a position corresponding in Scotland to that of attorney or solicitor in England. The character of this father, stern, scrupulous, Calvinistic, with a high sense of ceremonial dignity and a punctilious regard for the honorable conventions of life, united with the wilder ancestral strain to make Scott what he was. From "Auld Wat" and "Beardie" came his high spirit, his rugged manliness, his chivalric ideals; from the Writer to the Signet came that power of methodical labor which made him a giant among the literary workers of his day, and that delicate sense of responsibility which gave his private life its remarkable sweetness and beauty.

At the age of eighteen months, Scott was seized with a teething fever which settled in his right leg and retarded its growth to such an extent that he was slightly lame for the rest of his life. Possibly this affliction was a blessing in disguise, since it is not improbable that Scott's love of active adventure would have led him into the army or the navy, if he had not been deterred by a bodily impediment; in which case English history might have been a gainer, but English literature would certainly have been immeasurably a loser. In spite of his lameness, the child grew strong enough to be sent on a long visit to his grandfather's farm at Sandyknowe; and here, lying among the sheep on the windy downs, playing about the romantic ruins of Smailholm Tower,^[1] scampering through the heather on a tiny Shetland pony, or listening to stories of

the thrilling past told by the old women of the farm, he drank in sensations which strengthened both the hardiness and the romanticism of his nature. A story is told of his being found in the fields during a thunder storm, clapping his hands at each flash of lightning, and shouting "Bonny! Bonny!"—a bit of infantile intrepidity which makes more acceptable a story of another sort illustrative of his mental precocity. A lady entering his mother's room found him reading aloud a description of a shipwreck, accompanying the words with excited comments and gestures. "There's the mast gone," he cried, "crash it goes; they will all perish!" The lady entered into his agitation with tact, and on her departure, he told his mother that he liked their visitor, because "she was a virtuoso, like himself." To her amused inquiry as to what a virtuoso might be, he replied: "Don't ye know? why, 'tis one who wishes to and will know everything."

As a boy at school in Edinburgh and in Kelso, and afterwards as a student at the University and apprentice in his father's law office, Scott took his own way to become a "virtuoso"; a rather queer way it must sometimes have seemed to his good preceptors. He refused point-blank to learn Greek, and cared little for Latin. His scholarship was so erratic that he glanced meteor-like from the head to the foot of his classes and back again, according as luck gave or withheld the question to which his highly selective memory had retained the answer. But outside of school hours he was intensely at work to "know everything," so far as "everything" came within the bounds of his special tastes. Before he was ten years old he had begun to collect chap-books and ballads. As he grew older he read omnivorously in romance and history; at school he learned French for the sole purpose of knowing at first hand the fascinating cycles of old French romance; a little later he mastered Italian in order to read Dante and Ariosto, and to his schoolmaster's indignation stoutly championed the claim of the latter poet to superiority over Homer; a little later he acquired Spanish and read *Don Quixote* in the original. With such efforts, however, considerable as they were for a boy who passionately loved a "bicker" in the streets and who was famed among his comrades for bravery in climbing the perilous "kittle nine stanes" on Castle Rock, he was not content. Nothing more conclusively shows the genuineness of Scott's romantic feeling than his willingness to undergo severe mental drudgery in pursuit of knowledge concerning the old storied days which had enthralled his imagination. It was no moonshine sentimentality which kept him hour after hour and day after day in the Advocate's Library, poring over musty manuscripts, deciphering heraldic devices, tracing genealogies, and unraveling obscure points of Scottish history. By the time he was twenty-one he had made himself, almost unconsciously, an expert paleographer and

antiquarian, whose assistance was sought by professional workers in those branches of knowledge. Carlyle has charged against Scott that he poured out his vast floods of poetry and romance without preparation or forethought; that his production was always impromptu, and rooted in no sufficient past of acquisition. The charge cannot stand. From his earliest boyhood until his thirtieth year, when he began his brilliant career as poet and novelist, his life was one long preparation—very individual and erratic preparation, perhaps, but none the less earnest and fruitful.

In 1792, Scott, then twenty-one years old, was admitted a member of the faculty of advocates of Edinburgh. During the five years which elapsed between this date and his marriage, his life was full to overflowing of fun and adventure, rich with genial companionship, and with experience of human nature in all its wild and tame varieties. Ostensibly he was a student of law, and he did, indeed, devote some serious attention to the mastery of his profession. But the dry formalities of legal life his keen humor would not allow him to take quite seriously. On the day when he was called to the bar, while waiting his turn among the other young advocates, he turned to his friend, William Clark, who had been called with him, and whispered, mimicking the Highland lasses who used to stand at the Cross of Edinburgh to be hired for the harvest: "We've stood here an hour by the Tron, hinny, and deil a ane has speered^[2] our price." Though Scott never made a legal reputation, either as pleader at the bar or as an authority upon legal history and principles, it cannot be doubted that his experience in the Edinburgh courts was of immense benefit to him. In the first place, his study of the Scotch statutes, statutes which had taken form very gradually under the pressure of changing national conditions, gave him an insight into the politics and society of the past not otherwise to have been obtained. Of still more value, perhaps, was the association with his young companions in the profession, and daily contact with the racy personalities which traditionally haunt all courts of law, and particularly Scotch courts of law: the first association kept him from the affectation and sentimentality which is the bane of the youthful romanticist; and the second enriched his memory with many an odd figure afterward to take its place, clothed in the colors of a great dramatic imagination, upon the stage of his stories.

Added to these experiences, there were others equally calculated to enlarge his conception of human nature. Not the least among these he found in the brilliant literary and artistic society of Edinburgh, to which his mother's social position gave him entrance. Here, when only a lad, he met Robert Burns, then the pet and

idol of the fashionable coteries of the capital. Here he heard Henry Mackenzie deliver a lecture on German literature which turned his attention to the romantic poetry of Germany and led directly to his first attempts at ballad-writing. But much more vital than any or all of these influences, were those endless walking-tours which alone or in company with a boon companion he took over the neighboring country-side—care-free, roystering expeditions, which he afterwards immortalized as Dandie Dinmont's "Liddesdale raids" in *Guy Mannering*. Thirty miles across country as the crow flies, with no objective point and no errand, a village inn or a shepherd's hut at night, with a crone to sing them an old ballad over the fire, or a group of hardy dalesmen to welcome them with stories and carousal—these were blithe adventurous days such as could not fail to ripen Scott's already ardent nature, and store his memory with genial knowledge. The account of Dandie Dinmont given by Mr. Shortreed may be taken as a picture, only too true in some of its touches, of Scott in these youthful escapades: "Eh me, ... sic an endless fund of humor and drollery as he had then wi' him. Never ten yards but we were either laughing or roaring and singing. Wherever we stopped how brawlie he suited himsel' to everybody! He aye did as the lave did; never made himsel' the great man or took ony airs in the company. I've seen him in a' moods in these jaunts, grave and gay, daft and serious, sober and drunk—(this, however, even in our wildest rambles, was but rare)—but drunk or sober, he was aye the gentleman. He looked excessively heavy and stupid when he was fou, but he was never out o' gude humor." After this, we are not surprised to hear that Scott's father told him disgustedly that he was better fitted to be a fiddling peddler, a "gangrel scrape-gut," than a respectable attorney. As a matter of fact, however, behind the mad pranks and the occasional excesses there was a very serious purpose in all this scouring of the country-side. Scott was picking up here and there, from the old men and women with whom he hobnobbed, antiquarian material of an invaluable kind, bits of local history, immemorial traditions and superstitions, and, above all, precious ballads which had been handed down for generations among the peasantry. These ballads, thus precariously transmitted, it was Scott's ambition to gather together and preserve, and he spared no pains or fatigue to come at any scrap of ballad literature of whose existence he had an inkling. Meanwhile, he was enriching heart and imagination for the work that was before him. So that here also, though in the hair-brained and heady way of youth, he was engaged in his task of preparation.

Scott has told us that it was his reading of *Don Quixote* which determined him to be an author, but he was first actually excited to composition in another way. This was by hearing recited a ballad of the German poet Bürger, entitled *Lenore*,

in which a skeleton lover carries off his bride to a wedding in the land of death. Mr. Hutton remarks upon the curiousness of the fact that a piece of "raw supernaturalism" like this should have appealed so strongly to a mind as healthy and sane as Scott's. So it was, however. He could not rid himself of the fascination of the piece until he had translated it, and published it, together with another translation from the same author. One stanza at least of this first effort of Scott sounds a note characteristic of his poetry:

Tramp! tramp! along the land they
rode,
Splash! splash! along the sea;
The scourge is red, the spur drops
blood,
The flashing pebbles flee.

Here we catch the trumpet-like clang and staccato tramp of verse which he was soon to use in a way to thrill his generation. This tiny pamphlet of verse, Scott's earliest publication, appeared in 1796. Soon after, he met Monk Lewis, then famous as a purveyor to English palates of the crude horrors which German romanticism had just ceased to revel in. Lewis was engaged in compiling a book of supernatural stories and poems under the title of *Tales of Wonder*, and asked Scott to contribute. Scott wrote for this book three long ballads—"Glenfinlas," "Cadyow Castle," and "The Gray Brother." Though tainted with the conventional diction of eighteenth century verse, these ballads are not unimpressive pieces of work; the second named, especially, shows a kind and degree of romantic imagination such as his later poetry rather substantiated than newly revealed.

II

In the following year, 1797, Scott married a Miss Charpentier, daughter of a French refugee. She was not his first love, that place having been usurped by a Miss Stuart Belches, for whom Scott had felt perhaps the only deep passion of his life, and memory of whom was to come to the surface touchingly in his old age. Miss Charpentier, or Carpenter, as she was called, with her vivacity and quaint foreign speech "caught his heart on the rebound"; there can be no doubt that, in spite of a certain shallowness of character, she made him a good wife, and that his affection for her deepened steadily to the end. The young couple went to live at Lasswade, a village near Edinburgh, on the Esk. Scott, in whom the proprietary instinct was always very strong, took great pride in the pretty

little cottage. He made a dining-table for it with his own hands, planted saplings in the yard, and drew together two willow-trees at the gate into a kind of arch, surmounted by a cross made of two sticks. "After I had constructed this," he says, "mamma (Mrs. Scott) and I both of us thought it so fine that we turned out to see it by moonlight, and walked backwards from it to the cottage door, in admiration of our magnificence and its picturesque effect." It would have been well indeed for them both if their pleasures of proprietorship could always have remained so touchingly simple.

Now that he was married, Scott was forced to look a little more sharply to his fortunes. He applied himself with more determination to the law. In 1799 he became deputy-sheriff of Selkirkshire, with a salary of three hundred pounds, which placed him at least beyond the reach of want. He began to look more and more to literature as a means of supplementing his income. His ballads in the *Tales of Wonder* had gained him some reputation; this he increased in 1802 by the publication, under the title *Border Minstrelsy*, of the ballads which he had for several years been collecting, collating, and richly annotating. Meanwhile he was looking about for a congenial subject upon which to try his hand in a larger way than he had as yet ventured. Such a subject came to him at last in a manner calculated to enlist all his enthusiasm in its treatment, for it was given him by the Countess of Dalkeith, wife of the heir-apparent to the dukedom of Buccleugh. The ducal house of Buccleugh stood at the head of the clan Scott, and toward its representative the poet always held himself in an attitude of feudal reverence. The Duke of Buccleugh was his "chief," entitled to demand from him both passive loyalty and active service; so, at least, Scott loved to interpret their relationship, making effective in his own case a feudal sentiment which had elsewhere somewhat lapsed. He especially loved to think of himself as the bard of his clan, a modern representative of those rude poets whom the Scottish chiefs once kept as a part of their household to chant the exploits of the clan. Nothing could have pleased his fancy more, therefore, than a request on the part of the lady of his chief to treat a subject of her assigning—namely, the dark mischief-making of a dwarf or goblin who had strayed from his unearthly master and attached himself as page to a human household. The subject fell in with the poet's reigning taste for strong supernaturalism. Gilpin Horner, the goblin page, though he proved in the sequel a difficult character to put to poetic use, was a figure grotesque and eerie enough to appeal even to Monk Lewis. At first Scott thought of treating the subject in ballad-form, but the scope of treatment was gradually enlarged by several circumstances. To begin with, he chanced upon a copy of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, and the history of that robber baron

suggested to him the feasibility of throwing the same vivid light upon the old Border life of his ancestors as Goethe had thrown upon that of the Rhine barons. This led him to subordinate the part played by the goblin page in the proposed story, which was now widened to include elaborate pictures of medieval life and manners, and to lay the scene in the castle of Branksome, formerly the stronghold of Scott's and the Duke of Buccleugh's ancestors. The verse form into which the story was thrown was due to a still more accidental circumstance, i.e., Scott's overhearing Sir John Stoddard recite a fragment of Coleridge's unpublished poem "Christabel." The placing of the story in the mouth of an old harper fallen upon evil days, was a happy afterthought; besides making a beautiful framework for the main poem, it enabled the author to escape criticism for any violent innovations of style, since these could always be attributed to the rude and wild school of poetry to which the harper was supposed to belong. In these ways *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* gradually developed in its present form. Upon its publication in 1805, it achieved an immediate success. The vividness of its descriptive passages, the buoyant rush of its meter, the deep romantic glow suffusing all its pages, took by storm a public familiar to weariness with the decorous abstractions of the eighteenth century poets. The first edition, a sumptuous quarto, was exhausted in a few weeks; an octavo edition of fifteen hundred was sold out within the year; and before 1830, forty-four thousand copies were needed to supply the popular demand. Scott received in all something under eight hundred pounds for the *Lay*, a small amount when contrasted with his gains from subsequent poems, but a sum so unusual nevertheless that he determined forthwith to devote as much time to literature as he could spare from his legal duties; those he still placed foremost, for until near the close of his life he clung to his adage that literature was "a good staff, but a poor crutch."

A year before the publication of the *Lay*, Scott had removed to the small country seat of Ashiestiel, in Selkirkshire, seven miles from the nearest town, Selkirk, and several miles from any neighbor. In the introductions to the various cantos of *Marmion* he has given us a delightful picture of Ashiestiel and its surroundings—the swift Glenkinnon dashing through the estate in a deep ravine, on its way to join the Tweed; behind the house the rising hills beyond which lay the lovely scenery of the Yarrow. The eight years (1804–1812) at Ashiestiel were the serenest, and probably the happiest, of Scott's life. Here he wrote his two greatest poems, *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*. His mornings he spent at his desk, always with a faithful hound at his feet watching the tireless hand as it threw off sheet after sheet of manuscript to make up the day's stint. By one o'clock he was,

as he said, "his own man," free to spend the remaining hours of light with his children, his horses, and his dogs, or to indulge himself in his life-long passion for tree-planting. His robust and healthy nature made him excessively fond of all out-of-door sports, especially riding, in which he was daring to foolhardiness. It is a curious fact, noted by Lockhart, that many of Scott's senses were blunt; he could scarcely, for instance, tell one wine from another by the taste, and once sat quite unconscious at his table while his guests were manifesting extreme uneasiness over the approach of a too-long-kept haunch of venison, but his sight was unusually keen, as his hunting exploits proved. His little son once explained his father's popularity by saying that "it was him that commonly saw the hare sitting." What with hunting, fishing, salmon-spearing by torchlight, gallops over the hills into the Yarrow country, planting and transplanting of his beloved trees, Scott's life at Ashestiel, during the hours when he was "his own man," was a very full and happy one.

Unfortunately, he had already embarked in an enterprise which was destined to overthrow his fortunes just when they seemed fairest. While at school in Kelso he had become intimate with a school fellow named James Ballantyne, and later, when Ballantyne set up a small printing house in Kelso, he had given him his earliest poems to print. After the issue of the *Border Minstrelsy*, the typographical excellence of which attracted attention even in London, he set Ballantyne up in business in Edinburgh, secretly entering the firm himself as silent partner. The good sale of the *Lay* had given the firm an excellent start; but more matter was presently needed to feed the press. To supply it, Scott undertook and completed at Ashestiel four enormous tasks of editing—the complete works of Dryden and of Swift, the Somers' Tracts, and the Sadler State Papers. The success of these editions, and the subsequent enormous sale of Scott's poems and novels, would have kept the concern solvent in spite of Ballantyne's complete incapacity for business, but in 1809 Scott plunged recklessly into another and more serious venture. A dispute with Constable, the veteran publisher and bookseller, aggravated by the harsh criticism delivered upon *Marmion* by Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, Constable's magazine, determined Scott to set up in connection with the Ballantyne press a rival bookselling concern, and a rival magazine, to be called the *Quarterly Review*. The project was a daring one, in view of Constable's great ability and resources; to make it foolhardy to madness Scott selected to manage the new business a brother of James Ballantyne, a dissipated little buffoon, with about as much business ability and general caliber of character as is connoted by the name which Scott coined for him, "Rigdumfunnidos." The selection of such a

man for such a place betrays in Scott's eminently sane and balanced mind a curious strain of impracticality, to say the least; indeed, we are almost constrained to feel with his harsher critics that it betrays something worse than defective judgment—defective character. His greatest failing, if failing it can be called, was pride. He could not endure even the mild dictations of a competent publisher, as is shown by his answer to a letter written by one of them proposing some salaried work; he replied curtly that he was a "black Hussar" of literature, and not to be put to such tame service. Probably this haughty dislike of dictation, this imperious desire to patronize rather than be patronized, led him to choose inferior men with whom to enter into business relations. If so, he paid for the fault so dearly that it is hard for a biographer to press the issue against him.

For the present, however, the wind of fortune was blowing fair, and all the storm clouds were below the horizon. In 1808 *Marmion* appeared, and was greeted with an enthusiasm which made the unprecedented reception of the *Lay* seem lukewarm in comparison. *Marmion* contains nothing which was not plainly foreshadowed in the *Lay*, but the hand of the poet has grown more sure, his descriptive effects are less crude and amateurish, the narrative proceeds with a steadier march, the music has gained in volume and in martial vigor. An anecdote is told by Mr. Hutton which will serve as a type of a hundred others illustrative of the extraordinary hold which this poetry took upon the minds of ordinary men. "I have heard," he says, "of two old men—complete strangers—passing each other on a dark London night, when one of them happened to be repeating to himself, just as Campbell did to the hackney coachman of the North Bridge of Edinburgh, the last lines of the account of Flodden Field in *Marmion*, 'Charge, Chester, charge,' when suddenly a reply came out of the darkness, 'On, Stanley, on,' whereupon they finished the death of *Marmion* between them, took off their hats to each other, and parted, laughing." *The Lady of the Lake*, which followed in little more than a year, was received with the same popular delight, and with even greater respect on the part of the critics. Even the formidable Jeffrey, who was supposed to dine off slaughtered authors as the Giant in "Jack and the Beanstalk" dined off young Englishmen, keyed his voice to unwonted praise. The influx of tourists into the Trossachs, where the scene of the poem was laid, was so great as seriously to embarrass the mail coaches, until at last the posting charges had to be raised in order to diminish the traffic. Far away in Spain, at a trying moment of the Peninsular campaign, Sir Adam Ferguson, posted on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's fire, read to his men as they lay prostrate on the ground the passage from *The Lady of the Lake* describing the combat between Roderick Dhu's Highlanders and the forces of the Earl of Mar;

and "the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza when the French shot struck the bank close above them." Such tributes—and they were legion—to the power of his poetry to move adventurous and hardy men, must have been intoxicating to Scott; there is small wonder that the success of his poems gave him, as he says, "such a *heeze* as almost lifted him off his feet."

III

Scott's modesty was not in danger, but so far as his prudence was concerned, his success did really lift him off his feet. In 1812, still more encouraged thereto by entering upon the emoluments of the office of Clerk of Sessions, the duties of which he had performed for six years without pay, he purchased Abbotsford, an estate on the Tweed, adjoining that of the Duke of Buccleugh, his kinsman, and near the beautiful ruins of Melrose Abbey. Here he began to carry out the dream of his life, to found a territorial family which should augment the power and fame of his clan. Beginning with a modest farm house and a farm of a hundred acres, he gradually bought, planted, and built, until the farm became a manorial domain and the farm house a castle. He had not gone far in this work before he began to realize that the returns from his poetry would never suffice to meet such demands as would thus be made upon his purse. Byron's star was in the ascendant, and before its baleful magnificence Scott's milder and more genial light visibly paled. He was himself the first to declare, with characteristic generosity, that the younger poet had "bet"^[3] him at his own craft. As Carlyle says, "he had held the sovereignty for some half-score of years, a comparatively long lease of it, and now the time seemed come for dethronement, for abdication. An unpleasant business; which, however, he held himself ready, as a brave man will, to transact with composure and in silence."

But, as it proved, there was no need for resignation. The reign of metrical romance, brilliant but brief, was past, or nearly so. But what of prose romance, which long ago, in picking out *Don Quixote* from the puzzling Spanish, he had promised himself he would one day attempt? With some such questioning of the Fates, Scott drew from his desk the sheets of a story begun seven years before, and abandoned because of the success of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. This story he now completed, and published as *Waverley* in the spring of 1814—an event "memorable in the annals of British literature; in the annals of British bookselling thrice and four times memorable." The popularity of the metrical romances dwindled to insignificance before the enthusiasm with which this prose romance was received. A moment before quietly resolved to give up his

place in the world's eye, and to live the life of an obscure country gentleman, Scott found himself launched once more on the tide of brave fortunes. The Ballantyne publishing and printing houses ceased to totter, and settled themselves on what seemed the firmest of foundations. At Abbotsford, buying, planting, and building began on a greater scale than had ever been planned in its owner's most sanguine moments.

The history of the next eleven years in Scott's life is the history, on the one hand, of the rapidly-appearing novels, of a fame gradually spreading outward from Great Britain until it covered the civilized world—a fame increased rather than diminished by the *incognito* which the "author of *Waverley*" took great pains to preserve even after the secret had become an open one; on the other hand, of the large-hearted, hospitable life at Abbotsford, where, in spite of the importunities of curious and ill-bred tourists, bent on getting a glimpse of the "Wizard of the North," and in spite of the enormous mass of work, literary and official, which Scott took upon himself to perform, the atmosphere of country leisure and merriment was somehow miraculously preserved. This life of the hearty prosperous country laird was the one toward the realization of which all Scott's efforts were directed; it is worth while, therefore, to see as vividly as may be, what kind of life that was, that we may the better understand what kind of man he was who cared for it. The following extract from Lockhart's *Life of Scott* gives us at least one very characteristic aspect of the Abbotsford world:

"It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine; and all was in readiness for a grand coursing-match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the staunchest of anglers, Mr. Rose; but he, too, was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net.... This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about, to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphrey Davy, Dr. Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie.... Laidlow (the steward of Abbotsford) on a strong-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept Hoddin Grey, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp

(Sir Humphrey Davy) ... a brown hat with flexible brim, surrounded with line upon line of catgut, and innumerable fly-hooks; jackboots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jacket, white-cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr. Wollaston was in black; and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr. Mackenzie, at this time in the seventy-sixth year of his age, with a hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck.... Tom Purdie (one of Scott's servants) and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the grey-hounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gamboled about Sibyl Grey barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

"The order of march had all been settled, when Scott's daughter Anne broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed, 'Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet!' Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background; Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos, the first verse of an old pastoral song—

What will I do gin my hoggie
die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had na mae,
And wow, but I was vogie!

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on."

Let us supplement this with one more picture, from the same hand, showing Scott in a little more intimate light. The passage was written in 1821, after Lockhart had married Scott's eldest daughter, and gone to spend the summer at Chiefswood, a cottage on the Abbotsford estate:

"We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its

brilliant and constantly varying society; yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new-comers entailed upon all the family, except Scott himself. But in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open house-keeping.... When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *réveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils, and meant for that day to 'take his ease in his inn.' On descending, he was found to be seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast he would take possession of a dressing-room upstairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate*; and then, having made up and despatched his packet for Mr. Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work ... until it was time to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening.... He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced,—this primitive device being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper, and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice; and in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether."

Few events of importance except the successive appearances of "our buiks" as Tom Purdie called his master's novels, and an occasional visit to London or the continent, intervened to break the busy monotony of this Abbotsford life. On one of these visits to London, Scott was invited to dine with the Prince Regent, and when the prince became King George IV, in 1820, almost the first act of his reign was to create Scott a baronet. Scott accepted the honor gratefully, as coming, he said, "from the original source of all honor." There can well be two opinions as to whether this least admirable of English kings constituted a very prime fountain of honor, judged by democratic standards; but to Scott's mind,

such an imputation would have been next to sacrilege. The feudal bias of his mind, strong to start with, had been strengthened by his long sojourn among the visions of a feudal past; the ideals of feudalism were living realities to him; and he accepted knighthood from his king's hand in exactly the same spirit which determined his attitude of humility towards his "chief," the Duke of Buccleugh, and which impelled him to exhaust his genius in the effort to build up a great family estate.

There were already signs that the enormous burden of work under which he seemed to move so lightly, was telling on him. *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Legend of Montrose*, and *Ivanhoe*, had all of them been dictated between screams of pain, wrung from his lips by a chronic cramp of the stomach. By the time he reached *Redgauntlet* and *St. Ronan's Well*, there began to be heard faint murmurings of discontent from his public, hints that he was writing too fast, and that the noble wine he had poured them for so long was growing at last a trifle watery. To add to these causes of uneasiness, the commercial ventures in which he was interested drifted again into a precarious state. He had himself fallen into the bad habit of forestalling the gains from his novels by heavy drafts on his publishers, and the example thus set was followed faithfully by John Ballantyne. Scott's good humor and his partner's bad judgment saddled the concern with a lot of unsalable books. In 1818 the affairs of the book-selling business had to be closed up, Constable taking over the unsalable stock and assuming the outstanding liabilities in return for copyright privileges covering some of Scott's novels. This so burdened the veteran publisher that when, in 1825, a large London firm failed, it carried him down also—and with him James Ballantyne, with whom he had entered into close relations. Scott's secret connection with Ballantyne had continued; accordingly he woke up one fine day to find himself worse than beggared, being personally liable for one hundred and thirty thousand pounds.

IV

The years intervening between this calamity and Scott's death form one of the saddest and at the same time most heroic chapters in the history of literature. The fragile health of Lady Scott succumbed almost immediately to the crushing blow, and she died in a few months. Scott surrendered Abbotsford to his creditors and took up humble lodgings in Edinburgh. Here, with a pride and stoical courage as quiet as it was splendid, he settled down to fill with the earnings of his pen the vast gulf of debt for which he was morally scarcely

responsible at all. In three years he wrote *Woodstock*, three *Chronicles of the Canongate*, the *Fair Maid of Perth*, *Anne of Geierstein*, the first series of the *Tales of a Grandfather*, and a *Life of Napoleon*, equal to thirteen volumes of novel size, besides editing and annotating a complete edition of his own works. All these together netted his creditors £40,000. Touched by the efforts he was making to settle their claims, they now presented him with Abbotsford, and thither he returned to spend the few years remaining to him. In 1830 he suffered a first stroke of paralysis; refusing to give up, however, he made one more desperate rally to recapture his old power of story-telling. *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous* were the pathetic result; they are not to be taken into account, in any estimate of his powers, for they are manifestly the work of a paralytic patient. The gloomy picture is darkened by an incident which illustrates strikingly one phase of Scott's character.

The great Reform Bill was being discussed throughout Scotland, menacing what were really abuses, but what Scott, with his intense conservatism, believed to be sacred and inviolable institutions. The dying man roused himself to make a stand against the abominable bill. In a speech which he made at Jedburgh, he was hissed and hooted by the crowd, and he left the town with the dastardly cry of "Burk Sir Walter!" ringing in his ears.

Nature now intervened to ease the intolerable strain. Scott's anxiety concerning his debt gradually gave way to an hallucination that it had all been paid. His friends took advantage of the quietude which followed to induce him to make the journey to Italy, in the fear that the severe winter of Scotland would prove fatal. A ship of His Majesty's fleet was put at his disposal, and he set sail for Malta. The youthful adventurousness of the man flared up again oddly for a moment, when he insisted on being set ashore upon a volcanic island in the Mediterranean which had appeared but a few days before and which sank beneath the surface shortly after. The climate of Malta at first appeared to benefit him; but when he heard, one day, of the death of Goethe at Weimar, he seemed seized with a sudden apprehension of his own end, and insisted upon hurrying back through Europe, in order that he might look once more on Abbotsford. On the ride from Edinburgh he remained for the first two stages entirely unconscious. But as the carriage entered the valley of the Gala he opened his eyes and murmured the name of objects as they passed, "Gala water, surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee." When the towers of Abbotsford came in view, he was so filled with delight that he could scarcely be restrained from leaping out. At the gates he greeted faithful Laidlaw in a voice strong and hearty as of old:

"Why, man, how often I have thought of you!" and smiled and wept over the dogs who came rushing as in bygone times to lick his hand. He died a few days later, on the afternoon of a glorious autumn day, with all the windows open, so that he might catch to the last the whisper of the Tweed over its pebbles.

"And so," says Carlyle, "the curtain falls; and the strong Walter Scott is with us no more. A possession from him does remain; widely scattered; yet attainable; not inconsiderable. It can be said of him, when he departed, he took a Man's life along with him. No sounder piece of British manhood was put together in that eighteenth century of Time. Alas, his fine Scotch face, with its shaggy honesty, sagacity and goodness, when we saw it latterly on the Edinburgh streets, was all worn with care, the joy all fled from it—plowed deep with labor and sorrow. We shall never forget it; we shall never see it again. Adieu, Sir Walter, pride of all Scotchmen, take our proud and sad farewell."

FOOTNOTES:

[1] See Scott's ballad "The Eve of St. John."

[2] Asked.

[3] Bested, got the better of.



II. SCOTT'S PLACE IN THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

In order rightly to appreciate the poetry of Scott it is necessary to understand something of that remarkable "Romantic Movement" which took place toward the end of the eighteenth century, and within a space of twenty-five years completely changed the face of English literature. Both the causes and the effects of this movement were much more than merely literary; the "romantic revival" penetrated every crevice and ramification of life in those parts of Europe which it affected; its social, political, and religious results were all deeply significant. But we must here confine ourselves to such aspects of the revival as showed themselves in English poetry.

Eighteenth century poetry had been distinguished by its polish, its formal correctness, or—to use a term in much favor with critics of that day—its "elegance." The various and wayward metrical effects of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets had been discarded for a few well-recognized verse forms, which themselves in turn had become still further limited by the application to them of precise rules of structure. Hand in hand with this restricting process in meter, had gone a similar tendency in diction. The simple, concrete phrases of daily speech had given way to stately periphrases; the rich and riotous vocabulary of earlier poetry had been replaced by one more decorous, measured, and high-sounding. A corresponding process of selection and exclusion was applied to the subject matter of poetry. Passion, lyric exaltation, delight in the concrete life of man and nature, passed out of fashion; in their stead came social satire, criticism, generalized observation. While the classical influence, as it is usually called, was at its height, with such men as Dryden and Pope to exemplify it, it did a great work; but toward the end of the eighth decade of the eighteenth century it had visibly run to seed. The feeble Hayley, the silly Della Crusca, the arid Erasmus Darwin, were its only exemplars. England was ripe for a literary revolution, a return to nature and to passion; and such a revolution was not slow in coming.

It announced itself first in George Crabbe, who turned to paint the life of the poor with patient realism; in Burns, who poured out in his songs the passion of love, the passion of sorrow, the passion of conviviality; in Blake, who tried to reach across the horizon of visible fact to mystical heavens of more enduring

reality. Following close upon these men came the four poets destined to accomplish the revolution which the early comers had begun. They were born within four years of each other, Wordsworth in 1770, Scott in 1771, Coleridge in 1772, Southey in 1774. As we look at these four men now, and estimate their worth as poets, we see that Southey drops almost out of the account, and that Wordsworth and Coleridge stand, so far as the highest qualities of poetry go, far above Scott, as, indeed, Blake and Burns do also. But the contemporary judgment upon them was directly the reverse; and Scott's poetry exercised an influence over his age immeasurably greater than that of any of the other three. Let us attempt to discover what qualities this poetry possessed which gave it its astonishing hold upon the age when it was written. In so doing, we may discover indirectly some of the reasons why it still retains a large portion of its popularity, and perhaps arrive at some grounds of judgment by which we may test its right thereto.

One reason why Scott's poetry was immediately welcomed, while that of Wordsworth and of Coleridge lay neglected, is to be found in the fact that in the matter of diction Scott was much less revolutionary than they. By nature and education he was conservative; he put *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* into the mouth of a rude harper of the North in order to shield himself from the charge of "attempting to set up a new school in poetry," and he never throughout his life violated the conventions, literary or social, if he could possibly avoid doing so. This bias toward conservatism and conventionality shows itself particularly in the language of his poems. He was compelled, of course, to use much more concrete and vivid terms than the eighteenth century poets had used, because he was dealing with much more concrete and vivid matter; but his language, nevertheless, has a prevailing stateliness, and at times an artificiality, which recommended it to readers tired of the inanities of Hayley and Mason, but unwilling to accept the startling simplicity and concreteness of diction exemplified by the Lake poets at their best.

Another peculiarity of Scott's poetry which made powerfully for its popularity, was its spirited meter. People were weary of the heroic couplet, and turned eagerly to these hurried verses, that went on their way with the sharp tramp of moss-troopers, and heated the blood like a drum. The meters of Coleridge, subtle, delicate, and poignant, had been passed by with indifference—had not been heard perhaps, for lack of ears trained to hear; but Scott's metrical effects were such as a child could appreciate, and a soldier could carry in his head.

Analogous to this treatment of meter, though belonging to a less formal side of

his art, was Scott's treatment of nature, the landscape setting of his stories. Perhaps the most obvious feature of the romantic revival was a reawakening of interest in out-door nature. It was as if for a hundred years past people had been stricken blind as soon as they passed from the city streets into the country. A trim garden, an artfully placed country house, a well-kept preserve, they might see; but for the great shaggy world of mountain and sea—it had been shut out of man's elegant vision. Before Scott began to write there had been no lack of prophets of the new nature-worship, but none of them of a sort to catch the general ear. Wordsworth's pantheism was too mystical, too delicate and intuitive, to recommend itself to any but chosen spirits; Crabbe's descriptions were too minute, Coleridge's too intense, to please. Scott was the first to paint nature with a broad, free touch, without raptures or philosophizing, but with a healthy pleasure in its obvious beauties, such as appeal to average men. His "scenery" seldom exists for its own sake, but serves, as it should, for background and setting of his story. As his readers followed the fortunes of William of Deloraine or Roderick Dhu, they traversed by sunlight and by moonlight landscapes of wild romantic charm, and felt their beauty quite naturally, as a part of the excitement of that wild life. They felt it the more readily because of a touch of artificial stateliness in the handling, a slight theatrical heightening of effect—from an absolute point of view a defect, but highly congenial to the taste of the time. It was the scenic side of nature which Scott gave, and gave inimitably, while Burns was piercing to the inner heart of her tenderness in his lines "To a Mountain Daisy" and "To a Mouse," while Wordsworth was mystically communing with her soul, in his "Tintern Abbey." It was the scenic side of nature for which the perceptions of men were ripe; so they left profounder poets to their musings, and followed after the poet who could give them a brilliant story set in a brilliant scene.

Again, the emotional key to Scott's poetry was on a comprehensible plane. The situations with which he deals, the passions, ambitions, satisfactions, which he portrays, belong, in one form or another, to all men, or at least are easily grasped by the imaginations of all men. It has often been said that Scott is the most Homeric of English poets; so far as the claim rests on considerations of style, it is hardly to be granted, for nothing could be farther than the hurrying torrent of Scott's verse from the "long and refluent music" of Homer. But in this other respect, that he deals in the rudimentary stuff of human character in a straightforward way, without a hint of modern complexities and super-subtleties, he is really akin to the master poet of antiquity. This, added to the crude wild life which he pictures, the vigorous sweep of his action, the sincere glow of romance

which bathes his story—all so tonic in their effect upon minds long used to the stuffy decorum of didactic poetry, completed the triumph of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, and *The Lady of the Lake*, over their age.

As has been already suggested, Scott cannot be put in the first rank of poets. No compromise can be made on this point, because upon it the whole theory of poetry depends. Neither on the formal nor on the essential sides of his art is he among the small company of the supreme. And no one understood this better than himself. He touched the keynote of his own power, though with too great modesty, when he said, "I am sensible that if there is anything good about my poetry ... it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active dispositions." The poet Campbell, who was so fascinated by Scott's ballad of "Cadyow Castle" that he used to repeat it aloud on the North Bridge of Edinburgh until "the whole fraternity of coachmen knew him by tongue as he passed," characterizes the predominant charm of Scott's poetry as lying in a "strong, pithy eloquence," which is perhaps only another name for "hurried frankness of composition." If this is not the highest quality to which poetry can attain, it is a very admirable one; and it will be a sad day for the English-speaking race when there shall not be found persons of every age and walk of life, to take the same delights in these stirring poems as their author loved to think was taken by "soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active dispositions."



III. THE LADY OF THE LAKE

1. HISTORICAL SETTING

The Lady of the Lake deals with a distinct epoch in the life of King James V of Scotland, and has lying back of it a considerable amount of historical fact, an understanding of which will help in the appreciation of the poem. During his minority the King was under the tutelage of Archibald Douglas, sixth Earl of Angus, who had married the King's mother. The young monarch chafed for a long time under this authority, but the Douglasses were so powerful that he was unable to shake it off, in spite of several desperate attempts on the part of his sympathizers to rescue him. In 1528 the King, then sixteen years of age, escaped from his own castle of Falkland to Stirling Castle. The governor of Stirling, an enemy of the Douglas family, received him joyfully. There soon gathered about his standard a sufficient number of powerful peers to enable him to depose the Earl of Angus from the regency and to banish him and all his family to England. The Douglas who figures in the poem is an imaginary uncle of the banished regent, and himself under the ban, compelled to hide away in the shelter provided for him by Roderick Dhu on the lonely island in Loch Katrine. He is represented as having been loved and trusted by King James during the boyhood of the latter, before the enmity sprang up between the house of Angus and the throne. This enmity, to quote from the *History of the House of Douglas*, published at Edinburgh in 1743, "was so inveterate, that numerous as their allies were, their nearest friends, even in the most remote parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise."

The outlawed border chieftain, Roderick Dhu, who gives shelter to the persecuted Douglas, is a fictitious character, but one entirely typical of the time and place. The expedition undertaken by the young King against the Border clans, under the guise of a hunting party, is in part, at least, historic. Pitscottie's History says: "In 1529 James V made a convention at Edinburgh for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers, who, during the license of his minority and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances. Accordingly, he assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers, who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself

with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick forest, where he hanged over the gate of his own castle Piers Cockburn of Henderland, who had prepared, according to tradition, a feast for his reception."

2. GENERAL CRITICISM AND ANALYSIS

The Lady of the Lake appeared in 1810. Two years before, *Marmion* had vastly increased the popular enthusiasm aroused by *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, and the success of his second long poem had so exhilarated Scott that, as he says, he "felt equal to anything and everything." To one of his kinswomen, who urged him not to jeopardize his fame by another effort in the same kind, he gaily quoted the words of Montrose:

He either fears his fate too much
Or his deserts are small,
Who dares not put it to the touch,
To win or lose it all.

The result justified his confidence; for not only was *The Lady of the Lake* as successful as its predecessors, but it remains the most sterling of Scott's poems. The somewhat cheap supernaturalism of the *Lay* appears in it only for a moment; both the story and the characters are of a less theatrical type than in *Marmion*; and it has a glow, animation, and onset, which was denied to the later poems, *Rokeby* and *The Lord of the Isles*.

The following outline abridged from the excellent one given by Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* for August, 1810, will be useful as a basis for criticism of the matter and style of the poem.

"The first canto begins with a description of a staghunt in the Highlands of Perthshire. As the chase lengthens, the sportsmen drop off; till at last the foremost horseman is left alone; and his horse, overcome with fatigue, stumbles and dies. The adventurer, climbing up a craggy eminence, discovers Loch Katrine spread out in evening glory before him. The huntsman winds his horn; and sees, to his infinite surprise, a little skiff, guided by a lovely woman, glide from beneath the trees that overhang the water, and approach the shore at his feet. Upon the stranger's approach, she pushes the shallop from the shore in alarm. After a short parley, however,

she carries him to a woody island, where she leads him into a sort of silvan mansion, rudely constructed, and hung round with trophies of war and the chase. An elderly lady is introduced at supper; and the stranger, after disclosing himself to be 'James Fitz-James, the knight of Snowdoun,' tries in vain to discover the name and history of the ladies.

"The second canto opens with a picture of the aged harper, Allan-bane, sitting on the island beach with the damsel, watching the skiff which carries the stranger back to land. A conversation ensues, from which the reader gathers that the lady is a daughter of the Douglas, who, being exiled by royal displeasure from court, had accepted this asylum from Sir Roderick Dhu, a Highland chieftain long outlawed for deeds of blood; that this dark chief is in love with his fair *protégée*, but that her affections are engaged to Malcolm Graeme, a younger and more amiable mountaineer. The sound of distant music is heard on the lake; and the barges of Sir Roderick are discovered, proceeding in triumph to the island. Ellen, hearing her father's horn at that instant on the opposite shore, flies to meet him and Malcolm Graeme, who is received with cold and stately civility by the lord of the isle. Sir Roderick informs the Douglas that his retreat has been discovered, and that the King (James V), under pretence of hunting, has assembled a large force in the neighborhood. He then proposes impetuously that they should unite their fortunes by his marriage with Ellen, and rouse the whole Western Highlands. The Douglas, intimating that his daughter has repugnances which she cannot overcome, declares that he will retire to a cave in the neighboring mountains until the issue of the King's threat is seen. The heart of Roderick is wrung with agony at this rejection; and when Malcolm advances to Ellen, he pushes him violently back—and a scuffle ensues, which is with difficulty appeased by the giant arm of Douglas. Malcolm then withdraws in proud resentment, plunges into the water, and swims over by moonlight to the mainland.

"The third canto opens with an account of the ceremonies employed in summoning the clan. This is accomplished by the consecration of a small wooden cross, which, with its points scorched and dipped in blood, is carried with incredible celerity through the whole territory of the chieftain. The eager fidelity with which this fatal signal is carried on, is represented with great spirit. A youth starts from the side of his father's coffin, to bear it forward, and, having run his stage, delivers it to a young bridegroom returning from church, who instantly binds his plaid around him, and rushes

onward. In the meantime Douglas and his daughter have taken refuge in the mountain cave; and Sir Roderick, passing near their retreat on his way to the muster, hears Ellen's voice singing her evening hymn to the Virgin. He does not obtrude on her devotions, but hurries to the place of rendezvous.

"The fourth canto begins with some ceremonies by a wild hermit of the clan, to ascertain the issue of the impending war; and this oracle is obtained—that the party shall prevail which first sheds the blood of its adversary. The scene then shifts to the retreat of the Douglas, where the minstrel is trying to soothe Ellen in her alarm at the disappearance of her father by singing a fairy ballad to her. As the song ends, the knight of Snowdown suddenly appears before her, declares his love, and urges her to put herself under his protection. Ellen throws herself on his generosity, confesses her attachment to Graeme, and prevails on him to seek his own safety by a speedy retreat from the territory of Roderick Dhu. Before he goes, the stranger presents her with a ring, which he says he has received from King James, with a promise to grant any boon asked by the person producing it. As he retreats, his suspicions are excited by the conduct of his guide, and confirmed by the warnings of a mad woman whom they encounter. His false guide discharges an arrow at him, which kills the maniac. The knight slays the murderer; and learning from the expiring victim that her brain had been turned by the cruelty of Sir Roderick Dhu, he vows vengeance. When chilled with the midnight cold and exhausted with fatigue, he suddenly comes upon a chief reposing by a lonely watch-fire; and being challenged in the name of Roderick Dhu, boldly avows himself his enemy. The clansman, however, disdains to take advantage of a worn-out wanderer; and pledges him safe escort out of Sir Roderick's territory, when he must answer his defiance with his sword. The stranger accepts these chivalrous terms; and the warriors sup and sleep together. This ends the fourth canto.

"At dawn, the knight and the mountaineer proceed toward the Lowland frontier. A dispute arises concerning the character of Roderick Dhu, and the knight expresses his desire to meet in person and do vengeance upon the predatory chief. 'Have then thy wish!' answers his guide; and gives a loud whistle. A whole legion of armed men start up from their mountain ambush in the heath; while the chief turns proudly and says, 'I am Roderick Dhu!' Sir Roderick then by a signal dismisses his men to their concealment. Arrived at his frontier, the chief forces the knight to stand upon his defense. Roderick, after a hard combat is laid wounded on the ground; Fitz-James,

sounding his bugle, brings four squires to his side; and, after giving the wounded chief into their charge, gallops rapidly on towards Stirling. As he ascends the hill to the castle, he descries approaching the same place the giant form of Douglas, who has come to deliver himself up to the King, in order to save Malcolm Graeme and Sir Roderick from the impending danger. Before entering the castle, Douglas is seized with the whim to engage in the holiday sports which are going forward outside; he wins prize after prize, and receives his reward from the hand of the prince, who, however does not condescend to recognize his former favorite. Roused at last by an insult from one of the royal grooms, Douglas proclaims himself, and is ordered into custody by the King. At this instant a messenger arrives with tidings of an approaching battle between the clan of Roderick and the King's lieutenant, the Earl of Mar; and is ordered back to prevent the conflict, by announcing that both Sir Roderick and Lord Douglas are in the hands of their sovereign.

"The last canto opens in the guard room of the royal castle at Stirling, at dawn. While the mercenaries are quarreling and singing at the close of a night of debauch, the sentinels introduce Ellen and the minstrel Allan-bane—who are come in search of Douglas. Ellen awes the ruffian soldiery by her grace and liberality, and is at length conducted to a more seemly waiting place, until she may obtain audience with the King. While Allan-bane, in the cell of Sir Roderick, sings to the dying chieftain of the glorious battle which has just been waged by his clansmen against the forces of the Earl of Mar, Ellen, in another part of the palace, hears the voice of Malcolm Graeme lamenting his captivity from an adjoining turret. Before she recovers from her agitation she is startled by the appearance of Fitz-James, who comes to inform her that the court is assembled, and the King at leisure to receive her suit. He conducts her to the hall of presence, round which Ellen casts a timid and eager glance for the monarch. But all the glittering figures are uncovered, and James Fitz-James alone wears his cap and plume. The Knight of Snowdown is the King of Scotland! Struck with awe and terror, Ellen falls speechless at his feet, pointing to the ring which he has put upon her finger. The prince raises her with eager kindness, declares that her father is forgiven, and bids her ask for a boon for some other person. The name of Graeme trembles on her lips, but she cannot trust herself to utter it. The King, in playful vengeance, condemns Malcolm Graeme to fetters, takes a chain of gold from his own neck, and throwing it over that of the young chief, puts the clasp in the hand of Ellen."

From this outline, it will be evident that Scott had gained greatly in narrative power since the production of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Not only are the elements of the "fable" (to use the word in its old-fashioned sense) harmonious and probable, but the various incidents grow out of each other in a natural and necessary way. The *Lay* was at best a skillful bit of carpentering whereof the several parts were nicely juxtaposed; *The Lady of the Lake* is an organism, and its several members partake of a common life. A few weaknesses may, it is true, be pointed out in it. The warning of Fitz-James by the mad woman's song makes too large a draft upon our romantic credulity. Her appearance is at once so accidental and so opportune that it resembles those supernatural interventions employed by ancient tragedy to cut the knot of a difficult situation, which have given rise to the phrase *deus ex machina*. The improbability of the episode is further increased by the fact that she puts her warning in the form of a song. Scott's love of romantic episode manifestly led him astray here. Further, the story as a whole shares with all stories which turn upon the revelation of a concealed identity, the disadvantage of being able to affect the reader powerfully but once, since on a second reading the element of suspense and surprise is lacking. In so far as *The Lady of the Lake* is a mere story, or as it has been called, a "versified novelette," this is not a weakness; but in so far as it is a poem, with the claim which poetry legitimately makes to be read and reread for its intrinsic beauty, it constitutes a real defect.

Not only does this poem, with the slight exceptions just mentioned, show a gain over the earlier poems in narrative power, but it also marks an advance in character delineation. The characters of the *Lay* are, with one or two exceptions, mere lay-figures; Lord Cranstoun and Margaret are the most conventional of lovers; William of Deloraine is little more than an animated suit of armor, and the Lady of Branksome, except at one point, when from her walls she defies the English invaders, is nearly or quite featureless. With the characters of *The Lady of the Lake* the case is very different. The three rivals for Ellen's hand are real men, with individualities which enhance and deepen the picturesqueness of each other by contrast. The easy grace and courtly chivalry, of the disguised King, the quick kindling of his fancy at sight of the mysterious maid of Loch Katrine, his quick generosity in relinquishing his suit when he finds that she loves another, make him one of the most life-like figures of romance. Roderick Dhu, nursing darkly his clannish hatreds, his hopeless love, and his bitter jealousy, with a delicate chivalry sending its bright thread through the tissue of his savage nature, is drawn with an equally convincing hand. Against his gloomy figure the boyish magnanimity of Malcolm Graeme, Ellen's brave faithfulness, made human by a

surface play of coquetry, and the quiet nobility of the exiled Douglas, stand out in varied relief. Judged in connection with the more conventional character types of *Marmion*, and with the draped automatons of the *Lay*, the characters of *The Lady of the Lake* show the gradual growth in Scott of that dramatic imagination which was later to fill the vast scene of his prose romances with unforgettable figures.

But the most significant advance which this poem shows over earlier work is in the greater genuineness of the poetic effect. In the description, for example, of the approach of Roderick Dhu's boats to the island, there is a singular depth of race feeling. There is borne in upon us, as we read, the realization of a wild and peculiar civilization; we get a breath of poetry keen and strange, like the shrilling of the bag-pipes across the water. Again, in the speeding of the fiery cross there is a primitive depth of poetry which carries with it a sense of "old, unhappy, far-off things"; it appeals to latent memories in us, which have been handed down from an ancestral past. There is nothing in either *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* or *Marmion* to compare for natural dramatic force with the situation in *The Lady of the Lake* when Roderick Dhu whistles for his clansmen to appear, and the astonished Fitz-James sees the lonely mountain side suddenly bristle with tartans and spears; and the fight which follows at the ford is a real fight, in a sense not at all to be applied to the tournaments and other conventional encounters of the earlier poems. Even where Scott still clung to supernatural devices to help along his story, he handles them with much greater subtlety than he had done in his earlier efforts. The dropping of Douglas's sword from its scabbard when his disguised enemy enters the room, arouses the imagination without burdening it. It has the same imaginative advantage over such an episode as that in the *Lay*, where the ghost of the wizard comes to bear off the goblin page, as suggestion always has over explicit statement. This gain in subtlety of treatment will be made still more apparent by comparing with any supernatural episode of the *Lay*, the account in *The Lady of the Lake* of the unearthly parentage of Brian the Hermit.

The gain in style is less perceptible. Scott was never a great stylist; he struck out at the very first a nervous, hurrying meter, and a strong though rather commonplace diction, upon which he never substantially improved. Abundant action, rapid transitions, stirring descriptions, common sentiments and ordinary language heightened by a dash of pomp and novelty, above all a pervading animation, spirit, intrepidity—these are the constant elements of Scott's success, present here in their accustomed measure. In the broader sense of style, however,

where the word is understood to include all the processes leading to a given poetical effect, *The Lady of the Lake* has some advantage, even over *Marmion*. It contains nothing, to be sure, so fine or so typical of Scott's peculiar power, as the account of the Battle of Flodden in *Marmion*; the minstrel's recital of the battle of Beal' an Duine does not abide the comparison. The quieter parts of *The Lady of the Lake*, moreover, are sometimes disfigured by a sentimentality and "prettiness" happily unfrequent with Scott. But the description of the approach of Roderick Dhu's war-boats, already mentioned, the superb landscape delineation in the fifth canto, and the beautiful twilight ending of canto third, can well stand as prime types of Scott's stylistic power.



THE LADY OF THE LAKE



CANTO FIRST

THE CHASE

Harp of the North! that moldering
long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades
Saint Fillan's spring,[note](#)
And down the fitful breeze thy
numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee
cling,

5

Muffling with verdant ringlet every
string—
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine
accents sleep?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains
murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds
their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a
maid to weep?

10

Not thus, in ancient days of
Caledon,[note](#)
Was thy voice mute amid the
festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory
won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued
the proud.
At each according pause, was heard
aloud

15

Thine ardent symphony sublime
and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs
attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy
minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed,
and Beauty's matchless eye.

O wake once more! how rude soe'er
the hand

20

That ventures o'er thy magic
maze to stray;

O wake once more! though scarce
my skill command

Some feeble echoing of thine
earlier lay;

Though harsh and faint, and soon to
die away,

And all unworthy of thy nobler
strain,

25

Yet if one heart throb higher at its
sway,

The wizard note has not been
touched in vain.

Then silent be no more!

Enchantress, wake again!

I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on

Monan's rill,[note](#)

30

And deep his midnight lair had
made

In lone Glenartney's hazel shade;[note](#)

But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's
 head,[note](#)
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's
 heavy bay
35
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance
 borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and
 horn.

II

As Chief, who hears his warder call
"To arms! the foemen storm the
 wall,"
40
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in
 haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he
 shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
45
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the
 sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew
 nigh;
50
Then, as the headmost foes
 appeared,
With one brave bound the copse he
 cleared,
And, stretching forward free and
 far,

Sought the wild heaths of Uam-
Var.[note](#)

III

Yelled on the view the opening
pack;
55
Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them
back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave
response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and
strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
60
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild
halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe;
65
Close in her covert cowered the
doe;
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
70
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and
linn,[note](#)
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV

Less loud the sounds of silvan war
75
Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where, 'tis
told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
80
And many a gallant, stayed
perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering
horse,
And of the trackers of the deer,
Scarce half the lessening pack was
near;
So shrewdly on the mountain side,
85
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair
Menteith.[note](#)
90
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and
moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.[note](#)
But nearer was the copsewood grey,
95
That waved and wept on Loch-
Achray,[note](#)
And mingled with the pine-trees
blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.[note](#)

Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
With flying foot the heath he
 spurned,
100
Held westward with unwearied
 race,
And left behind the panting chase.

VI

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave
 o'er,
As swept the hunt through
 Cambusmore;[note](#)
What reins were tightened in
 despair,
105
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;[note](#)
Who flagged upon Bochastle's
 heath,[note](#)
Who shunned to stem the flooded
 Teith—
For twice that day, from shore to
 shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
110
Few were the stragglers, following
 far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was
 won,[note](#)
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
115
That horseman plied the scourge
 and steel;

For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with
soil,
While every gasp with sobs he
drew,
The laboring stag strained full in
view.

120

Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's
breed,[note](#)
Unmatched for courage, breath, and
speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate
game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his
haunch,

125

Vindictive, toiled the bloodhounds
stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
130
O'er stock and rock their race they
take.

VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain
high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to
bay,
Where that huge rampart barred the
way;

135

Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;

For the death-wound and the death-
halloo,
Mustered his breath, his whinyard
drew—[note](#)
But thundering as he came
prepared,
140
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunned the shock,
And turned him from the opposing
rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome
glen,
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's
ken,
145
In the deep Trossachs' wildest
nook[note](#)
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couched, the
thicket shed
Cold dews and wild-flowers on his
head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
150
Rave through the hollow pass
amain,
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter
came,
To cheer them on the vanished
game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
155
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,

For the good steed, his labors o'er,
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no
more;

160

Then, touched with pity and
remorse,

He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.

"I little thought, when first thy rein

I slacked upon the banks of Seine,

That Highland eagle e'er should

feed

165

On thy fleet limbs, my matchless
steed!

Woe worth the chase, woe worth the

day,[note](#)

That costs thy life, my gallant

gray!"

X

Then through the dell his horn
resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the
hounds.

170

Back limped, with slow and
crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they
pressed,
With drooping tail and humbled
crest;

But still the dingle's hollow throat

175

Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles answered with their
scream,
Round and around the sounds were
cast,[note](#)
Till echo seemed an answering
blast;

180

And on the Hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;
Yet often paused, so strange the
road,
So wondrous were the scenes it
showed.

XI

The western waves of ebbing day

185

Rolled o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,

190

Where twined the path in shadow
hid,

Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,

195

The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders

vain^{note}

Presumptuous piled on Shinar's
plain.

The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,

200

Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles
bare,

205

Nor lacked they many a banner fair;
For, from their shivered brows
displayed,

Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dewdrops

sheen,^{note}

The brier-rose fell in streamers
green,

210

And creeping shrubs, of thousand
dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer
sighs.

XII

Boon nature scattered, free and

wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's
child.

Here eglantine embalmed the air,
215

Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Fox-glove and night-shade, side by
side,

Emblems of punishment and pride,
220

Grouped their dark hues with every
stain

The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every
breath,

Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
225

Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent
flung,[note](#)

Where seemed the cliffs to meet on
high,

His bows athwart the narrowed sky.
230

Highest of all, where white peaks
glanced,

Where glist'ning streamers waved
and danced,

The wanderer's eye could barely
view

The summer heaven's delicious
blue;

So wondrous wild, the whole might
seem

235

The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of
 brim
As served the wild duck's brood to
 swim.

240

Lost for a space, through thickets
 veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their
 face

Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter strayed,
245

Still broader sweep its channels
 made.

The shaggy mounds no longer
 stood,

Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seemed to
 float,

Like castle girdled with its moat;
250

Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,
255

No pathway meets the wanderer's
 ken,

Unless he climb, with footing
 nice,[note](#)

A far projecting precipice.
The broom's tough roots his ladder
 made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
260
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting
 sun,
One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him
 rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
265
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And island that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants
 stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
270
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crag, knoll, and mound,
 confusedly hurled,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feathered o'er
275
His ruined sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle
 air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead
 bare.

XV

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed,
280
And, "What a scene were here," he
 cried,

"For princely pomp, or churchman's
pride!

On this bold brow, a lordly tower;
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,

285

The turrets of a cloister gray;
How blithely might the bugle-horn
Chide, on the lake, the lingering
morn!

How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
Chime, when the groves were still
and mute!

290

And when the midnight moon
should lave

Her forehead in the silver wave,
How solemn on the ear would come
The holy matin's distant hum,
While the deep peal's commanding
tone

295

Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
A sainted hermit from his cell,
To drop a bead with every knell—
And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
Should each bewildered stranger
call

300

To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI

"Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now—beshrew yon nimble deer

—

Like that same hermit's, thin and
spare,

The copse must give my evening
fare;

305

Some mossy bank my couch must
be,

Some rustling oak my canopy.
Yet pass we that; the war and chase
Give little choice of resting-place—
A summer night, in greenwood
spent,

310

Were but tomorrow's merriment:
But hosts may in these wilds
abound,

Such as are better missed than
found;

To meet with Highland plunderers
here,[note](#)

Were worse than loss of steed or
deer.

315

I am alone; my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been
tried."

XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,

320

When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,

325

That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow-twigs to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound

and slow,
330
The beach of pebbles bright as
snow.
The boat had touched the silver
strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood concealed amid the
brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
335
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant
strain.
With head upraised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips
apart,
340
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seemed to
stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace
345
Of finer form or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent
frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with
brown—
The sportive toil, which, short and
light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so
bright,
350
Served too in hastier swell to show

Short glimpses of a breast of snow.
What though no rule of courtly
 grace
To measured mood had trained her
 pace,—
A foot more light, a step more true,
355
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed
 the dew;
E'en the slight harebell raised its
 head,
Elastic from her airy tread.
What though upon her speech there
 hung
The accents of the mountain tongue
 —
360
Those silver sounds, so soft, so
 dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the
 maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,[note](#)
Her golden brooch such birth
 betrayed.
365
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might
 bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
370
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds
 combined
Above a heart more good and kind.

Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;

375

Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more
true,

Than every free-born glance
confessed

The guileless movements of her
breast;

Whether joy danced in her dark eye,

380

Or woe or pity claimed a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion poured a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.

385

One only passion unrevealed,
With maiden pride the maid
concealed,

Yet not less purely felt the flame—
Oh! need I tell that passion's name!

XX

Impatient of the silent horn,

390

Now on the gale her voice was
borne:

"Father!" she cried; the rocks
around

Loved to prolong the gentle sound.

A while she paused, no answer
came—

"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the
name

395

Less resolutely uttered fell,
The echoes could not catch the

swell.
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
Advancing from the hazel shade.
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar,
400
Pushed her light shallop from the
shore,
And when a space was gained
between,
Closer she drew her bosom's screen
—
So forth the startled swan would
swing,
So turn to prune his ruffled wing.
405
Then safe, though fluttered and
amazed,
She paused, and on the stranger
gazed.
Not his the form, nor his the eye,
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

XXI

On his bold visage middle age
410
Had slightly pressed its signet sage,
Yet had not quenched the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
415
The sparkling glance, soon blown to
fire,
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mold,
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb
arrayed,
420

And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a Baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armor trod the
shore.

425

Slighting the petty need he showed,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flowed fair and
free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seemed that tone, and gesture
bland,

430

Less used to sue than to command.

XXII

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wildered wanderers of the hill.

435

"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pulled for
you;[note](#)

On yonder mountain's purple head

440

Have ptarmigan and heath-cock
bled;[note](#)

And our broad nets have swept the
mere,
To furnish forth your evening
cheer."

"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has erred," he said;

445

"No right have I to claim,
 misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A wanderer here, by fortune tost,
My way, my friends, my courser
 lost,
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
450
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land!"

XXIII

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the
 side,
455
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's
 shore;
But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
460
Was on the visioned future bent.[note](#)
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
465
That tasselled horn so gaily gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and
 hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and
 grim.
He bade that all should ready be,
470
To grace a guest of fair degree;

But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's
 horn,
Whose echoes o'er the lake were
 borne."

XXIV

The stranger smiled: "Since to your
 home

475

A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and
 old,
Doomed, doubtless, for
 achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise,
For one kind glance of those bright
 eyes.

480

Permit me, first, the task to guide
Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
The maid with smile suppressed and
 sly,

The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom sure, if e'er before,

485

His noble hand had grasped an oar.
Yet with main strength his strokes
 he drew,

And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect, and whimpering
 cry,

The hounds behind their passage
 ply.

490

Nor frequent does the bright oar
 break

The dark'ning mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,

And moor their shallop on the
beach.

XXV

The stranger viewed the shore
around,
495
'Twas all so close with copsewood
bound,
Nor track nor pathway might
declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain-maiden showed
A clambering, unsuspected road,
500
That winded through the tangled
screen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow
round
With their long fibres swept the
ground.
Here, for retreat in dangerous
hour,[note](#)
505
Some chief had framed a rustic
bower.

XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials as around
The workman's hand had readiest
found.
510
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar
trunks bared,

And by the hatchet rudely squared,
To give the walls their destined
height,
The sturdy oak and ash unite;
While moss and clay and leaves
combined

515

To fence each crevice from the
wind.

The lighter pine-trees overhead,
Their slender length for rafters
spread,

And withered heath and rushes dry
Supplied a russet canopy.

520

Due westward, fronting to the
green,

A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to
twine

525

The ivy and Idaeon vine,
The clematis, the favored flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-
bower,

And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching
air.

530

An instant in this porch she stayed
And gaily to the stranger said,
"On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!"

XXVII

"My hope, my heaven, my trust
must be,

535

My gentle guide, in following thee."

He crossed the threshold—and a

clang

Of angry steel that instant rang.

To his bold brow his spirit rushed,

But soon for vain alarm he blushed,

540

When on the floor he saw

displayed,

Cause of the din, a naked blade

Dropped from the sheath, that

careless flung

Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;

For all around, the walls to grace,

545

Hung trophies of the fight or chase:

A target there, a bugle here,[note](#)

A battle-ax, a hunting spear,

And broadswords, bows, and arrows

store,

With the tusked trophies of the boar.

550

Here grins the wolf as when he

died,

And there the wild-cat's brindled

hide

The frontlet of the elk adorns,

Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;

Pennons and flags defaced and

stained,

555

That blackening streaks of blood

retained,

And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and

white,

With otter's fur and seal's unite,

In rude and uncouth tapestry all,

To garnish forth the silvan hall.

XXVIII

560

The wondering stranger round him
gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised

—

Few were the arms whose sinewy
strength,
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and
swayed,

565

"I never knew but one," he said,
"Whose stalwart arm might brook to
wield^{note}

A blade like this in battle-field."
She sighed, then smiled and took
the word:

"You see the guardian champion's
sword;

570

As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand;
My sire's tall form might grace the
part

Of Ferragus, or Ascabart;^{note}
But in the absent giant's hold

575

Are women now, and menials old."

XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,

580

To whom, though more than
kindred knew,^{note}

Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she
 made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
585
Though all unasked his birth and
 name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's
 door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
590
At length his rank the stranger
 names,
"The Knight of Snowdown, James
 Fitz-James;[note](#)
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to
 age,
By their good swords had held with
 toil;
595
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to
 stand
Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning, with Lord Moray's
 train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
600
Outstripped his comrades, missed
 the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered
 here."

XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn

require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well showed the elder lady's mien,
605
That courts and cities she had seen;
Ellen, though more her looks
displayed
The simple grace of silvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and
face,
Showed she was come of gentle
race.
610
"Twere strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such
mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdown
gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence
grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
615
Turned all inquiry light away:
"Weird women we—by dale and
down
We dwell, afar from tower and
town.
We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
On wandering knights our spells we
cast;
620
While viewless minstrels touch the
string,
"Tis thus our charméd rimes we
sing."
She sung, and still a harp unseen^{note}
Filled up the symphony between.

SONG

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,

625

Sleep the sleep that knows no
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,

630

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,

635

Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

"No rude sound shall reach thine
ear,

Armor's clang, or war-steed
champing,

Trump nor pibroch summon here [note](#)

Mustering clan, or squadron
tramping.

640

Yet the lark's shrill fife may come

At the day-break from the fallow,

And the bittern sound his drum, [note](#)

Booming from the sedgy shallow.

Ruder sounds shall none be near,

645

Guards nor warders challenge here,

Here's no war-steed's neigh and
champing,

Shouting clans or squadrons

stamping."

XXXII

She paused—then, blushing, led the
lay

To grace the stranger of the day.
650

Her mellow notes awhile prolong
The cadence of the flowing song,
Till to her lips in measured frame
The minstrel verse spontaneous
came.

SONG—(*Continued*)

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
655

While our slumbrous spells assail
ye,

Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound
reveillé.[note](#)

Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee
lying;

660
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,

665
Here no bugles sound reveillé."

XXXIII

The hall was cleared—the stranger's
bed

Was there of mountain heather
spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had
lain,
And dreamed their forest sports
again.

670

But vainly did the heath-flower
shed
Its moorland fragrance round his
head;

Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.

In broken dreams the image rose

675

Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
His steed now flounders in the
brake,

Now sinks his barge upon the lake;

Now leader of a broken host,

His standard falls, his honor's lost.

680

Then—from my couch may
heavenly might

Chase that worst phantom of the
night!

Again returned the scenes of youth,

Of confident undoubting truth;

Again his soul he interchanged

685

With friends whose hearts were
long estranged.

They come, in dim procession led,

The cold, the faithless, and the
dead;

As warm each hand, each brow as
gay,

As if they parted yesterday.

690

And doubt distracts him at the view

—
O were his senses false or true?
Dreamed he of death, or broken
vow,
Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV

At length, with Ellen in a grove
695
He seemed to walk, and speak of
love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were
high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp;
700
The phantom's sex was changed and
gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and
threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
705
To Ellen still a likeness bore.
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were
red.
And deep and dusky luster shed,
710
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye,
Where that huge falchion hung on
high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a
countless throng,

715

Rushed, chasing countless thoughts
along.

Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose, and sought the moonshine
pure.

XXXV

The wild-rose, eglantine, and
broom,

Wasted around their rich perfume:
720

The birch-trees swept in fragrant
balm,

The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering
glance,

Played on the water's still expanse
—

Wild were the heart whose passion's
sway

725

Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his
breast:

"Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?

730

Can I not mountain-maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas
hand?

Can I not frame a fevered dream,
735

But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.

My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."

740

His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and
 woes,

And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,

745

And morning dawned on Benvenue.



CANTO SECOND

THE ISLAND

I

At morn the blackcock trims his
jetty wing,[note](#)
'Tis morning prompts the linnet's
blithest lay,
All Nature's children feel the matin
spring
Of life reviving, with reviving
day;

5

And while yon little bark glides
down the bay,
Wafting the stranger on his way
again,
Morn's genial influence roused a
minstrel gray,[note](#)
And sweetly o'er the lake was
heard thy strain,
Mixed with the sounding harp, O
white-haired Allan-bane!

II

SONG

10

"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,

15

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,
20

High place in battle line,
Good hawk and hound for silvan
sport,
Where beauty sees the brave resort;
The honored meed be thine!
True be thy sword, thy friend
sincere,

25

Thy lady constant, kind and dear,
And lost in love, and friendship's
smile
Be memory of the lonely isle.

III

SONG (*Continued*)

"But if beneath yon southern sky
A plaided stranger roam
30
Whose drooping crest and stifled
sigh,
And sunken cheek and heavy eye,

A sparkle of inspiring flame.
His hand, reclined upon the wire,
Seemed watching the awakening
fire;

60

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,

65

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,[note](#)

70

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!

75

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,

80

Show me the fair would scorn to
spy,

And prize such conquest of her eye!

VI

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellen marked him not;
But when he turned him to the
glade,

85

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,

90

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,

95

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!"

'Twas thus upbraiding conscience
said—

100

"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,

105

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!"

110

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

115

Arose the well-known martial
chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
"Vainly thou bid'st, O noble maid,"
Clasping his withered hands, he
said,

120

"Vainly thou bid'st me wake the
strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has
spanned!

I touch the chords of joy, but low

125

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!
130
If, as my tuneful fathers said,
This harp, which erst Saint Modan
 swayed,[note](#)
Can thus its master's fate foretell,
Then welcome be the minstrel's
 knell!

VIII

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed
135
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,
140
And, disobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell's
 bannered hall,[note](#)
Ere Douglasses to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native
 heaven.
Oh! if yet worse mishap and woe,
145
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;
150
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,
155
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,[note](#)

160
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;

165
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;

170
The graceful foliage storms may
reave,
The noble stem they cannot grieve.
For me,"—she stooped, and,
looking round,
Plucked a blue hare-bell from the
ground—

"For me, whose memory scarce
conveys

175

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;

180

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

185

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
190

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 birth-right
place,

195

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,
200
The Lady of the Bleeding
Heart!"[note](#)

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;
205
Nor would my footsteps spring
more gay
In courtly dance than blithe
strathspey,[note](#)
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
And then for suitors proud and high,
210
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,[note](#)
The terror of Loch-Lomond's side,
215
Would, at my suit, thou know'st,
delay
A Lennox foray—for a day."[note](#)

XII

The ancient bard his glee repressed:
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western
wild,

220

Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and
smiled!

In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;[note](#)
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the
stride

Of the undaunted homicide;

225

And since, though outlawed, hath
his hand

Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the
day,[note](#)

That I such hated truth should say—

The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
230

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,

235

Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation
sought,[note](#)

To back his suit, from Rome he
brought.

Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
240

Be held in reverence and fear;
And though to Roderick thou'rt so
dear,

That thou might'st guide with silken

thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain
dread;
Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth
refrain!

245

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,[note](#)

250

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.

255

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

260

A votaress in Maronnan's cell;[note](#)
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,
265
An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV

"Thou shakest, good friend, thy
tresses gray—
That pleading look, what can it say
But what I own?—I grant him
brave,
270
But wild as Bracklinn's thundering
wave;[note](#)
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;[note](#)
275
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,
280
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;
285
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,
290
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;
295
A maiden gown, 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
300
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!
305
Thy father's battle-brand, of yore^{note}
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
310
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?
315
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^{note}
320
Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm
Graeme;
Still, though thy sire the peace
renewed,
Smolders in Roderick's breast the
feud;
Beware!—But hark, what sounds
are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering
breeze,
325
No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
Still is the canna's hoary beard,^{note}
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
330
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

XVI

Far up the lengthened lake were

spied^{note}
Four darkening specks upon the
tide,
That, slow enlarging on the view,
Four manned and masted barges
grew,^{note}

335

And, bearing downwards from
Glengyle,^{note}
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

340

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 tartans
brave,^{note}

And plaids and plumage dance and
wave;

345

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,

350

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

355

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sound, by distance tame,
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and
bay,

360

Waived 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.

365

Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the
glen,

And hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their
tread.

Then prelude light, of livelier tone,

370

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 broad sword upon target jarred;

375

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

380

Clan-Alpine's conquest—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

385
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

390
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.

395
The chorus first could Allan
know,[note](#)
"Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
And near, and nearer as they rowed,
Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

XIX

BOAT SONG

Hail to the Chief who in triumph
advances!

400
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,
405
Gayly to borgeon, and broadly to
grow,
While every Highland
glen
Sends our shout back
again,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho!
ieroe!"[note](#)

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by
the fountain,
410
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to
fade;[note](#)
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,
415
Firmer he roots him the ruder it
blow;
Menteith and
Breadalbane,
then,[note](#)
Echo his praise again,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho!
ieroe!"

XX

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in
Glen Fruin,[note](#)

420

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,

425

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!

430

Stretch to your oars, for the ever-
green Pine!
O that the rose-bud that graces yon
islands,[note](#)
Were wreathed in a garland
around him to twine!
O that some seedling
gem,
Worthy such noble stem,

435

Honored and blest in their
shadow might grow;
Loud should Clan-Alpine
then

Ring from her deepmost
glen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho!
ieroe!"

XXI

With all her joyful female band,
440
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;
445
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,
450
And shun to wreathe 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:
455
"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,
460
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

465
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,
470
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,
475
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 'twas an hero's eye that
weaped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering
tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she, that fear, affection's
proof,
480

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;

485

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

490

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

495

O'er the arched gate of Bothwell
 proud,

While many a minstrel answered
 loud,

When Percy's Norman pennon,

won^{note}

In bloody field, before me shone,
And twice ten knights, the least a
 name

500

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 marshaled crowd,
Though the waned crescent owned
my might,[note](#)

505

And in my train trooped lord and
knight,

Though Blantyre hymned her
holiest lays,[note](#)

And Bothwell's bards flung back
my praise,

As when this old man's silent tear,
And this poor maid's affection dear,

510

A welcome give more kind and true,
Than aught my better fortunes
knew.

Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,
Oh! it out-beggars all I lost!"

XXIV

Delightful praise!—like summer
rose,

515

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;

520

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,

525

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,

530

Well might the lover's judgment fail
To balance with a juster scale;
For with each secret glance he stole,
The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
535

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.

540

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,

545

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.

550

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,

555

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,

560

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,

565

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,
570

'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,[note](#)

575

Nor strayed I safe; for all around,
Hunters and horsemen scoured the
ground.

This youth, though still a royal
ward,[note](#)

Risked life and land to be my guard,
And through the passes of the wood
580

Guided my steps, not unpursued;
And Roderick shall his welcome
make,
Despite old spleen, for Douglas'
sake.

Then must he seek Strath-Endrick
glen,[note](#)

Nor peril aught for me again."

XXVII

585

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
590

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.

595

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
600

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

605

"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,

610

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—

615

List all—The King's vindictive
pride

Boasts to have tamed the Border-
side,

Where chiefs, with hound and hawk
who came

To share their monarch's silvan
game,

Themselves in bloody toils were
snared;

620

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,[note](#)

From Yarrow braes, and banks of
Tweed,

625

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,

630

So faithless, and so ruthless known,

Now hither comes; his end the

same,

The same pretext of silvan game.

What grace for Highland Chiefs,

judge ye

By fate of Border chivalry.

635

Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green,

Douglas, thy stately form was seen.

This by espial sure I know:

Your counsel in the strait I show."

XXIX

Ellen and Margaret fearfully

640

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 Malcolm

Graeme;

645

But from his glance it well

appeared,

'Twas but for Ellen that he feared;

While, sorrowful, but undismayed,

The Douglas thus his counsel said:

"Brave Roderick, though the

tempest roar,

650

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.

655

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,

660

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

665

"No, by mine honor," Roderick said,
"So help me Heaven, and my good
blade!

No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My fathers' ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part

670

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;

675

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,[note](#)
The guards shall start in Stirling's
porch;

680

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;

685

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,
690

Till the foiled king, from pathless
glen,
Shall bootless turn him home
again."

XXXI

There are who have, at midnight
hour,[note](#)

In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,
And, on the verge that beetled o'er
695

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,
700
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,
705
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,
710
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
715
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;
720
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,

725

"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.

730

Against his sovereign, Douglas
ne'er

Will level a rebellious spear.
'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!

735

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

740

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,

745

Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
Upon the knighted pilgrim's way.

But, unrequited Love! thy dart
Plunged deepest its envenomed
smart,

750

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

755

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
hall.

760

The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there
came,

To aid her parting steps, the
Graeme.

XXXIV

Then Roderick from the Douglas
broke—

765

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.

770

With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted
plaid:

"Back, beardless boy!" he sternly
said,

"Back, minion! hold'st thou thus at
naught

The lesson I so lately taught?

775

This roof, the Douglas, and that
maid,

Thank thou for punishment
delayed."

Eager as a greyhound on his game
Fiercely with Roderick grappled
Graeme.

"Perish my name, if aught afford

780

Its Chieftain's 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

785

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

790

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

795

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

800

And veiled his wrath in scornful
 word:
"Rest safe till morning; pity
 'twere [note](#)
Such cheek should feel the midnight
 air!
Then mayest thou to James Stuart
 tell,

Roderick will keep the lake and fell,

805

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; [note](#)

810

"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.

815

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
820
Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.

—
Brave Douglas—lovely Ellen—nay,
Nought here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret but we meet again.—
825
Chieftain! we too shall find an
hour,"
He said, and left the silvan bower.

XXXVI

Old Allan followed to the strand—
Such was the Douglas's command—
And anxious told, how, on the morn,
830

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;

835

Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
Himself would row him to the
strand.

He gave his counsel to the wind,
While Malcolm did, unheeding,
bind,

Round dirk and pouch and
broadsword rolled,

840

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!"

845

The Minstrel's hand he kindly
pressed—

"Oh, 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,

850

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;

855

Nor, ere yon pride-swoll'n robber
dare,

I might not give the rest to air!

Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him
nought,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side."

860

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,

865

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,

870

Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore
withdrew.



CANTO THIRD

THE GATHERING

I

Time rolls his ceaseless course. The
 race of yore,
 Who danced our infancy upon
 their knee,
And told our marveling boyhood
 legends store
 Of their strange ventures happed
 by land or sea,

5

How are they blotted from the
 things that be!
 How few, all weak and withered
 of their force,
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
 Like stranded wrecks, the tide
 returning hoarse,
To sweep them from our sight!
 Time rolls his ceaseless
 course.

10

Yet live there still who can
 remember well,
 How, when a mountain chief his
 bugle blew,
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff,
 and dell,
 And solitary heath, the signal
 knew;
And fast the faithful clan around

him drew,
15
What time the warning note was
 keenly wound,
What time aloft their kindred
 banner flew,
 While clamorous war-pipes
 yelled the gathering
 sound,
And while the Fiery Cross glanced,
 like a meteor, round.

II

The summer dawn's reflected hue
20
To purple changed Loch Katrine
 blue;
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the
 trees,
And the pleased lake, like maiden
 coy,
Trembled but dimpled not for joy;
25
The mountain-shadows on her
 breast
Were neither broken nor at rest;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
The water-lily to the light
30
Her chalice reared of silver bright;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her
 fawn;
The gray mist left the mountain
 side,
The torrent showed its glistening
 pride;

35

Invisible in fleckéd sky,
The lark sent down her revelry;
The blackbird and the speckled
 thrush,
Good-morrow gave from brake and
 bush;
In answer cooed the cushat dove^{note}

40

Her notes of peace, and rest, and
 love.

III

No thought of peace, no thought of
 rest,
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's
 breast.

With sheathéd broadsword in his
 hand,

Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
45

And eyed the rising sun, and laid
His hand on his impatient blade.
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
With deep and deathful meaning
 fraught;

50

For such Antiquity had taught
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
The Cross of Fire should take its
 road.

The shrinking band stood oft aghast
At the impatient glance he cast—

55

Such glance the mountain eagle
 threw,

As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
She spread her dark sails on the

wind,
And, high in middle heaven
reclined,
With her broad shadow on the lake,
60
Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV

A heap of withered boughs was
piled,
Of juniper and rowan wild,
Mingled with shivers from the
oak,[note](#)
Rent by the lightning's recent
stroke.

65
Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
His grizzled beard and matted hair
Obscured a visage of despair;
His naked arms and legs, seamed
o'er,

70
The scars of frantic penance bore.
That monk, of savage form and
face,
The impending danger of his race
Had drawn from deepest solitude,
Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.[note](#)

75
Not his the mien of Christian priest,
But Druid's, from the grave
released,
Whose hardened heart and eye
might brook
On human sacrifice to look;
And much, 'twas said, of heathen
lore

80

Mixed in the charms he muttered
o'er.
The hallowed creed gave only
worse
And deadlier emphasis of curse;
No peasant sought that Hermit's
prayer,
His cave the pilgrim shunned with
care,
85
The eager huntsman knew his
bound,
And in mid chase called off his
hound;
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,[note](#)
The desert-dweller met his path,
He prayed, and signed the cross
between,
90
While terror took devotion's mien.

V

Of Brian's birth strange tales were
told.
His mother watched a midnight
fold,
Built deep within a dreary glen,
Where scattered lay the bones of
men
95
In some forgotten battle slain,
And bleached by drifting wind and
rain.
It might have tamed a warrior's
heart,
To view such mockery of his art!
The knot-grass fettered there the
hand
100

Which once could burst an iron
band;
Beneath the broad and ample bone,
That bucklered heart to fear
unknown,
A feeble and a timorous guest,
The fieldfare framed her lowly
nest;[note](#)

105

There the slow blindworm left his
slime
On the fleet limbs that mocked at
time;
And there, too, lay the leader's
skull,
Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed
and full,
For heath-bell with her purple
bloom

110

Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
All night, in this sad glen, the maid
Sat, shrouded in her mantle's shade:
She said no shepherd sought her
side,

No hunter's hand her snood untied;

115

Yet ne'er again to braid her hair
The virgin snood did Alice wear;[note](#)
Gone was her maiden glee and
sport,
Her maiden girdle all too short,
Nor sought she, from that fatal
night,

120

Or holy church or blessed rite,
But locked her secret in her breast,
And died in travail, unconfessed.

Alone, among his young compeers,
Was Brian from his infant years;

125

A moody and heartbroken boy,
Estranged from sympathy and joy,
Bearing each taunt with careless
tongue

On his mysterious lineage flung.
Whole nights he spent by moonlight
pale,

130

To wood and stream his hap to wail,
Till, frantic, he as truth received
What of his birth the crowd
believed,

And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
To meet and know his Phantom
Sire!

135

In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
The cloister oped her pitying gate;
In vain, the learning of the age
Unclasped the sable-lettered page;
Even in its treasures he could find

140

Food for the fever of his mind.
Eager he read whatever tells
Of magic, cabala, and spells,
And every dark pursuit allied
To curious and presumptuous pride;

145

Till with fired brain and nerves
o'erstrung,

And heart with mystic horrors
wrung,

Desperate he sought Benharrow's
den,

And hid him from the haunts of
men.

VII

The desert gave him visions wild,
150

Such as might suit the specter's
child.

Where with black cliffs the torrents
toil,

He watched the wheeling eddies
boil,

Till, from their foam, his dazzled
eyes

Beheld the River Demon rise;[note](#)
155

The mountain mist took form and
limb,

Of noontide hag, or goblin grim;[note](#)
The midnight wind came wild and
dread,

Swelled with the voices of the dead;
Far on the future battle-heath
160

His eyes beheld the ranks of death.
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind
hurled,

Shaped forth a disembodied world.
One lingering sympathy of mind
Still bound him to the mortal kind;
165

The only parent he could claim
Of ancient Alpine lineage came.
Late had he heard, in prophet's
dream,

The fatal Ben-Shie's boding
scream;[note](#)

Sounds, too, had come in midnight
blast,

170

Of charging steeds, careering fast
Along Benharrow's shingly side,

Where mortal horseman ne'er might
ride;

The thunderbolt had split the pine—
All augured ill to Alpine's line.

175

He girt his loins, and came to show
The signals of impending woe,
And now stood prompt to bless or
ban,

As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII

'Twas all prepared—and from the
rock,

180

A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
Before the kindling pile was laid,
And pierced by Roderick's ready
blade.

Patient the sickening victim eyed
The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,

185

Down his clogged beard and shaggy
limb,
Till darkness glazed his eyeballs
dim.

The grisly priest, with murmuring
prayer,

A slender crosslet formed with care,
A cubit's length in measure due;

190

The shaft and limbs were rods of
yew,

Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach
wave^{note}

Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's
grave,

And, answering Lomond's breezes
deep,

Soothe many a chieftain's endless
sleep.

195

The Cross, thus formed, he held on
high,
With wasted hand and haggard eye,
And strange and mingled feelings
woke;
While his anathema he spoke.

IX

"Woe to the clansman, who shall
view [note](#)

200

This symbol of sepulchral yew,
Forgetful that its branches grew
Where weep the heavens their
holiest dew
On Alpine's dwelling
low!

Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
205

He ne'er shall mingle with their
dust,
But, from his sires and kindred
thrust,
Each clansman's execration just
Shall doom him wrath
and woe."

He paused—the word the vassals
took,

210

With forward step and fiery look,
On high their naked brands they
shook,
Their clattering targets wildly
strook;
And first in murmur
low,

Then, like the billow in his course,
215
That far to seaward finds his source,
And flings to shore his mustered
force,
Burst, with loud roar, their answer
hoarse,
"Woe to the traitor,
woe!"
Ben-an's grey scalp the accents
knew,
220
The joyous wolf from cover drew,
The exulting eagle screamed afar—
They knew the voice of Alpine's
war.

X

The shout was hushed on lake and
fell,
The Monk resumed his muttered
spell;
225
Dismal and low its accents came,
The while he scathed the Cross with
flame:
And the few words that reached the
air,
Although the holiest name was
there,
Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
230
But when he shook above the crowd
Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:
"Woe to the wretch, who fails to
rear
At this dread sign the ready spear!
For, as the flames this symbol sear,
235

His home, the refuge of his fear,
A kindred fate shall know;
Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall
proclaim,
While maids and matrons on his
name

240

Shall call down wretchedness and
shame,

And infamy and woe."

Then rose the cry of females, shrill
As goshawk's whistle on the hill,
Denouncing misery and ill,

245

Mingled with childhood's babbling
trill

Of curses stammered
slow;

Answering, with imprecation dread,
"Sunk be his home in embers red!
And curséd be the meanest shed

250

That e'er shall hide the houseless
head

We doom to want and
woe!"

A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave![note](#)
And the gray pass where birches
wave,

255

On Beala-nam-bo.

XI

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
And hard his laboring breath he
drew,

While, with set teeth and clenched

hand,
And eyes that glowed like fiery
brand,

260

He meditated curse more dread,
And deadlier, on the clansman's
head,
Who, summoned to his chieftain's
aid,

The signal saw and disobeyed.
The crosslet's points of sparkling
wood

265

He quenched among the bubbling
blood,
And, as again the sign he reared,
Hollow and hoarse his voice was
heard:

"When flits this Cross from man to
man,

Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,
270

Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!
May ravens tear the careless eyes,
Wolves make the coward heart their
prize!

As sinks that blood-stream in the
earth,

275

So may his heart's blood drench his
hearth!

As dies in hissing gore the spark,
Quench thou his light, Destruction
dark!

And be the grace to him denied,
Bought by this sign to all beside!"

280

He ceased; no echo gave again
The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
From Brian's hand the symbol took:
"Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and
gave

285

The crosslet to his henchman brave.
"The muster-place be Lanrick mead

—[note](#)

Instant the time—speed, Malise,
speed!"

Like heath-bird, when the hawks
pursue,

A barge across Loch Katrine flew;

290

High stood the henchman on the
prow,

So rapidly the barge-men row,
The bubbles, where they launched
the boat,

Were all unbroken and afloat,
Dancing in foam and ripple still,

295

When it had neared the mainland
hill;

And from the silver beach's side
Still was the prow three fathom
wide,

When lightly bounded to the land
The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII

300

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's
hide[note](#)

On fleeter foot was never tied.

Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of

haste
Thine active sinews never braced.
Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy
breast,
305
Burst down like torrent from its
crest;
With short and springing footstep
pass
The trembling bog and false
morass;
Across the brook like roebuck
bound,
And thread the brake like questing
hound;
310
The crag is high, the scar is deep,
Yet shrink not from the desperate
leap:
Parched are thy burning lips and
brow.
Yet by the fountain pause not now;
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
315
Stretch onward in thy fleet career!
The wounded hind thou track'st not
now,
Pursuest not maid through
greenwood bough,
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace,
With rivals in the mountain race;
320
But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—speed, Malise,
speed!

XIV

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;
From winding glen, from upland
brown,

325

They poured each hardy tenant
down.

Nor slacked the messenger his pace;
He showed the sign, he named the
place,

And, pressing forward like the
wind,

Left clamor and surprise behind.

330

The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and
brand;

With changéd cheer, the mower
blithe

Left in the half-cut swathe the
scythe;

The herds without a keeper strayed,

335

The plow was in mid-furrow stayed,
The falc'ner tossed his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;

340

So swept the tumult and affray
Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of
fear!

The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep

345

So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol, from the
cloud

Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV

Speed, Malise, speed! the lake is
past,
Duncraggan's huts appear at last,[note](#)
350
And peep, like moss-grown rocks,
half seen,
Half hidden in the copse so green;
There mayst thou rest, thy labor
done,
Their Lord shall speed the signal
on.
As stoops the hawk upon his prey,
355
The henchman shot him down the
way.
—What woeful accents load the
gale?
The funeral yell, the female wail!
A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,
A valiant warrior fights no more.
360
Who, in the battle or the chase,
At Roderick's side shall fill his
place!—
Within the hall, where torches' ray
Supplies the excluded beams of day,
Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,
365
And o'er him streams his widow's
tear.
His stripling son stands mournful
by,
His youngest weeps, but knows not
why;
The village maids and matrons
round

The dismal coronach resound.[note](#)

XVI

CORONACH

370

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,

375

From the raindrops shall borrow,
But to us comes no cheering,
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,

380

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,

385

When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,[note](#)

Sage counsel in cumber,[note](#)

Red hand in the foray,
How sound is thy slumber!

390

Like dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain
Thou art gone, and forever!

XVII

See Stumah, who, the bier
 beside,[note](#)
395
His master's corpse with wonder
 eyed—
Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
Could send like lightning o'er the
 dew,
Bristles his crest, and points his
 ears,
As if some stranger step he hears.
400
'Tis not a mourner's muffled tread,
Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,
But headlong haste, or deadly fear,
Urge the precipitate career.
All stand aghast—unheeding all,
405
The henchman bursts into the hall;
Before the dead man's bier he stood;
Held forth the Cross besmeared
 with blood:
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;
Speed forth the signal! clansmen,
 speed!"

XVIII

410
Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
Sprung forth and seized the fatal
 sign.
In haste the stripling to his side
His father's dirk and broadsword
 tied;
But when he saw his mother's eye
415
Watch him in speechless agony,
Back to her opened arms he flew,
Pressed on her lips a fond adieu—

"Alas!" she sobbed—"and yet be
gone,
And speed thee forth, like Duncan's
son!"

420

One look he cast upon the bier,
Dashed from his eye the gathering
tear,
Breathed deep to clear his laboring
breast,
And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,
Then, like the high-bred colt, when,
freed,

425

First he essays his fire and speed,
He vanished, and o'er moor and
moss
Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
Suspended was the widow's tear,
While yet his footsteps she could
hear;

430

And when she marked the
henchman's eye
Wet with unwonted sympathy,
"Kinsman," she said, "his race is
run,
That should have sped thine errand
on;
The oak has fallen—the sapling
bough

435

Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
Yet trust I well, his duty done,
The orphan's God will guard my
son.

And you, in many a danger true,
At Duncan's hest your blades that
drew,

440

To arms, and guard that orphan's
head!
Let babes and women wail the
dead."
Then weapon-clang and martial call
Resounded through the funeral hall,
While from the walls the attendant
band
445
Snatched sword and targe, with
hurried hand;
And short and flitting energy
Glanced from the mourner's sunken
eye,
As if the sounds to warrior dear,
Might rouse her Duncan from his
bier.
450
But faded soon that borrowed force;
Grief claimed his right, and tears
their course.

XIX

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire;
It glanced like lightning up Strath-
Ire.
O'er dale and hill the summons
flew,
455
Nor rest nor pause young Angus
knew;
The tear that gathered in his eye
He left the mountain breeze to dry;
Until, where Teith's young waters
roll
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll
460
That graced the sable strath with
green,

The chapel of St. Bride was
seen.[note](#)
Swoln was the stream, remote the
bridge,
But Angus paused not on the edge;
Though the dark waves danced
dizzily,
465
Though reeled his sympathetic eye,
He dashed amid the torrent's roar.
His right hand high the crosslet
bore,
His left the pole-ax grasped, to
guide[note](#)
And stay his footing in the tide.
470
He stumbled twice—the foam
splashed high;
With hoarser swell the stream raced
by;
And had he fallen—forever there,
Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir!
But still, as if in parting life,
475
Firmer he grasped the Cross of
strife,
Until the opposing bank he gained,
And up the chapel pathway strained.

XX

A blithesome rout, that morning
tide,
Had sought the chapel of St. Bride.
480
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave[note](#)
To Norman, heir of Armandave.
And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
The bridal now resumed their
march.

In rude, but glad procession, came

485

Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame;

And plaided youth, with jest and

jeer,

Which snooden maiden would not

hear:

And children, that, unwitting why,

Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;

490

And minstrels, that in measures vied

Before the young and bonny bride,

Whose downcast eye and cheek

disclose

The tear and blush of morning rose.

With virgin step, and bashful hand,

495

She held the kerchief's snowy band;

The gallant bridegroom, by her side,

Beheld his prize with victor's pride,

And the glad mother in her ear

Was closely whispering word of

cheer.

XXI

500

Who meets them at the churchyard

gate?

The messenger of fear and fate!

Haste in his hurried accent lies,

And grief is swimming in his eyes.

All dripping from the recent flood,

505

Panting and travel-soiled he stood,

The fatal sign of fire and sword

Held forth, and spoke the appointed

word:

"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;

Speed forth the signal! Norman,

speed!"

510

And must he change so soon the
hand,
Just linked to his by holy band,
For the fell Cross of blood and
brand?

And must the day, so blithe that rose
And promised rapture in the close,
515

Before its setting hour, divide
The bridegroom from the plighted
bride?

O fatal doom!—it must! it must!
Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's
trust,

Her summons dread, brook no
delay;

520

Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely
bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to
cheer;

525

Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on the
heath

Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the
Teith.

—What in the racer's bosom
stirred?

530

The sickening pang of hope

deferred,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience
came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
535
The stormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain
burning,
And hope, from well-fought field
returning,
With war's red honors on his crest,
540
To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank
and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced
away,
While high resolve, and feeling
strong,
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII

SONG

545
The heath this night must be my
bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,[note](#)
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far, from love and thee,
Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
550
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song, thy wail, sweet

maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!
I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely
brow,

555

I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me,
Mary.

No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the
foe,

His heart must be like bended bow,
560

His foot like arrow free,
Mary.

A time will come with feeling
fraught,
For if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee,
Mary.

565

And if returned from conquered
foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnets sing repose,
To my young bride and me,
Mary!

XXIV

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
570
Balquidder, speeds the midnight
blaze,[note](#)
Rushing, in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,

And reddening the dark lakes
below;

575

Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil,
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,[note](#)
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the
source

580

Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy
course;

Thence southward turned its rapid
road

Adown Strath-Gartney's valley
broad,

Till rose in arms each man might
claim

A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
585

From the gray sire, whose trembling
hand

Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and
bow

Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequestered glen,
590

Mustered its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams
unite,

Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more
strong,

595

Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and
blood,
Each trained to arms since life

began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his chieftain's hand,
600
No law, but Roderick Dhu's
command.

XXV

That summer morn had Roderick
Dhu
Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,
And sent his scouts o'er hill and
heath,
To view the frontiers of Menteith.
605
All backward came with news of
truce;
Still lay each martial Graeme and
Bruce;
In Rednoch courts no horsemen
wait,
No banner waved on Cardross gate,
On Duchray's towers no beacon
shone,
610
Nor scared the herons from Loch
Con;
All seemed at peace. Now wot ye
why
The Chieftain, with such anxious
eye,
Ere to the muster he repair,
This western frontier scanned with
care?
615
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft,
A fair, though cruel, pledge was left;
For Douglas, to his promise true,
That morning from the isle

withdrew,
And in a deep sequestered dell
620
Had sought a low and lonely cell.
By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;[note](#)
A softer name the Saxons gave,
And called the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI

625
It was a wild and strange retreat,
As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
Yawned like a gash on warrior's
breast;
Its trench had stayed full many a
rock,
630
Hurled by primeval earthquake
shock
From Benvenue's gray summit wild,
And here, in random ruin piled,
They frowned incumbent o'er the
spot,
And formed the rugged silvan grot.
635
The oak and birch, with mingled
shade,
At noontide there a twilight made,
Unless when short and sudden
shone
Some straggling beam on cliff or
stone,
With such a glimpse as prophet's
eye
640
Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
No murmur waked the solemn

still,[note](#)
Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
But when the wind chafed with the
lake,
A sullen sound would upward
break,
645
With dashing hollow voice, that
spoke
The incessant war of wave and
rock.
Suspended cliffs, with hideous
sway,
Seemed nodding o'er the cavern
gray.
From such a den the wolf had
sprung,
650
In such the wild-cat leaves her
young;
Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
Sought for a space their safety
there.
Gray Superstition's whisper dread
Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;
655
For there, she said, did fays resort,
And satyrs hold their silvan
court,[note](#)
By moonlight tread their mystic
maze,
And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII

Now eve, with western shadows
long,
660
Floated on Katrine bright and
strong,

When Roderick, with a chosen few,
Repassed the heights of Benvenue.
Above the Goblin-cave they go,
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-
bo:[note](#)

665

The prompt retainers speed before,
To launch the shallop from the
shore,
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way
To view the passes of Achray,
And place his clansmen in array.

670

Yet lags the chief in musing mind,
Unwonted sight, his men behind.
A single page, to bear his sword,[note](#)
Alone attended on his lord;
The rest their way through thickets
break,

675

And soon await him by the lake.
It was a fair and gallant sight,
To view them from the neighboring
height,
By the low-leveled sunbeam's light!
For strength and stature, from the
clan

680

Each warrior was a chosen man,
As even afar might well be seen,
By their proud step and martial
mien.
Their feathers dance, their tartans
float,
Their targets gleam, as by the boat
685
A wild and warlike group they
stand,
That well became such mountain-
strand.

XXVIII

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
Was lingering on the craggy hill,
Hard by where turned apart the road
690

To Douglas's obscure abode.
It was but with that dawning morn,
That Roderick Dhu had proudly
sworn

To drown his love in war's wild
roar,

Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
695

But he who stems a stream with
sand,

And fetters flame with flaxen band,
Has yet a harder task to prove—
By firm resolve to conquer love!
Eve finds the Chief, like restless
ghost,

700
Still hovering near his treasure lost;
For though his haughty heart deny
A parting meeting to his eye,
Still fondly strains his anxious ear,
The accents of her voice to hear,
705

And inly did he curse the breeze
That waked to sound the rustling
trees.

But hark! what mingles in the
strain?

It is the harp of Allan-bane,
That wakes its measures slow and
high,

710
Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
What melting voice attends the
strings?

'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX

HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

Ave Maria! maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!

715

Thou canst hear though from the
wild,

Thou canst save amid despair.
Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banished, outcast, and
reviled—

Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;

720

Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave

Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must
share

Shall seem with down of eider
piled,

725

If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast
smiled;

Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's
prayer;

Mother, list a suppliant child!

730

Ave

Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,

Shall flee before thy presence
fair.

735

We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer,
And for a father hear a child!

Ave

Maria!

XXX

740

Died on the harp the closing hymn

—

Unmoved in attitude and limb,
As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
Until the page, with humble sign,

745

Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
Then while his plaid he round him
cast,

"It is the last time—'tis the last,"
He muttered thrice, "the last time
e'er

That angel voice shall Roderick
hear!"

750

It was a goading thought—his stride
Hied hastier down the mountain
side;

Sullen he flung him in the boat,
And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
They landed in that silvery bay,

755

And eastward held their hasty way,
Till, with the latest beams of light,
The band arrived on Lanrick height,
Where mustered, in the vale below,

Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI

760

A various scene the clansmen made,
Some sat, some stood, some slowly
strayed;

But most with mantles folded
round,

Were couched to rest upon the
ground,

Scarce to be known by curious eye,
765

From the deep heather where they
lie,

So well was matched the tartan
screen

With heath-bell dark and brackens
green,

Unless where, here and there, a
blade,

Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
770

Like glow-worm twinkling through
the shade.

But when, advancing through the
gloom,

They saw the Chieftain's eagle
plume,

Their shout of welcome, shrill and
wide,

Shook the steep mountain's steady
side.

775

Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
Three times returned the martial
yell;

It died upon Bochastle's plain,
And Silence claimed her evening

reign.



CANTO FOURTH

THE PROPHECY

I

"The rose is fairest when 'tis
budding new,
And hope is brightest when it
dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with
morning dew,
And love is loveliest when
embalmed in tears.

5

O wilding rose, whom fancy thus
endears,
I bid your blossoms in my bonnet
wave,
Emblem of hope and love
through future years!"
Thus spake young Norman, heir of
Armandave,
What time the sun arose on
Vennachar's broad wave.

II

10

Such fond conceit, half said, half
sung,
Love prompted to the bridegroom's
tongue.
All while he stripped the wild-rose
spray,

His ax and bow beside him lay,
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
15

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,[note](#)

20
By thy keen step and glance I know,
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe."
For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
On distant scout had Malise gone.—
"Where sleeps the Chief?" the
henchman said.

25
"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, Glantarkin! rouse thee, ho!
30
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;
35
This certain—that a band of war
Has for two days been ready
boune,[note](#)

At prompt command, to march from

Doune;
King James, the while, with
 princely powers,
Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
40
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
45
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
50
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

55
"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
60
Brian an augury hath tried,

Of that dread kind which must not
be
Unless in dread extremity,
The Taghairm called; by which,
afar,[note](#)
Our sires foresaw the events of war.
65
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they
slew."

MALISE

"Ah! Well the gallant brute I knew,
The choicest of the prey we had,
When swept our merry men
Gallangad.[note](#)
His hide was snow, his horns were
dark,
70
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,[note](#)
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
75
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 scatheless stroke his
brow."[note](#)

V

NORMAN

"That bull was slain; his reeking

hide

80

They stretched the cataract beside,
Whose waters their wild tumult toss
Adown the black and craggy

boss^{note}

Of that huge cliff, whose ample
verge

Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.

85

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,

90

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.

95

Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?
Or raven on the blasted oak,
That, watching while the deer is

broke,^{note}

His morsel claims with sullen
croak?"

MALISE

100

"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,

105

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:

110

"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,

115

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, my eyeballs dim,

120

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
125

Between the living and the dead,
Is gifted beyond nature's law—
Had e'er survived to say he saw.
At length the fatal answer came,
In characters of living flame!

130

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!

135

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:

140

A spy has sought my land this morn

—[note](#)

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,

145

Has charge to lead his steps aside,
Till in deep path or dingle brown,
He light on those shall bring him
down.

—But see, who comes his news to
show!

Malise! what tidings of the foe?"

VIII

150

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and
glaive[note](#)

Two Barons proud their banners
wave.

I saw the Moray's silver star,
And marked the sable pale of
Mar."[note](#)

"By Alpine's soul, high tidings
those!

155

I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?" "Tomorrow's
noon
Will see them here for battle
bounes."
"Then shall it see a meeting stern!
But, for the place—say, couldst thou
learn

160

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 Trossachs' shaggy
glen;

165

Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll
fight,
All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
Each for his hearth and household
fire,
Father for child, and son for sire—
Lover for maid beloved! But why—

170

Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
A messenger of doubt and fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,[note](#)

175

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,
180
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;
185
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!
190
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.
195
I saw their boats with many a light,
Floating the live-long yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
By the red streamers of the north;
I marked at morn how close they
ride,
200
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,
205
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,
210
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,
215
Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears the report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of
strife.
I saw him redden, when the theme
220
Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream
Of Malcolm Graeme in fetters
bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him
wound.
Think'st thou he trowed thine omen
aught?"

Oh, no! 'twas apprehensive thought
225

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,

230

'If not on earth, we meet in heaven!'
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's
fane,[note](#)

If e'er return him not again,
Am I to hie, and make me known?
Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
235

Buys his friend's safety with his
own;

He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his
son!"

XI

"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
240

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,

245

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!

250

Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know—

255

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,
260
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII

BALLAD—ALICE BRAND

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are
singing,[note](#)
When the deer sweeps by, and the
hounds are in cry,
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

265

"O Alice Brand, my native land
Is lost for love of you;
And we must hold by wood and
wold,

As outlaws wont to do.

"O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so
bright,

270

And 'twas all for thine eyes so
blue,

That on the night of our luckless
flight,

Thy brother bold I slew.

"Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,

275

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,

280

To keep the cold away."

"O Richard! if my brother died,

'Twas but a fatal chance;

For darkling was the battle tried,[note](#)

And fortune sped the lance.

285

"If pall and vair no more I wear,[note](#)

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,

290

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;
295
On the beech's pride, and oak's
brown side,
Lord Richard's ax is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who wonned within the
hill,[note](#)
Like wind in the porch of a ruined
church,
300
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?
305
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green?[note](#)

"Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,
For thou wert christened man;[note](#)
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
310
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)

315

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

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
320

 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,

325

 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,

330

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,
335
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)

340
"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairyland
When fairy birds are singing,
When the court doth ride by their
monarch's side
With bit and bridle ringing;

"And gaily shines the Fairyland—
345
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,
350
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,
355
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 mold,
360
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.

365
She crossed him thrice, that lady
bold;
He rose beneath her hand
The fairest knight on Scottish mold,
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,
370
When the mavis and merle are
singing,
But merrier were they in
Dunfermline gray,[note](#)
When all the bells were ringing.

XVI

Just as the minstrel sounds were
stayed,
A stranger climbed the steepy glade;
375
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,

380

Then, starting, scarce suppressed a
scream

"Oh, 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?

385

By promise bound, my former
guide^{note}

Met me betimes this morning tide,
And marshaled, over bank and
bourne,

The happy path of my return."

"The happy path!—what! said he
nought

390

Of war, of battle to be fought,
Of guarded pass?" "No, by my
faith!

Nor saw I ought could augur
scathe."

"O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
—Yonder his tartans I discern;

395

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,

400

Unknown to him to guide thee
here."

XVII

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be
Since it is worthy care from thee;
Yet life I hold but idle breath,
When love or honor's weighed with
death.

405

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
410

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"—

415

"O hush, Sir Knight! 'twere female
art

To say I do not read thy heart;
Too much, before, my selfish ear
Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
420

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!

425

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,
430
With me 'twere infamy to wed.
Still wouldst thou speak?—then
hear the truth!
Fitz-James, there is a noble youth—
If yet he is!—exposed for me
And mine to dread extremity—
435
Thou hast the secret of my heart;
Forgive, be generous, and depart!"

XVIII

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them
vain.
440
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
445
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.
450

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,
455

If thou may'st 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,

460
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,

465
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,

470
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;

475

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."

480

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

485

The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their
way,
That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

XX

All in the Trossachs' glen was still,
Noontide was sleeping on the hill:

490

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,

495

His own brave steed—"Ah! gallant
gray!

For thee—for me, perchance
—'twere well

We ne'er had seen the Trossachs'
dell.

Murdoch, move first—but silently;
Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt
die!"

500

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,

505

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,

510

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;

515

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,

520

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;

525

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,
530
 I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
But were I now where Allan
 glides,[note](#)
Or heard my native Devan's tides,
So sweetly would I rest, and pray
That Heaven would close my wintry
 day!

535

'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
540
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,
545
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,
550
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,
555
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's
 charge.[note](#)
Hence, 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!"—[note](#)
560
"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,[note](#)

565

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,
570
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."

XXIV

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be
still!"
"Oh! thou look'st kindly and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted
been,
575
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!
580
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,
585

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

590

"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,[note](#)
595

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;
600

She warned him of the toils below,
Oh, so faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,

Ever sing warily, warily;
He had a foot, and he could speed—
605
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.

610
Not like a stag that spies the snare,
But lion of the hunt aware,
He waved at once his blade on high,
"Disclose thy treachery, or die!"
Forth at full speed the Clansman
flew,

615
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!

620
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,
625
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,
630
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;
635
Then slower wended back his way,
Where the poor maiden bleeding
lay.

XXVII

She sat beneath a birchen-tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
640
And gazed on it, and feebly
laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers
gray,
Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to staunch the life-
stream tried—
"Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried.
645
"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,
650
And something tells me in thine
 eye,
That thou wert mine avenger born.
Seest thou this tress?—Oh! still I've
 worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and
 despair!

655
It once was bright and clear as
 thine,
But blood and tears have dimmed
 its shine.
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's
 head—
My brain would turn!—but it shall
 wave

660
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!

—
665
Oh! 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 tartans broad and shadowy
 plume

670
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

675
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,
680
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:
685
"By Him whose word is truth! I
swear
No other favor will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
—But hark! what means yon faint
halloo?
690
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,

695

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:

700

"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

705

As e'er they heard of bands at
Doune?

Like bloodhounds now they search
me out—

Hark, to the whistle and the shout!

—

If further through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe.

710

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 wrapped in deeper

brown,
The owl awakens from her dell,
715
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.
720
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,
725
Benumbed his drenchéd 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,
730
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!"

735

"A stranger." "What dost thou
require?"

"Rest and a guide, and food and
fire.

My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with
frost."

"Art thou a friend to Roderick?"

"No."

740

"Thou darest not call thyself a foe?"

"I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous
hand."

"Bold words!—but, though the
beast of game

The privilege of chase may claim,

745

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,

750

Who say thou camest a secret spy!"

"They do, by heaven!—Come
Roderick Dhu,

And of his clan the boldest two,

And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest."

755

"If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of
Knight."

"Then by these tokens may'st thou
know

Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."

"Enough, enough; sit down and
share

760

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.

765

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 honor spoke,
770

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;

775

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 honor's laws;
To assail a wearied man were
shame,

780

And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,

785

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,

790

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;

795

And the brave foemen, side by side,

Lay peaceful down like brothers
tried,

And slept until the dawning beam

Purpled the mountain and the
stream.



CANTO FIFTH

THE COMBAT

I

Fair as the earliest beam of eastern
light,

When first, by the bewildered
pilgrim spied,

It smiles upon the dreary brow of
night,

And silvers o'er the torrent's
foaming tide,

5

And lights the fearful path on
mountain side;

Fair as that beam, although the
fairest far,

Giving to horror grace, to danger
pride,

Shine martial Faith, and

Courtesy's bright star,

Through all the wreckful storms
that cloud the brow of War.

II

10

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel
screen,

When rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,

15

Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier
meal.

That o'er, the Gael around him
threw

His graceful plaid of varied hue,
20

And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path—they winded now
Along the precipice's brow,
Commanding the rich scenes
beneath,

25

The windings of the Forth and
Teith,

And all the vales between that lie,
Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;
Then, sunk in copse, their farthest
glance

Gained not the length of horseman's
lance.

30

'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft, that, bursting
through,

Each hawthorn shed her showers of
dew—

That diamond dew, so pure and
clear,

35

It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

III

At length they came where, stern
and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.

Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
40

Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening
stone;

An hundred men might hold the
post

With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
45

Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and
oak,

With shingles bare, and cliffs
between,[note](#)

And patches bright of bracken
green,

And heather black, that waved so
high,

It held the copse in rivalry.
50

But where the lake slept deep and
still,

Dank osiers fringed the swamp and
hill;

And oft both path and hill were
torn,

Where wintry torrents down had
borne,

And heaped upon the cumbered
land

55
Its wreck of gravel, rocks and sand.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James, by what
strange cause

60
He sought these wilds, traversed by

few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV

"Brave Gael, my pass, in danger
tried,
Hangs in my belt, and by my side;
Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,
65
"I dreamt not now to claim its aid.
When here, but three days since, I
came,
Bewildered in pursuit of game,
All seemed as peaceful and as still
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;
70
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,
Nor soon expected back from war.
Thus said, at least, my mountain-
guide,
Though deep perchance the villian
lied."
"Yet why a second venture try?"
75
"A warrior thou, and ask me why!
Moves our free course by such fixed
cause
As gives the poor mechanic laws?
Enough, I sought to drive away
The lazy hours of peaceful day;
80
Slight cause will then suffice to
guide
A Knight's free footsteps far and
wide—
A falcon flown, a greyhound
strayed,
The merry glance of mountain
maid;

Or, if a path be dangerous known,
85
The danger's self is lure alone."

V

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
Say, heard ye nought of Lowland
war,
Against Clan-Alpine, raised by
Mar?"

90
"No, by my word—of bands
prepared
To guard King James's sports I
heard;
Nor doubt I aught, but, when they
hear
This muster of the mountaineer,
Their pennons will abroad be flung,
95
Which else in Doune had peaceful
hung."

"Free be they flung!—for we were
loath
Their silken folds should feast the
moth.
Free be they flung!—as free shall
wave

Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
100

But, Stranger, peaceful since you
came,
Bewildered in the mountain game,
Whence the bold boast by which
you show
Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal
foe?"

"Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew

105

Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick
Dhu,
Save as an outlawed desperate man,
The chief of a rebellious clan,
Who, in the Regent's court and
sight,
With ruffian dagger stabbed a
knight;

110

Yet this alone might from his part
Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clansman's sable
scowl.

A space he paused, then sternly
said,

115

"And heard'st thou why he drew his
blade?

Heard'st thou that shameful word
and blow

Brought Roderick's vengeance on
his foe?

What recked the Chieftain if he
stood

On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood?

120

He rights such wrong where it is
given,

If it were in the court of heaven."

"Still was it outrage—yet, 'tis true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his
due;

While Albany, with feeble hand,[note](#)

125

Held borrowed truncheon of

command,
The young King, mewed in Stirling
tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!
Winning mean prey by causeless
strife,

130

Wrenching from ruined Lowland
swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain

—
Methinks a soul, like thine, should
scorn
The spoils from such foul foray
borne."

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the
while,

135

And answered with disdainful smile

—
"Saxon, from yonder mountain
high,

I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,

140

Deep waving fields and pastures
green,

With gentle slopes and groves
between;

These fertile plains, that softened
vale,

Were once the birthright of the
Gael;

The stranger came with iron hand,

145

And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now! See, rudely
swell

Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread
For fattened steer or household
bread;

150

Ask we for flocks these shingles
dry,

And well the mountain might reply,
'To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,

155

Your own good blades must win the
rest.'

Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?

160

Aye, by my soul! While on yon
plain

The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
While, of ten thousand herds, there
strays

But one along yon river's maze,
The Gael, of plain and river heir,

165

Shall, with strong hand, redeem his
share.

Where live the mountain Chiefs
who hold

That plundering Lowland field and
fold

Is aught but retribution true?

Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick
Dhu."

VIII

170

Answered Fitz-James, "And if I
sought,

Think'st thou no other could be
brought?

What deem ye of my path waylaid?
My life given o'er to ambuscade?"

"As of a meed to rashness due:

175

Hadst thou sent warning fair and
true—

I seek my hound, or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid

—

Free hadst thou been to come and
go;

But secret path marks secret foe.

180

Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed
to die.

Save to fulfill an augury."

"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,

185

To chafe thy mood and cloud thy
brow.

Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's
glen

In peace; but when I come again,

190

I come with banner, brand, and bow,
As leader seeks his mortal foe.

For love-lorn swain, in lady's
bower,

Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,

As I, until before me stand
195
This rebel Chieftain and his band!"

IX

"Have, then, thy wish!" He whistled
shrill,
And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew,[note](#)
From crag to crag the signal flew.
200
Instant, through copse and heath,
arose
Bonnets and spears and bended
bows;
On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances
start,
205
The bracken bush sends forth the
dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into ax and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
210
That whistle garrisoned 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,
215
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,
220
With step and weapon forward
flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of
pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
225
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 thrilled with sudden
start,
230
He manned himself with dauntless
air,
Returned 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
235
From its firm base as soon as I."
Sir Roderick marked—and in his
eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors
feel
In foemen worthy of their steel.

240

Short space he stood—then waved
his hand;

Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he
stood,

In broom or bracken, heath or
wood;

Sunk brand and spear and bended
bow,

245

In osiers pale and copses low;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in
air,

Pennon, and plaid, and plumage
fair;

250

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,[note](#)

The next, all unreflected, shone

255

On bracken green, and cold gray
stone.

XI

Fitz-James looked round—yet
scarce believed

The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.

260

Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,

And to his look the Chief replied,
"Fear naught—nay, that I need not
say—

But—doubt not aught from mine
array.

Thou art my guest—I pledged my
word

265

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.

270

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,

275

As ever knight that belted glaive;
Yet dare not say, that now his blood
Kept on its wont and tempered
flood,

As, following Roderick's stride, he
drew

That seeming lonesome pathway
through,

280

Which yet, by fearful proof, was
rife

With lances, that, to take his life,
Waited but signal from a guide,
So late dishonored and defied.

Ever, by stealth, his eye sought
round

285

The vanished 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.
290
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,
295
To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reached that torrent's sounding
shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty
lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
300
Sweeps through the plain, and
ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the moldering
lines,[note](#)
Where Rome, the Empress of the
world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain
stayed,
305
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,

310

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.

315

See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Armed, 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 delayed,

320

When foeman bade me draw my
blade;

Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy
death;

Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life
preserved,

A better meed have well deserved.

325

Can naught 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

330

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.

335

Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff

—

There lies Red Murdoch, stark and
stiff.

Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.

To James, at Stirling, let us go,

340

When, if thou wilt be still his foe,

Or if the King shall not agree

To grant thee grace and favor free,

I plight mine honor, oath, and word,

That, to thy native strengths

restored,

345

With each advantage shalt thou

stand,

That aids thee now to guard thy

land."

XIV

Dark lightning flashed from

Roderick's eye—

"Soars thy presumption, then, so

high,

Because a wretched kern ye slew,
350
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

355
My thought, and hold thy valor 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."

360
"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!—

365
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be
shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or
cairn,

Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast

370
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,
375
Each looked to sun, and stream, and
plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye
opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
380
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-
hide
Had death so often dashed aside;
For, trained abroad his arms to
wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and
shield.
385
He practiced every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to
guard;
While less expert, though stronger
far,
The Gael maintained unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they
stood,
390
And thrice the Saxon blade drank
blood;
No stinted draft, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showered his blows like wintry
rain;

395

And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
400

Forced Roderick's weapon from his
hand,
And backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his
knee.

XVI

"Now, yield thee, or by Him who
made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes
my blade!"—

405

"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,[note](#)

410

Full at Fitz-James's throat he
sprung;
Received, but recked not of a
wound,
And locked his arms his foeman
round.
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine
own!
No maiden's hand is round thee
thrown!

415

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
compressed

420

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 gleamed aloft his dagger
bright!

425

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 gleamed on
high,

430

Reeled soul and sense, reeled 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;

435

Unwounded from the dreadful
close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for
life,

Redeemed, unhopèd, from
desperate strife;

Next on his foe his look he cast,
440

Whose every gasp appeared his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the
braid—

"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are
dearly paid;

Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that faith and valor
give."

445

With that he blew a bugle-note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sat down his brow and hands to
lave.

Then faint afar are heard the feet
450

Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are
seen

Four mounted squires in Lincoln
green;

Two who bear lance, and two who
lead,

By loosened rein, a saddled steed;
455

Each onward held his headlong
course,

And by Fitz-James reined up his
horse—

With wonder viewed the bloody
spot—

"Exclaim not, gallants! question not.
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
460

And bind the wounds of yonder
knight;
Let the gray palfrey bear his
weight,[note](#)
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling
straight;
I will before at better speed,
465
To seek fresh horse and fitting
weed.[note](#)
The sun rides high—I must be
bouné,
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII

470
"Stand, Bayard, stand!" The steed
obeyed,
With arching neck and bended head,
And glancing eye and quivering ear
As if he loved his lord to hear.
No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,
475
No grasp upon the saddle laid,
But wreathed his left hand in the
mane,
And lightly bounded from the plain,
Turned on the horse his arméd heel,
And stirred his courage with the
steel.
480
Bounded the fiery steed in air;
The rider sat erect and fair;
Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
Forth launched, along the plain they
go.

They dashed that rapid torrent
through,

485

And up Carhonie's hill they flew;
Still at the gallop pricked the
Knight,

His merry men followed as they
might.

Along thy banks, swift Teith! they
ride,

And in the race they mock thy tide;

490

Torry and Lendrick now are past,[note](#)
And Deanstown lies behind them
cast;

They rise, the bannered towers of
Doune,

They sink in distant woodland soon;
Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs
strike fire,

495

They sweep like breeze through
Ochertyre;

They mark just glance and
disappear

The lofty brow of ancient Kier;

They bathe their coursers'
sweltering sides,

Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,

500

And on the opposing shore take
ground,

With splash, with scramble, and with
bound.

Right-hand they leave thy cliffs,
Craig-Forth!

And soon the bulwark of the North,
Gray Stirling, with her towers and
town,

505

Upon their fleet career looked
down.

XIX

As up the flinty path they strained
Sudden his steed the leader reined;
A signal to his squire he flung,
Who instant to his stirrup sprung:

510

"Seest thou, De Vaux, yon
woodsman gray,
Who townward holds the rocky
way,
Of stature tall and poor array?
Mark'st thou the firm, yet active
stride,
With which he scales the mountain-
side?

515

Know'st thou from whence he
comes, or whom?"

"No, by my word—a burly groom
He seems, who in the field or chase
A baron's train would nobly grace."

"Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,

520

And jealousy, no sharper eye?
Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
That stately form and step I knew;
Like form in Scotland is not seen,
Treads not such step on Scottish
green.

525

'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint
Serle![note](#)

The uncle of the banished Earl.
Away, away, to court, to show
The near approach of dreaded foe;
The King must stand upon his

guard;
530
Douglas and he must meet
prepared."
Then righthand wheeled their
steeds, and straight
They won the castle's postern
gate.[note](#)

XX

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey
gray,

535
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:
"Yes! all is true my fears could
frame;

A prisoner lies the noble Graeme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
540

The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate—
God grant the ransom come not
late!

The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of
heaven.

545
Be pardoned one repining tear!
For He, who gave her, knows how
dear,

How excellent!—but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.
—Ye towers! within whose circuit
dread

550
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!

That oft hast heard the death-ax
 sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody
 hand—

555

The dungeon, block, and nameless
 tomb

Prepare—for Douglas seeks his
 doom!

—But hark! what blithe and jolly
 peal

Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,

560

In motley groups what maskers
 meet!

Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morris dancers come.

I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports
 today.

565

James will be there; he loves such
 show,

Where the good yeoman bends his
 bow,

And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.

570

I'll follow to the Castle-park,
And play my prize—King James
 shall mark

If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft, in happier days,
His boyish wonder loved to praise."

575

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rocked
and rung,

And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent

580

Fair Scotland's King and nobles
went,

While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.

And ever James was bending low,
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,[note](#)

585

Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride
and shame.

And well the simperer might be
vain—

He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,

590

Commends each pageant's quaint
attire.

Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the
crowd,

Who rend the heavens with their
acclaims,

"Long live the Commons' King,
King James!"

595

Behind the King thronged peer and
knight,

And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the
stay

Of the steep street and crowded

way.
But in the train you might discern
600
Dark lowering brow and visage
stern;
There nobles mourned their pride
restrained,
And the mean burgher's joys
disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their
clan,
Were each from home a banished
man,
605
There thought upon their own gray
tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal
power,
And deemed themselves a shameful
part
Of pageant which they cursed in
heart.

XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
610
Their checkered bands the joyous
rout.
Their morricers, with bell at
heel,[note](#)
And blade in hand, their mazes
wheel;
And chief, beside the butts, there
stand[note](#)
Bold Robin Hood and all his band
—[note](#)
615
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and
cowl,

Old Scathelocke with his surly
 scowl,
Maid Marion, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
620
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might—
His first shaft centered in the
 white,[note](#)
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
625
From the King's hand must Douglas
 take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery
 eye,
Some answering glance of
 sympathy—
No kind emotion made reply!
630
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII

Now, clear the ring! for, hand to
 hand,
The manly wrestlers take their
 stand.
Two o'er the rest superior rose,
635
And proud demanded mightier foes,
Nor called in vain; for Douglas
 came.
—For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
Whom senseless home his comrades
 bear.

640

Prize of the wrestling match, the
King

To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of
blue,

As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his
breast

645

His struggling soul his words
suppressed;
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen
bare.

To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had
shown,

650

The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it
high,

And sent the fragment through the
sky,

A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling's royal park,

655

The gray-haired sires, who know
the past,

To strangers point the Douglas-cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV

The vale with loud applauses rang,

660

The Ladies' Rock sent back the
clang.[note](#)

The King, with look unmoved,

bestowed
A purse well-filled with pieces
broad.

Indignant smiled the Douglas
proud,
And threw the gold among the
crowd,

665

Who now, with anxious wonder,
scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray
man;
Till whispers rose among the
throng,
That heart so free, and hand so
strong,

Must to the Douglas blood belong.

670

The old men marked and shook the
head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each
son,

Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand

675

Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's
storm;

The youth with awe and wonder
saw

His strength surpassing Nature's
law.

680

Thus judged, as is their wont, the
crowd,

Till murmur rose to clamors loud.
But not a glance from that proud
ring

Of peers who circled round the
King,
With Douglas held communion
kind,
685
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who, at the
chase,
Once held his side the honored
place,
Begirt his board, and, in the field,
Found safety underneath his shield;
690
For he, whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers
known!

XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
695
Two favorite greyhounds should
pull down,
That venison free, and Bordeaux
wine,
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra—whom from Douglas'
side
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er
divide,
700
The fleetest hound in all the North
—
Brave Lufra saw and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds mid-way,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
705

And deep the flowing life-blood
drank.
The King's stout huntsman saw the
sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash
unbound,
In anger struck the noble hound.
710
The Douglas had endured, that
morn,
The King's cold look, the nobles'
scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
715
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen, Lufra's neck
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates, that
with name
Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
720
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his
stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
725
The groom lies senseless in his
gore.
Such blow no other hand could
deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI

Then clamored loud the royal train,

And brandished swords and staves
 amain,

730

But stern the Baron's warning
 —"Back!

Back, on your lives, ye menial
 pack!

Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! the Douglas, doomed
 of old,

And vainly sought for near and far,
735

A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his
 friends."

"Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!" the monarch
 said;

740

"Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the
 man,

The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:
But shall a Monarch's presence
 brook

745

Injurious blow, and haughty look?
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.
Break off the sports!"—for tumult
 rose,

And yeomen 'gan to bend their
 bows—

750

"Break off the sports!" he said, and
 frowned,

"And bid our horsemen clear the
 ground."

XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the
crowd,

755

Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff,
with bar,

The hardier urge tumultuous war.

760

At once round Douglas darkly
sweep

The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep;
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.

765

With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said—
"Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my
blade,
That knighthood on thy shoulder
laid;

770

For that good deed, permit me then
A word with these misguided men.

XXVIII

"Hear, gentle friends! ere yet for
me,

Ye break the bands of fealty.
My life, my honor, and my cause,

775

I tender free to Scotland's laws.

Are these so weak as must require
The aid of your misguided ire?

Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
Is then my selfish rage so strong,

780

My sense of public weal so low,
That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
Those cords of love I should

unbind,

Which knit my country and my
kind?

O no! Believe, in yonder tower

785

It will not soothe my captive hour,
To know those spears our foes

should dread,

For me in kindred gore are red;

To know, in fruitless brawl begun,

For me, that mother wails her son;

790

For me, that widow's mate expires;

For me, that orphans weep their

sires;

That patriots mourn insulted laws,

And curse the Douglas for the

cause.

O let your patience ward such ill,

795

And keep your right to love me

still!"

XXIX

The crowd's wild fury sunk again

In tears, as tempests melt in rain.

With lifted hands and eyes, they

prayed

For blessings on his generous head,

800

Who for his country felt alone,

And prized her blood beyond his
own.

Old men, upon the verge of life,
Blessed him who stayed the civil
strife;

And mothers held their babes on
high,

805

The self-devoted Chief to spy,
Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
To whom the prattlers owed a sire.
Even the rough soldier's heart was
moved;

As if behind some bier beloved,
810

With trailing arms and drooping
head,

The Douglas up the hill he led,
And at the Castle's battled verge,
With sighs resigned his honored
charge.

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,
815

With bitter thought and swelling
heart,

And would not now vouchsafe
again

Through Stirling streets to lead his
train.

"O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this
common fool?

820

Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud
acclaim,

With which they shout the Douglas
name?

With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their
 morning note;
With like acclaim they hailed the
 day

825

When first I broke the Douglas'
 sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas
 greet,
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to
 reign,

Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain!

830

Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
And fickle as a changeful dream;
Fantastic as a woman's mood,
And fierce as Frenzy's fevered
 blood.

Thou many-headed monster-thing,

835

O who could wish to be thy king!

XXXI

"But soft! what messenger of speed
Spurs hitherward his panting steed?
I guess his cognizance afar—
What from our cousin, John of
 Mar?"—

840

"He prays, my liege, your sports
 keep bound
Within the safe and guarded ground;
For some foul purpose yet unknown
 —

Most sure for evil to the throne—
The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick
 Dhu,

845

Has summoned his rebellious crew;
'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
These loose banditti stand arrayed.
The Earl of Mar, this morn, from
 Doune,
To break their muster marched, and
 soon

850

Your Grace will hear of battle
 fought;
But earnestly the Earl besought,
Till for such danger he provide,
With scanty train you will not ride."

XXXII

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss

855

I should have earlier looked to this;
I lost it in this bustling day.
Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed
The best of mine shall be thy meed.

860

Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war.
Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
Was made our prisoner by a knight;
And Douglas hath himself and
 cause

865

Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain
 host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel
For their Chief's crimes, avenging
 steel.

870

Bear Mar our message, Braco; fly!"

He turned his steed—"My liege, I

hie,

Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,[note](#)

I fear the broadswords will be

drawn."

The turf the flying courser spurned,

875

And to his towers the King

returned.

XXXIII

Ill with King James's mood that day,

Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;

Soon were dismissed the courtly

throng,

And soon cut short the festal song.

880

Nor less upon the saddened town

The evening sunk in sorrow down.

The burghers spoke of civil jar,

Of rumored feuds and mountain

war,

Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,

885

All up in arms—The Douglas too,

They mourned him pent within the

hold,

"Where stout Earl William was of

old."

And there his word the speaker

stayed,

And finger on his lip he laid,

890

Or pointed to his dagger blade.

But jaded horsemen, from the west,

At evening to the Castle pressed;

And busy talkers said they bore

Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;
895

At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumor shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons
brown.



CANTO SIXTH

THE GUARD-ROOM

I

The sun, awakening, through the
smoky air
Of the dark city casts a sullen
glance,
Rousing each caitiff to his task of
care,
Of sinful man the sad inheritance;
5
Summoning revelers from the
lagging dance,
Scaring the prowling robber to
his den;
Gilding on battled tower the
warder's lance,
And warning student pale to
leave his pen,
And yield his drowsy eyes to the
kind nurse of men.

10
What various scenes, and, Oh! what
scenes of woe,
Are witnessed by that red and
struggling beam!
The fevered patient, from his pallet
low,
Through crowded hospital
beholds its stream;
The ruined maiden trembles at its
gleam;

15

The debtor wakes to thought of
gyve and jail;
The love-lorn wretch starts from
tormenting dream;
The wakeful mother, by the
glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and
soothes his feeble wail.

II

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
20

With soldier-step and weapon-
clang,
While drums, with rolling note,
foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement
barred,
The sunbeams sought the Court of
Guard,

25

And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deadened the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of
blackened stone,
And showed wild shapes in garb of
war,

30

Faces deformed with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight
watch,
And fevered with the stern debauch;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments
stored,

35

And beakers drained, and cups
o'erthrown,
Showed in what sport the night had
flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and
bench;
Some labored still their thirst to
quench;
Some, chilled with watching, spread
their hands
40
O'er the huge chimney's dying
brands,
While round them, or beside them
flung,
At every step their harness rung.[note](#)

III

These drew not for their fields the
sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
45
Nor owned the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name;
Adventurers they, from far who
roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
50
The swarthy Spaniard's there you
trace;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-
air;
The Fleming there despised the soil,
That paid so ill the laborer's toil;
55
Their rolls showed French and
German name;

And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-concealed disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well trained to
wield

60

The heavy halberd, brand, and
shield;[note](#)

In camps licentious, wild and bold;
In pillage fierce and uncontrolled;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV

65

They held debate of bloody fray,
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and
Achray.

Fierce was their speech, and, mid
their words,
Their hands oft grappled to their
swords;

Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear

70

Of wounded comrades groaning
near,

Whose mangled limbs, and bodies
gored,

Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighboring to the Court of
Guard,

Their prayers and feverish wails
were heard;

75

Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length up-started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,

80

In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew,
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved, that day, their games
cut short,

85

And marred the dicer's brawling
sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the
bowl!
And, while in merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and
spear."

V

SOLDIER'S SONG

90

Our vicar still preaches that Peter
and Poule
Laid a swinging long curse on the
bonny brown bowl,
That there's wrath and despair in the
jolly black-jack,[note](#)
And the seven deadly sins in a
flagon of sack;
Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy
liquor,

95

Drink upsees out, and a fig for the
vicar![note](#)

Our vicar he calls it damnation to
sip
The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's

dear lip,
Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her
kerchief so sly,
And Apollyon shoots darts from her
merry black eye;

100

Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the
quicker,
Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig
for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why
should he not?

For the dues of his cure are the
placket and pot;[note](#)
And 'tis right of his office poor
laymen to lurch,[note](#)

105

Who infringe the domains of our
good Mother Church.
Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with
your liquor,
Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig
for the Vicar!

VI

The warder's challenge, heard
without,
Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.

110

A soldier to the portal went—
"Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
And—beat for jubilee the drum!
A maid and minstrel with him
come."

Bertram, a Fleming, gray and
scarred,

115

Was entering now the Court of

Guard,
A harper with him, and in plaid
All muffled close, a mountain maid,
Who backward shrunk, to 'scape the
view
Of the loose scene and boisterous
crew.

120

"What news?" they roared. "I only
know,
From noon till eve we fought with
foe,
As wild and as untamable
As the rude mountains where they
dwell;
On both sides store of blood is lost,
125
Nor much success can either boast."
"But whence thy captives, friend?
Such spoil
As theirs must needs reward thy
toil.
Old dost thou wax, and wars grow
sharp;
Thou now hast glee-maiden and
harp!

130

Get thee an ape, and trudge the
land,
The leader of a juggler band."

VII

"No, comrade; no such fortune
mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
135
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them

steed,
And bring them hitherward with
speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or
harm."

140

"Hear ye his boast?" cried John of
Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our
lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?

145

I'll have my share, howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife;

150

Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
And dropped at once the tartan
screen.

So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May, through summer
tears.

155

The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and
tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII

Boldly she spoke—"Soldiers,
attend!

160

My father was the soldier's friend;
Cheered him in camps, in marches
 led,
And with him in the battle bled.
Not from the valiant, or the strong,
Should exile's daughter suffer
 wrong."

165

Answered De Brent, most forward
 still

In every feat of good or ill:
"I shame me of the part I played;
And thou an outlaw's child, poor
 maid!

An outlaw I by forest laws,
170

And merry Needwood knows the
 cause.

Poor Rose—if Rose be living
 now"—

He wiped his iron eye and brow—
"Must bear such age, I think, as
 thou.

Hear ye, my mates; I go to call
175

The Captain of our watch to hall.
There lies my halberd on the floor;
And he that steps my halberd o'er,
To do the maid injurious part,
My shaft shall quiver in his heart!

180

Beware loose speech, or jesting
 rough;

Ye all know John de Brent.
 Enough."

IX

Their Captain came, a gallant young
—

Of Tullibardine's house he sprung—
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
185

Gay was his mien, his humor light,
And, though by courtesy controlled,
Forward his speech, his bearing
bold.

The high-born maiden ill could
brook

The scanning of his curious look
190

And dauntless eye; and yet, in
sooth,

Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction
strange,

195

And give loose fancy scope to
range.

"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair
maid!

Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?

200

Does thy high quest a knight
require,

Or may the venture suit a squire?"
Her dark eye flashed—she paused
and sighed—

"O what have I to do with pride!
Through scenes of sorrow, shame,
and strife,

205

A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
The royal pledge of grateful claims,

Given by the Monarch to Fitz-
James."

X

210

The signet ring young Lewis took,
With deep respect and altered look;
And said—"This ring our duties

own;

And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely
veiled,

215

Lady, in aught my folly failed.
Soon as the day flings wide his
gates,

The King shall know what suitor
waits.

Please you, meanwhile, in fitting
bower

Repose you till his waking hour;

220

Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way."
But, ere she followed, with the
grace

And open bounty of her race,

225

She bade her slender purse be
shared

Among the soldiers of the guard.

The rest with thanks their guerdon
took;

But Brent, with shy and awkward
look,

On the reluctant maiden's hold

230

Forced bluntly back the proffered

gold:

"Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barret-cap I'll bear.

235

Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar."
With thanks—'twas all she could—
the maid

His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
240

Allan made suit to John of Brent:

"My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!

His minstrel I—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.

245

Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their
lyres,

Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our
care;

250

Our harp must soothe the infant
heir,

Teach the youth tales of fight, and
grace

His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our ranks we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his
sleep,

255

Nor leave him till we pour our verse

—
A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot;
It is my right—deny it not!"
"Little we reck," said John of Brent,
260
"We Southern men, of long descent;
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord;
Yet kind my noble landlord's part—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
265
And, but I loved to drive the deer,
More than to guide the laboring
steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow
me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou
see."

XII

270
Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage
dread.
Portals they passed, where, deep
within,
275
Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters'
din;
Through rugged vaults, where,
loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and ax, and headsman's
sword,
And many an hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing

limb,

280

By artist formed, who deemed it
shame

And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-browed porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward
rolled

285

And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They entered—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its
way,

290

And rude and antique garniture
Decked the sad walls and oaken
floor;
Such as the rugged days of old
Deemed fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou mayst
remain

295

Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurings growled
anew.

300

Roused at the sound, from lowly
bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel looked,
and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick
Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine

fought,
305
They, erring, deemed the Chief he
sought.

XIII

As the tall ship, whose lofty

prore^{note}

Shall never stem the billows more,

Deserted by her gallant band,

Amid the breakers lies astrand,

310

So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu!

And oft his fevered limbs he threw

In toss abrupt, as when her sides

Lie rocking in the advancing tides,

That shake her frame with ceaseless

beat,

315

Yet cannot heave her from her seat

—

Oh! how unlike her course at sea!

Or his free step on hill and lea!

Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,

"What of thy lady?—of my clan?—

320

My mother?—Douglas?—tell me

all?

Have they been ruined in my fall?

Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here!

Yet speak—speak boldly—do not

fear."

For Allan, who his mood well knew,

325

Was choked with grief and terror

too.

"Who fought—who fled?—Old

man, be brief—

Some might—for they had lost their

Chief.

Who basely live?—who bravely

died?"

"O calm thee, Chief!" the Minstrel

cried,

330

"Ellen is safe;" "For that thank
Heaven!"
"And hopes are for the Douglas
given;
The Lady Margaret too is well;
And, for thy clan—on field or fell,
Has never harp of minstrel told,
335
Of combat fought so true and bold.
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
Though many a goodly bough is
rent."

XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on
high,
And fever's fire was in his eye;
340
But ghastly pale, and livid streaks
Checked his swarthy brow and
cheeks.
"Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee
play,
With measure bold, on festal day,
In yon lone isle, ... again where
ne'er
345
Shall harper play, or warrior hear!...
That stirring air that peals on high,
O'er Dermid's race our victory.
Strike it!—and then—for well thou
canst—
Free from thy minstrel spirit
glanced,
350
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon
might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears

The clang of swords, the crash of
spears!

These grates, these walls, shall
vanish then,

355

For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray."
The trembling Bard with awe
obeyed—

Slow on the harp his hand he laid;

360

But soon remembrance of the sight
He witnessed from the mountain's
height,

With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along;

365

As shallop launched on river's side,
That slow and fearful leaves the
side,

But, when it feels the middle
stream,

Drives downward swift as
lightning's beam.

XV

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

"The Minstrel came once more to
view

370

The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For ere he parted, he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!

375

There is no breeze upon the fern,
Nor ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyry nods the erne,[note](#)
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing
aloud,

380

The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder
cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple
shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.

Is it the thunder's solemn sound

385

That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning
ground

The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering
glance

That on the thicket streams,

390

Or do they flash on spear and
lance

The sun's retiring beams?
—I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,

395

That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero boune for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful
life,
One glance at their array!

XVI

400

"Their light-armed archers far and
near

Surveyed the tangled ground,
Their center ranks, with pike and
spear,

A twilight forest frowned,
Their barded horsemen, in the rear,

405

The stern battalia crowned.
No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armor's
clang,

The sullen march was dumb.

410

There breathed no wind their crests
to shake,

Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seemed to
quake,

That shadowed o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings
bring,

415

Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;
The host moves, like a deep-sea
wave,

Where rise no rocks its pride to
brave,

420

High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is passed, and now they
gain

A narrow and a broken plain,
Before the Trossachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen
pause,

425

While, to explore the dangerous
glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-
men.

XVII

"At once there rose so wild a yell^{note}
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that
fell,

430

Had pealed the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult
driven,

Like chaff before the wind of
heaven,

The archery appear;
For life! for life! their flight they
ply—

435

And shriek, and shout, and battle-
cry,

And plaids and bonnets waving
high,

And broadswords flashing to the
sky,

Are maddening in the rear.

Onward they drive, in dreadful race,

440

Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,

The spearmen's twilight wood?
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your
lances down!

445

Bear back both friend and foe!
Like reeds before the tempest's

frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay leveled low;
And closely shouldering side to
side,
450
The bristling ranks the onset bide.
'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the
game![note](#)
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'

XVIII

455
"Bearing before them, in their
course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling
foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine
come.
Above the tide, each broadsword
bright
460
Was brandishing like beam of
light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty
swing,
When heaving to the tempest's
wing,
They hurled them on the foe.
465
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the
ash;
I heard the broadsword's deadly
clang,

As if an hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheeled his rearward
rank

470

Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's
flank,
'My banner-man advance!
I see,' he cried, 'their column
shake.
Now, gallants! for your ladies'
sake,
Upon them with the lance!'

475

The horsemen dashed among the
rout,
As deer break through the
broom;
Their steeds are stout, their
swords are out,
They soon make lightsome
room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward
borne—

480

Where, where was Roderick
then!
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men.
And refluent through the pass of
fear
The battle's tide was poured;

485

Vanished the Saxon's struggling
spear,
Vanished the mountain-sword.
As Bracklinn's chasm, so black
and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,[note](#)
As the dark caverns of the deep

490

Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass;
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight
again.

XIX

495
"Now westward rolls the battle's
din,
That deep and doubling pass within.

—
Minstrel, away! the work of fate
Is bearing on; its issue wait,
Where the rude Trossachs' dread
defile

500
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.—
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set, the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven

505
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from
mountain-glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.
I heeded not the eddying surge,

510
Mine eye but saw the Trossachs'
gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which like an earthquake shook the
ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate
strife
That parts not but with parting life,

515

Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood
glen

The martial flood disgorged again,
But not in mingled tide;

520

The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side;
While by the lake below appears
The dark'ning cloud of Saxon
spears.

525

At weary bay each shattered band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tattered
sail,

That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray

530

Marked the fell havoc of the day.

XX

"Viewing the mountain's ridge
askance,

The Saxon stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried—'Behold yon isle!

535

See! none are left to guard its
strand,

But women weak, that wring the
hand;

'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile.

My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,

540

To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf
 then,
Lords of his mate, and brood, and
 den.'

Forth from the ranks a spearman
 sprung,

545

On earth his casque and corselet
 rung,

 He plunged him in the wave;
All saw the deed—the purpose
 knew,

And to their clamors Benvenue
 A mingled echo gave;

550

The Saxons shout, their mate to
 cheer,

The helpless females scream for
 fear,

And yells for rage the mountaineer.

'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Poured down at once the lowering
 heaven;

555

A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's
 breast,

Her billows reared their snowy
 crest.

Well for the swimmer swelled they
 high,

To mar the Highland marksman's
 eye;

For round him showered, 'mid rain
 and hail,

560

The vengeful arrows of the Gael.
In vain—he nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.

Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with
flame;

565

I marked Duncraggan's widowed
dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleamed in her hand;
It darkened—but, amid the moan
Of waves, I heard a dying groan;

570

Another flash!—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him
stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming
blood.

XXI

"'Revenge! revenge!' the Saxons
cried;

575

The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate
fight,

Bloody with spurring came a
knight,

580

Sprung from his horse, and, from a
crag,
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white
flag.

Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and
wide,

While, in the Monarch's name, afar

585

An herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick
bold,[note](#)
Were both, he said, in captive hold."
—But here the lay made sudden
stand,
The harp escaped the Minstrel's
hand!—

590

Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brooked his
minstrelsy:[note](#)
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
That motion ceased—yet feeling
strong

595

Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp—his hands
are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings
wrenched;

600

Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
Thus, motionless, and moanless,
drew
His parting breath, stout Roderick
Dhu!

Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
605

While grim and still his spirit
passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

LAMENT

"And art thou cold and lowly laid,
Thy foeman's dread, thy people's
aid,

610

Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's
shade!

For thee shall none a requiem say?

—For thee—who loved the
minstrel's lay,

For thee, of Bothwell's house the
stay,

The shelter of her exiled line,

615

E'en in this prison-house of thine
I'll wail for Alpine's honored Pine!

"What groans shall yonder valleys
fill!

What shrieks of grief shall rend yon
hill!

What tears of burning rage shall
thrill,

620

When mourns thy tribe thy battles
done,

Thy fall before the race was won,

Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!

There breathes not clansman of thy
line,

But would have given his life for
thine.

625

O woe for Alpine's honored Pine!

"Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!

The captive thrush may brook the
cage,

The prisoned eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!

630

And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice
 combine,
And mix her woe and tears with
 mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honored
 Pine."

XXIII

635

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many colored
 gleams,
Through storied pane the rising
 beams.

In vain on gilded roof they fall,

640

And lightened up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber
 gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance
 astray;

645

Or if she looked, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle where waved on
 high

The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared

650

The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,

Her station claimed with jealous
pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland
game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm
Graeme,

655

Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts
betrayed.

Those who such simple joys have
known,

Are taught to prize them when
they're gone.

But sudden, see, she lifts her head!

660

The window seeks with cautious
tread.

What distant music has the power

To win her in this woeful hour!

'Twas from a turret that o'erhung

Her latticed bower, the strain was
sung.

XXIV

LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN

665

"My hawk is tired of perch and
hood,

My idle greyhound loathes his food,

My horse is weary of his stall,

And I am sick of captive thrall.

I wish I were as I have been,

670

Hunting the hart in forest green,

With bended bow and bloodhound

free,

For that's the life is meet for me.

"I hate to learn the ebb of time,
From yon dull steeple's drowsy
chime,

675

Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
Inch after inch, along the wall.
The lark was wont my matins ring,
The sable rook my vespers sing;
These towers, although a king's they
be,

680

Have not a hall of joy for me.

"No more at dawning morn I rise,
And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
Drive the fleet deer the forest
through,
And homeward wend with evening
dew;

685

A blithesome welcome blithely
meet,
And lay my trophies at her feet,
While fled the eve on wing of glee

—

That life is lost to love and me!"

XXV

The heartsick lay was hardly said,
690

The list'ner had not turned her head,
It trickled still, the starting tear,
When light a footstep struck her ear,
And Snowdoun's graceful knight
was near.

She turned the hastier, lest again
695

The prisoner should renew his
strain.

"O welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she
said;

"How may an almost orphan maid
Pay the deep debt"—"O say not so!
To me no gratitude you owe.

700

Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
And bid thy noble father live;
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
No tyrant he, though ire and pride

705

May lay his better mood aside.
Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than
time,

He holds his court at morning
prime."

With beating heart, and bosom
wrung,

As to a brother's arm she clung.

710

Gently he dried the falling tear,
And gently whispered hope and
cheer;

Her faltering steps, half led, half
stayed,

Through gallery fair, and high
arcade,

Till, at his touch, its wings of pride

715

A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given

720

Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue, fancy frames
Aërial knights and fairy dames.

Still by Fitz-James her footing
stayed;

A few faint steps she forward made,
725

Then slow her drooping head she
raised,

And fearful round the presence
gazed;

For him she sought, who owned this
state,

The dreaded Prince whose will was
fate!—

She gazed on many a princely port,
730

Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed
—

Then turned bewildered and
amazed,

For all stood bare; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and
plume.

735

To him each lady's look was lent;
On him each courtier's eye was
bent;

Midst furs and silks and jewels
sheen,

He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The center of the glittering ring—

740

And Snowdoun's Knight is
Scotland's King.

XXVII

As wreath of snow, on mountain
breast,
Slides from the rock that gave it
rest,

Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
745

No word her choking voice
commands—
She showed the ring—she clasped
her hands.

Oh! not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant
look!

Gently he raised her—and, the
while,

750
Checked with a glance the circle's
smile;

Graceful, but grave, her brow he
kissed,

And bade her terrors be dismissed:
"Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-
James

The fealty of Scotland claims.
755

To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet-ring.
Ask naught for Douglas; yester
even

His prince and he have much
forgiven.

Wrong hath he had from slanderous
tongue,

760
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamor
loud;

Calmly we heard and judged his

cause,
Our council aided, and our laws.
765
I stanch'd thy father's death-feud
stern,
With stout De Vaux and gray
Glencairn;
And Bothwell's lord henceforth we
own
The friend and bulwark of our
throne.
But, lovely infidel, how now?
770
What clouds thy misbelieving
brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine
aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting
maid."

XXVIII

Then forth the noble Douglas
sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
775
The Monarch drank, that happy
hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of
Power—
When it can say, with godlike voice,
Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!
Yet would not James the general eye
780
On Nature's raptures long should
pry;
He stepped between—"Nay,
Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,

That brought this happy chance to
speed.

785

—Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my
power,
Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's
tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun
claims,

790

And Normans call me James Fitz-
James.

Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured
cause."

Then, in a tone apart and low—
"Ah, little traitress! none must know

795

What idle dream, what lighter
thought,

What vanity full dearly bought,
Joined to thine eye's dark
witchcraft, drew

My spell-bound steps to Benvenue,
In dangerous hour, and all but gave

800

Thy Monarch's life to mountain
glaive!"—

Aloud he spoke, "Thou still dost
hold

That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's
ring—

What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XXIX

805

Full well the conscious maiden
 guessed
He probed the weakness of her
 breast;
But, with that consciousness, there
 came
A lightening of her fears for
 Graeme,
And more she deemed the
 Monarch's ire

810

Kindled 'gainst him, who, for her
 sire
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick
 Dhu.

"Forbear thy suit—the King of
 kings

815

Alone can stay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved
 his brand.

My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!

820

Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turned her from the
 King,

And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wished her sire to speak

825

The suit that stained her glowing
 cheek.

"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its
 force,

And stubborn justice holds her

course.
Malcolm, come forth!"—and, at the
word,
Down kneeled the Graeme to
Scotland's lord.

830

"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant
sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim
her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our
smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous
wile,

And sought, amid thy faithful clan,
835

A refuge for an outlawed man,
Dishonoring thus thy loyal name.
Fetters and warder for the Graeme!"
His chain of gold the King
unstrung,
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he
flung,

840

Then gently drew the glittering
band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.



Harp of the North, farewell! The
hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade
descending;
In twilight copse the glowworm
lights her spark,

845

The deer, half seen, are to the
covert wending.

Resume thy wizard elm! the
fountain lending,
And the wild breeze, thy wilder
minstrelsy;
Thy slumbers sweet with Nature's
vespers blending,
With distant echo from the fold
and lea,

850

And herdboy'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.

855

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'erlived such woes,
Enchantress! is thine own.

860

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

865

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!



NOTES

CANTO FIRST

2. witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring. The well or spring of St. Fillan is on the summit of a hill near Loch Earn, some miles northeast of the scene of the poem. The reason why Scott places the "Harp of the North" here is that St. Fillan was the favorite saint of Robert Bruce, and a relic of the saint had been borne in a shrine by a warlike abbot at the battle of Bannockburn. The word "witch" (more properly spelled "wych") is connected with "wicker" and means "bending," "drooping."

10. Caledon. Caledonia, poetic name for Scotland.

29. Monan's rill. Scott takes the liberty of assigning a "rill" to this Scottish martyr of the fourth century on his own authority, unless his editors have been at fault in failing to discover the stream indicated.

31. Glenartney's. Glen Artney or Valley of the Artney. The Artney is a small river northeast of the main scene of the poem.

33. Benvoirlich. "Ben" is Scottish for mountain. Benvoirlich is near the western end of Glenartney.

53. Uam-Var. A mountain between Glenartney and the Braes of Doune. The name signifies "great den," and is derived from a rocky enclosure on the mountain-side, believed to have been used in primitive times as a toil or trap for deer. As told in [Stanza IV](#) a giant was fabled to have inhabited this den.

71. linn. This word means either "waterfall" or "steep ravine." The latter is probably the meaning here.

89. Menteith. A village and district southeast of the line of lakes—Loch Katrine, Loch Achray, and Loch Vennachar—about which the main action of the poem moves.

93. Lochard. Loch Ard, a small lake south of Loch Katrine. **Aberfoyle.** A village east of Loch Ard.

[95. Loch-Achray.](#) See note on [89](#).

[97. Benvenue.](#) A mountain on the south bank of Loch Katrine.

[103. Cambusmore.](#) An estate owned by Scott's friends, the Buchanans, on the border of the Braes of Doune.

[105. Benledi.](#) A majestic mountain shutting in the horizon to the north of Loch Vennachar.

[106. Bochastle's heath.](#) The plain between Loch Vennachar and the river Teith.

[112. Brigg of Turk.](#) A romantic bridge, still in existence, between Loch Vennachar and Loch Achray.

[120. dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed.](#) A breed of dogs, usually black in color, very keen of scent and powerful in build, were kept by the abbots of St. Hubert in commemoration of their patron saint, who was a hunter.

[138. whinyard.](#) Obsolete term for *sword*.

[145. Trossachs.](#) A wild and beautiful defile between Loch Katrine and Loch Achray. The word signifies "rough or bristled country."

[166. Woe worth the chase.](#) "Woe worth" is an exclamation, equivalent to "alack!"

[178. Round and around the sounds were cast.](#) Notice the mimicry of the echo in the vowel sounds of the line.

[196. tower ... on Shinar's plain.](#) The Tower of Babel.

[208. dewdrops sheen.](#) What part of speech is *sheen*? Is this use of the word obsolete in prose?

[227. frequent flung.](#) "Frequent" is used in the original Latin sense (Lat. *frequens*) of "crowded together," "numerous."

[256. Unless he climb, with footing nice.](#) Scott says: "Until the present road was made through the romantic pass I have presumptuously attempted to describe, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trossachs, excepting by a sort of ladder, composed of the branches and roots of trees." What is the meaning of "nice" here? What other meanings has the word had?

[313](#). **Highland plunderers.** The clans inhabiting the region about Loch Katrine were in the habit of making incursions into the neighboring Lowlands to plunder and lay waste the country. Their warlike habits were fostered by the rugged and almost inaccessible character of the country, which prevented the Lowlanders from retaliating upon them, and enabled them also to resist the royal authority.

[363](#). **snood.** A ribbon worn by Scotch lassies and upon marriage replaced by the matron's "curch" or cap. **plaid.** A rectangular shawl-like garment made of the checkered cloth called tartan.

[438](#). **couch was pulled.** Freshly pulled heather was the most luxurious bedding known to the Highlander.

[440](#). **ptarmigan and heath-cock.** These birds are a species of grouse, the one red, the other black.

[460](#). **on the visioned future bent.** The gift of second-sight was universally believed in at this period in the Highlands.

[504](#). **retreat in dangerous hour.** "The Celtic chieftains, whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually, in the most retired spot of their domain, some place of retreat for the hour of necessity ... a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut." (Scott's note in edition of 1830.)

[546](#). **target.** What is the connection of this word with that used in archery and gun-practice?

[566](#). **brook to wield.** "Brook" commonly means "endure." What is its exact meaning here?

[573](#). **Ferragus, or Ascabart.** Two giants whose names appear frequently in medieval romances of chivalry. The first is better known as Ferran, under which name he figures in the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. Ascabart plays a part in the old English metrical romance of Sir Bevis of Hampton.

[580](#). **To whom, though more than kindred knew.** This is a very obscure expression for Scott, who is usually so careful to make himself clear. The meaning seems to be: Ellen regarded her as a mother, though that was more than the actual kinship of the two justified (literally "knew how to recognize").

[591](#). **Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James.** As appears later in the poem, these were not his true name and title, though he was entitled to bear them.

[622](#). **a harp unseen.** In modern Scotland the bagpipe has altogether taken the place of the harp. A writer of the sixteenth century says: "They (the Highlanders) take great delight to deck their harps with silver and precious stones; the poor ones that cannot attain thereunto deck them with crystal. They sing verses prettily compounded (i.e., composed) containing for the most part praises of valiant men."

[638](#). **pibroch.** (Pronounced pee-brock.) A wild tumultuous tune played on the bagpipes in the onset of battle.

[642](#). **bittern.** A wading bird, allied to the heron.

[657](#). **reveillé.** As the rhyme shows, this word is pronounced *reh-vail'yah* here. The common pronunciation in the United States is *rev-a-lee'*. It is the drum-beat or bugle-call at dawn to arouse soldiers.

CANTO SECOND

[1](#). **blackcock.** See note to I, [440](#).

[7](#). **minstrel grey.** Until well on in the eighteenth century it was customary for Highland chieftains to keep in their service a bard, whose chief duty it was to sing the exploits of the ancestors of the line.

[69](#). **Lead forth his fleet.** What kind of figure is contained in the word *fleet* as applied to the flock of ducks?

[131](#). **harp, which erst Saint Modan swayed.** St. Modan was not a harper, as Scott elsewhere ingenuously confesses, adding, however, that "Saint Dunstan certainly did play upon that instrument."

[141](#). **Wailed loud through Bothwell's bannered hall.** The minstrel tries to account for the strange way in which his harp gives back mournful sounds instead of the joyous ones he is trying to evoke, by calling to Ellen's mind two other occasions when it behaved similarly. One of these was when it foreboded the death of Ellen's mother; the other when it foreboded the exile of the Douglasses during the minority of James V. For particulars, see the introduction on the historical setting of the poem. Bothwell Castle is on the Clyde, a few miles from Glasgow.

[159](#). **From Tweed to Spey.** The Tweed is in the extreme southern part, the Spey

in the northern part, of Scotland.

[200.](#) **Lady of the Bleeding Heart.** The minstrel calls Ellen so because a bleeding heart was the heraldic emblem of the Douglas family.

[206.](#) **strathspey.** A dance, named from the district of Strath Spey, in the north of Scotland. It resembled the reel, but was slower.

[213.](#) **Clan-Alpine's pride.** Clan Alpine was the collective name of the followers of Roderick Dhu, who figures later in the poem as Ellen's rejected suitor and the enemy of the mysterious "Knight of Snowdoun" who has just taken his departure from the island.

[216.](#) **Lennox foray.** Lennox is the district south of Menteith, in the Lowlands. It was the scene of innumerable forays and "cattle-drives."

[221.](#) **In Holy-Rood a knight he slew.** Holyrood is the royal castle at Edinburgh, where the court usually was held. It was deemed a heinous and desperate offense to commit an act of blood in the royal residence or its immediate neighborhood, since such an act was an indirect violation of the majesty of the king, and a breaking of "the king's peace." It was for this offense that Roderick Dhu was exiled, and compelled to live like an outlaw in his mountain fastness.

[227.](#) **Who else dared give.** Notice how skilfully Scott manages to give us the relations of the chief characters of the poem to each other, and to show that Ellen's father, pursued by the hatred of James V, has been given the island shelter in Loch Katrine by Roderick Dhu who is about to make his appearance in the story.

[236.](#) **Full soon may dispensation sought.** A papal dispensation was necessary, because Ellen and Roderick Dhu were cousins. See next note.

[249.](#) **All that a mother could bestow.** Here again the poet takes the indirect way of making clear his point, namely that the matron introduced in the first canto is the mother of Roderick Dhu. The phrase "an orphan in the wild," is in apposition with the following phrase "her sister's child"—i.e., Ellen herself. From this it appears that Lady Margaret is Ellen's aunt, and that Roderick Dhu is, therefore, Ellen's cousin.

[260.](#) **Maronnan's cell.** A chapel at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, dedicated to the rather obscure saint here named.

[270](#). **Bracklinn's thundering wave.** The reference is to a cascade made by a mountain torrent at the Bridge of Bracklinn, near the village of Callender in Menteith. Notice how Scott's numerous references to places in the region where the poem is laid tend gradually to give us an idea of the richness and diversity of the landscape.

[274](#). **claymore.** A large two-handed sword.

[305](#). **Thy father's battle-brand.** Some swords, especially those which had been magically forged, were held to possess the property of drawing themselves from their scabbard at the approach of their owner's deadly enemy. This is the first vague hint which Scott gives us as to the real identity of the "Knight of Snowdown." To throw a further glamor of romance about the prophetic weapon, he tells us that it was given by fairies to an ancestor of its present owner, namely, to Archibald, third Duke of Angus, called Tine-man (Loseman) because he always lost his men in battle, and that this gift was made while Archibald was in league with Harry Hotspur.

[319](#). **Beltane game.** The sports of May Day.

[327](#). **canna.** Cotton grass.

[Stanza XVI](#). In this and the two following stanzas notice how skillfully description and narrative are woven together, and how the picture gains in detail and distinctness as the boats approach.

[334](#). **barges.** What change has occurred in the use of this word?

[335](#). **Glengyle ... Brianchoil.** Why does the poet introduce these proper names? Are they of any value as information?

[343](#). **tartans.** See note to I, xix, [363](#).

[395](#). **The chorus first could Allan know.** The chorus was the first part of the song which the harper, listening from the shore, could distinctly make out.

[408](#). **Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu.** The words *vich* and *dhu* are Gaelic, the first meaning "descendant of," the second "black or swarthy." King Alpine was the half-mythical ancestor from whom the clan of Alpine sprung. The line means, therefore, "Black Roderick, descendant of Alpine." Compare II, xii, [220](#), where Allan-bane calls the chieftain "Black Sir Roderick."

[410](#). **Blooming at Beltane.** See note to II, [319](#).

[416](#). **Breadalbane.** A large district in the western part of the county of Perth.

[419](#)–426. **Glen Fruin, Bannochar, Glenn Luss, Ross-dhu, Leven-glen.** What, in simple language, should you say was the value of this array of obscure names in the song?

[431](#). **the rose-bud that graces yon islands.** To whom do the singers metaphorically refer?

[497](#). **Percy's Norman pennon.** Captured by the Douglas in the raid which led to the battle of Otterburn, as celebrated in the old ballad of Chevy Chase. (Sprague.)

[504](#). **The waned crescent.** This may be taken as referring to some victory over the Turkish armies in the East, or to the defeat of Scott's ancestor, Sir Walter Scott of Buccleugh, who was defeated in an attempt to set the young king free from the Douglas. The shield of Sir Walter bore a crescent moon.

[506](#). **Blantyre.** A priory on the banks of the Clyde near Bothwell castle, of which ruins still remain.

[574](#). **Glenfinlas.** A valley to the northeast of Loch Katrine, between Ben-An and Ben-Ledi.

[577](#). **royal ward.** Malcolm, as a minor, was still under the king's guardianship.

[583](#). **Strath-Endrick glen.** A valley on the southeast of Loch Lomond, presumably Malcolm's home.

[623](#)–625. **The Meggat, the Yarrow, and the Ettrick** are successive tributaries, the waters of which eventually reach the Tweed. The Teviot is also a tributary of the Tweed. All five rivers are in the southern part of Scotland.

[678](#). **Links of Forth.** Banks of the river Forth. In general the word "links" means flat or undulating stretches of sandy soil, partially covered with grass or heather.

[692](#). **There are who have.** How does this differ from the prose idiom?

[801](#). **pity 'twere such cheek should feel the midnight air.** Was there anything in the Highland character and training which would make these words seem particularly cutting? Notice how the insult is deepened later by the assumption

on Rhoderick Dhu's part that Malcolm is capable of treachery toward Douglas and the Clan of Alpine.

[809](#). **henchman**. This word is said to have been originally "haunch-man" because it was the duty of this retainer to stand beside his master's chair (at his haunches as it were) at the feast, in readiness to do his bidding or to defend him if attacked.

[831](#). **Fiery Cross**. The signal for the gathering of the clan to war. The preparation and carrying abroad of this cross is described in the next canto.

CANTO THIRD

[39.](#) **cushat dove.** Better known as the ringdove.

[63.](#) **shivers.** "Slivers" is the more common word, but the verb "to shiver," meaning to break in pieces, keeps the original meaning.

[74.](#) **Benharrow.** This mountain is near the north end of Loch Lomond.

[87.](#) **strath.** A wide open valley, distinguished from a glen, which is narrow.

[104.](#) **fieldfare.** A species of thrush.

[116.](#) **virgin snood.** See note to I, [363](#).

[154.](#) **River Demon.** Concerning this creature Scott gives the current observation: "The River Demon, or River-horse, is an evil spirit, delighting to forebode and witness calamity. He frequents most Highland lakes and rivers; and one of his most memorable exploits was performed upon the banks of Loch Vennachar: it consisted in the destruction of a bridal party with all its attendants."

[156.](#) **noontide hag.** A gigantic emaciated female figure which, contrary to the general rule of ghostly creatures, appeared in the full blaze of noon.

[168.](#) **Ben-Shie's boding scream.** The ben-shie or banshee was a tutelary spirit, supposed to forebode by midnight howlings the death of a member of a family to which it was attached. The superstition is still prevalent in Ireland.

[191.](#) **Inch-Cailliach.** An island in Loch Lomond, used as a place of burial for several neighboring clans, of whom the descendants of King Alpine were the chief. The name means "Isle of Nuns," or "Isle of Old Women."

[Stanza IX.](#) Notice the change in the rime system which marks the break from flowing narrative to solemn dramatic speech, and is continued through the stanza to increase the effect of solemnity.

[253.](#) **Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin cave.** This cave and the pass of Beala-nam-bo were on the slopes of Ben Venue, a mountain near Loch Katrine. See notes to [622](#) and [664](#).

[286.](#) **Lanrick mead.** This meadow is still pointed out to the traveler on the road from Loch Vennachar to the Trossachs.

[300.](#) **dun deer's hide.** It was their shoes made of untanned deer's hide, with the hair outwards, which gave the Highlander's their nickname, "Red-shanks."

[349.](#) **Duncraggan.** A village between Loch Achray and Loch Vennachar.

[369.](#) **coronach.** Death-song.

[386.](#) **correi.** Scott explains this as "the hollow side of the hill, where game usually lies."

[387.](#) **cumber.** Trouble, perplexity.

[394.](#) **Stumah.** The name of a dog, signifying "faithful."

[461.](#) **chapel of St. Bride.** This chapel stood on the knoll of Strath-Ire, mentioned at the beginning of the stanza, halfway up the pass of Leny. Scott is singularly careful not to take liberties with the geography of the localities where his story is laid.

[468.](#) **pole-ax.** An old weapon consisting of a broad ax-head fastened to a long pole, with a prick at the back.

[480.](#) **Tombea's Mary.** Tombea and Armandave are names of places in the vicinity of Strath-Ire.

[546.](#) **bracken.** Fern.

[570.](#) **Balquidder.** The braes of Balquidder extended west from Loch Voil, to the northward of the scene of the poem. **midnight blaze.** The heather on the moorlands is often set on fire by the shepherds in order that new herbage may spring up.

[578.](#) **Loch Voil,** etc. This and the following names are of poetic value in suggesting tangibly the rapid passage of the runner from place to place.

[622.](#) **Coir-nan-Uriskin.** Scott says that this name, signifying "Den of the Shaggy Men," was derived from the mythical inhabitants of the place, creatures half man and half goat, resembling the satyrs of classical mythology.

[641.](#) **still,** stillness. Can you instance other cases of the use of adjective for noun?

[656.](#) **satyrs.** See note to [622.](#)

[664.](#) **Beal-nam-bo.** The name signifies "Pass of cattle." It is described as a "most magnificent glade, overhung with aged birch-trees, a little higher up the mountains than the Coir-nan-Uriskin."

[672.](#) **A single page, to bear his sword.** The sword bearer, like the henchman and the bard, was a regular officer attached to the person of a Highland Chief. He was called in Gaelic "Gilliemore," or sword-man.

CANTO FOURTH

[19.](#) **Braes of Doune.** Doune is a village on the Teith, a few miles northwest of Stirling. The word "brae" means slope or declivity; the braes of Doune stretch away east and north from the village.

[36.](#) **boune.** An obsolete word meaning "prepared."

[63.](#) **Taghairm.** The word means "Augury of the Hide."

[68.](#) **When swept our merry men Gallangad.** The reference is to one of the forays or "cattledrives" which the Highland chiefs were fond of making at the expense of their neighbors. The situation of Gallangad is now unknown, but it was presumably a portion of the Lennox district.

[73.](#) **kerns.** The kern or cateran of the Highlands was a light-armed infantryman, as opposed to the heavy-armed "gallowglass."

[78.](#) **scatheless.** Without fear of injury, because of the weariness of the animal after the march.

[82.](#) **boss.** The word means knob or protuberance, especially that in the center of a shield. What the boss of a cliff can be it is a little difficult to understand.

[98.](#) **watching while the deer is broke.** The cutting up of the deer and allotting of the various portions was technically known as the "breaking" of the deer. A certain gristly portion was given, by long custom, to the birds, and came to be known as "the raven's bone."

[140.](#) **A spy has sought my land.** Roderick refers, as appears later, to the "Knight of Snowdown" of Canto I.

[150.](#) **glaive,** sword.

[153.](#) **sable pale.** An heraldic term, applied to a black perpendicular stripe in a coat of arms.

[174.](#) **stance,** station, foundation.

[231.](#) **Cambus-kenneth's fane.** The ruins of Cambus-kenneth Abbey are still to be seen on the banks of the Forth near Stirling.

[262.](#) **mavis and merle,** thrush and blackbird.

[283.](#) **darkling was the battle tried.** Scott first wrote "blindfold" in place of "darkling."

[285.](#) **pall.** A rich cloth, from which mantles of noblemen were made. **Vair.** A fur much used for the garments of nobility in medieval times.

[298.](#) **wonn'd,** an obsolete equivalent of "dwelt."

[306.](#) **fairies' fatal green.** The elves or gnomes wore green, and were angered when any mortal ventured to wear that color. For this or some other reason green was held an unlucky color in many parts of Scotland.

[308.](#) **thou wert christened man.** Urgan, as appears later, was a mortal, who had fallen under the spell of the elves and lived their life, but who still retained some of the privileges and immunities which belonged, according to medieval belief, to all persons who had been baptized into the Christian church.

[371.](#) **Dunfermline.** An Abbey sixteen miles northwest of Edinburgh.

[385.](#) **my former guide.** This is Red Murdoch, of whom Roderick Dhu speaks, see [144](#) ff.

[531.](#) The **Allan** and the **Devan** are two streams which descend from the hills of Perthshire into the lowland plain.

[555.](#) **from Maudlin's charge.** Maudlin, as a proper name, is a corruption of Magdalen. The curious development of meaning which has taken place in the word should be looked out in the dictionary.

[559.](#) **peasant pitched a bar.** "Pitching the bar" was a feat of strength like the modern "putting the shot." It was usually indulged in by the peasantry at fairs and on the village greens.

[564.](#) **that savage groom.** The mad woman refers to Red Murdoch, the guide.

[594.](#) **a stag of ten.** With ten branches on his antlers.

CANTO FIFTH

[46.](#) **shingles,** declivities or "slides" of small broken stone.

[124.](#) **While Albany with feeble hand.** After the death of James IV at Flodden Field the regency was held first by the mother of the young king, and then by the Duke of Albany. The latter was forced by the Estates to leave Scotland in 1624, and soon after the regency fell practically, though, not constitutionally, into the hands of the king's step-father, Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus. See introduction on the historical setting of the poem.

[198.](#) **curlew.** A shore-bird, with a long curved bill.

[253.](#) **jack.** A coat of mail made of leather or heavy padded cloth.

[301.](#) **On Bochastle the moldering lines, etc.** East of Lake Vennachar, in the moor of Bochastle, are some traces of the Roman occupation, in the form of mounds and intrenchments.

[409.](#) **mountain-cat.** "Catamount" is the common name in America.

[461.](#) **palfrey.** A saddle-horse as distinguished from a war-horse.

[465.](#) **weed,** garment. The word is now restricted to the phrase "widow's weeds."

[490–497.](#) **Torry, Lendrick, Deanstown, Doune, Blair-Drummond, Ochertyre,** and **Kier,** are all on the Teith, between Bochastle and Sterling.

[525.](#) **by Saint Serle.** The necessities of rime compel the poet to choose a very obscure saint from the calendar.

[532.](#) **postern gate,** the small rear gate of a castle, generally used by the servants only.

[584.](#) **jennet.** A small Spanish horse, originally a cross between native and Arabian stock.

[611.](#) **morricers,** morrice dancers. The morrice or morris was an old dance, imported into England from Spain. Believed to be a corruption of "Moorish."

[613.](#) **butts**, the targets for archery practice.

[614.](#) **Bold Robin Hood and all his band.** It is of course not meant that the renowned outlaw himself and his followers were there, but masqueraders representing these traditional characters. All the names that follow occur in one or other of the legends and ballads which gathered about Robin Hood's name.

[622.](#) **the white**, i.e., the white center of the target.

[660.](#) **Ladies Rock.** A hillock between the Castle and Grayfriar's church, from which the court ladies viewed the games.

[872.](#) **lily lawn.** A conventional phrase in old ballad poetry, without any very definite meaning.

CANTO SIXTH

[42.](#) **harness**, armor and other war gear.

[60.](#) **halberd**, a weapon consisting of a battle-ax and pike at the end of a long staff. **brand**, a poetical word for sword.

[92.](#) **black-jack**, a large drinking can of tarred or waxed leather.

[95.](#) **Drink upsees out.** "Upsees" is a corruption of a Dutch Bacchanalian interjection.

[103.](#) **cure.** Parish or charge. **placket.** Petticoat.

[104.](#) **lurch**, swindle, leave in difficulty.

[306.](#) **prore**, poetical form of "prow."

[377.](#) **erne**, eagle.

[Stanza XVII.](#) Notice how both rime and rhythm mirror the growing excitement of the conflict.

[452.](#) **As their Tinchel cows the game.** The "Tinchel" was a circle of hunters, surrounding a herd of deer and gradually closing in on them.

[488.](#) **linn**, the word here means waterfall.

[586.](#) **Bothwell's lord**, Douglas. See note to II, xiii, [141](#).

[591](#). **How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy.** "Brooked" is not used in its strong sense of "endured," but in the weaker one of "received"; we should say colloquially "how he took it."



APPENDIX

(Adapted, and enlarged, from the *Manual for the Study of English Classics*, by George L. Marsh)

HELPS TO STUDY

LIFE OF SCOTT

What prominent traits of Scott's character can be traced to his ancestors (pp. [9](#), [10](#))?

How did he regard the members of his clan, especially the chief (pp. [19](#), [20](#))?

What characteristic is represented in his refusal to learn Latin and Greek at school?

What was his own method of obtaining an education? In what did he become proficient (p. [12](#))?

How did he regard his legal studies? How did they benefit him in his later work?

How was he first interested in ballad-writing?

Tell of the composition, publication, and popularity of his first poems (pp. [20](#) ff.).

In what business venture did he become involved, and what was the final outcome? What defect in his character is it charged that his business relations brought to light (pp. [24](#), [25](#))?

Tell of the composition of his novels. Why were they published incognito?

What can you say of his last years and his struggle to pay off the debts incurred by his connection with Ballantyne?

SCOTT AND THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

What is meant by the "Romantic Movement"? What four men were chiefly instrumental in bringing about this revolution in English poetry (p. [40](#))?

What was the influence of Scott's poetry on the age in comparison with that of his chief contemporaries? Give the reasons (p. [41](#)).

What were the distinguishing qualities of the literature of the eighteenth century? Illustrate these by examples from Pope or any other poet that you choose from that period, and put them into contrast with the qualities of the romantic poets. Does Scott's style differ greatly from that of the poets of the preceding century?

THE LADY OF THE LAKE—CONSTRUCTION

Is there anything that has taken place before the opening of the poem that has to be understood for a thorough appreciation of the story (p. [46](#))? How are the previous fortunes of the Douglas family related (pp. [96](#)–[98](#))?

What purpose in the plot does the Minstrel serve throughout?

What do you think of the opening?

Does the chase serve merely to furnish an opportunity for the description?

Is the action rapid or slow? How is it often retarded?

For what are the songs introduced?

Note the transition from stanza X to XI (p. [66](#)); from XVI to XVII (p. [71](#)); from XXIV to XXV (p. [144](#)); and many others.

How many cases of concealed identity are there in the poem? Does this turning of the plot on mistaken identity make it seem unreal? Show in each case where the identity is exposed and where hints have been given beforehand of the real identity.

Is there any intimation of the identity of Ellen and her father in lines [565](#)–[7](#), page [81](#); lines [728](#)–[39](#), page [87](#)?

What is the purpose of Fitz-James's dream (p. [86](#))?

What is the first hint of Ellen's love story and the name of her lover (pp. [74](#), [92](#))?

When is Roderick Dhu first mentioned (p. [96](#))? In what light?

Where are the relations of Ellen with Roderick and with Malcolm further discussed (p. [98](#))?

To whom is the reference in lines [732](#)–34, page [116](#)?

What action does the struggle between Roderick and Malcolm motivate?

How does Canto Third advance the plot? What is its poetical value (p. [56](#))?

What purpose does Brian serve?

Does the prophecy (p. [157](#)) heighten the dramatic effect of the following scene (see p. [196](#))?

For what are lines [138](#)–47, page [157](#), a preparation (p. [168](#))?

What is the purpose of the Ballad of Alice Brand (pp. [162](#) ff.)?

What other results of Scott's early interest in ballad literature can you point out in *The Lady of the Lake*?

Does the warning of James by the song of mad Blanche seem improbable?

What is the purpose of the long speeches between James and Roderick in the dramatic scene following Roderick's calling of his men?

Does the combat between James and Roderick (pp. [198](#), [199](#)) seem a real fight?

Why was Roderick preserved to die in the castle at Stirling?

Are lines [519](#)–30, page [203](#), an artistic preparation for the following scene?

How do the games in the Castle park hasten the plot to its end?

How is the fight between Clan-Alpine and the Earl of Mar described?

How much of the action takes place outside the poem and is related?

Note the use of the supernatural (p. [239](#)). Does it seem impressive?

Is the conclusion sustained and dramatic?

DESCRIPTION

Are the nature descriptions given for scenic effect, or do they serve as a

background and setting for the story?

Does Scott employ incidents of plot for the sake of dragging in descriptions?

Which is the best in the poem: nature description, plot construction, character, description, or the portrayal of old life and customs?

Is the descriptive language suggestive?

Are the landscape scenes given minutely, or are they drawn broadly, with a free hand?

Does Scott keep closely to the geography of the region of his tale (see map, p. [6](#), and note [461](#), p. [259](#))?

Perry Pictures 912–17 (from Landseer's paintings of deer) and 1511 (Ben Lomond) may be used in illustration of *The Lady of the Lake*.

CHARACTERS

Are the characters distinctly drawn—do they seem real people of flesh and blood?

How is Ellen's character displayed?

Do you feel any sympathy for Roderick Dhu? Does your impression of his character improve (pp. [96](#), [98](#), [99](#), [182](#), [188](#), [195](#), and [241](#))?

Was Douglas an historical character?

Is the character of James Fitz-James true to James V of Scotland?

Is Allan-bane representative of the place in the ancient Scottish clan which the minstrel had?

THEME SUBJECTS

1. Scott's boyhood (with emphasis on the cultivation of characteristics displayed in his poems; pp. [10](#)–[12](#)).

2. Scott as a landed proprietor (pp. [27](#)–[33](#)). This may well take the form of an imaginary visit to Abbotsford.

3. Scott in business (pp. [23](#)–25, [34](#)–36). Compare his struggle against debt with Mark Twain's.
4. The historical setting of *The Lady of the Lake* (pp. [46](#)–48).
5. A visit to the scene of *The Lady of the Lake*.
6. Summary of the action; as a whole, or by parts (cantos or other logical divisions).
7. Character sketches of Fitz-James, Roderick Dhu, Ellen, Malcolm, Douglas.
8. Highland customs reflected in the poem (pp. [129](#) ff., [253](#), [254](#), etc.).
9. The use of the Minstrel in the poem.
10. The interpolated lyrics—what purposes do they, respectively, serve?
11. Descriptions of scenes resembling, in one way or another, attractive scenes depicted in *The Lady of the Lake*.
12. Soldier life in Stirling Castle (pp. [219](#) ff.).
13. Contrast feudal warfare (especially as shown on pp. [81](#), [182](#)) with modern warfare.
14. Show, by selected passages, Scott's veneration for the ideals of feudalism (pp. [81](#), [228](#), etc.).
15. Rewrite the scene of the combat between Roderick and Fitz-James (pp. [198](#)–200) in the prose style of Scott as in the tournament scene in *Ivanhoe*.

SELECTIONS FOR CLASS READING

1. The chase (pp. [60](#)–65).
2. The Trossachs (pp. [66](#)–68).
3. Ellen (pp. [72](#)–74).
4. Ellen's song (pp. [83](#)–85).
5. Roderick's arrival (pp. [100](#)–105).

6. Roderick's proposal (pp. [113](#)–118).
7. The consecration of the bloody cross (pp. [128](#)–132).
8. The summoning of the clan (pp. [132](#)–135).
9. The Coronach (pp. [136](#), [137](#)).
10. Roderick overhears Ellen's song (pp. [148](#)–149).
11. The ballad of Alice Brand (pp. [162](#)–167).
12. Fitz-James and the mad woman (pp. [172](#)–178).
13. The hospitality of a Highlander (pp. [180](#)–183).
14. The hidden army (pp. [191](#)–192).
15. The combat (pp. [195](#)–200).
16. Douglas at the games (pp. [207](#)–211).
17. The speech of Douglas (pp. [212](#), [213](#)).
18. The Battle of Beal' an Duine (pp. [232](#)–240).
19. Fitz-James reveals himself to Ellen (pp. [244](#)–249).

CLASSES OF POETRY

It is important for the student of poetry to know the principal classes into which poems are divided. The following brief explanations do not pretend to be exhaustive, but they should be of practical aid. It must be remembered that a long poem is sometimes not very definitely of any one class, but combines characteristics of different classes.

Narrative poetry, like narrative prose, aims primarily to tell a story.

The *epic* is the most pretentious kind of narrative poetry; it tells in serious verse of the great deeds of a popular hero. The *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, *Beowulf*, *Paradise Lost* are important epics. The *Idylls of the King* is in the main an epic poem.

The *metrical romance* is a rather long story in verse, of a less exalted and heroic character than the true epic. Scott's *Lady of the Lake* is a familiar example.

The *verse tale* is shorter and likely to be less dignified and serious than the metrical romance. The stories in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, or Burns's *Tam O'Shanter*, may serve as examples.

The *ballad* is a narrative poem, usually rather short and in such form as to be sung. It is distinguished from a song by the fact that it tells a story. *Popular* or *folk* ballads are ancient and of unknown authorship—handed down by word of mouth and varied by the transmitters. *Artistic* ballads are imitations, by known poets, of traditional ballads.

Descriptive and *reflective* poems have characteristics sufficiently indicated by the adjectives in italics.

The *pastoral* is a particular kind of descriptive and narrative poem in which the scene is laid in the country.

The *idyll* is, according to the etymology of its name, a "little picture." Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* are rather more epic than idyllic in the strict sense of the term. The terms *idyll* and *pastoral* are not definitely discriminated.

Lyric poetry is poetry expressing personal feeling or emotion and in tuneful form. *Songs* are the simplest examples of lyric poetry; formal *odes*, such as Wordsworth's on "Immortality," the most elaborate. A lyric does not primarily tell a story, but it may imply one or refer to one.

The *elegy* is a reflective lyric prompted by the death of some one. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* is a collection of elegiac lyrics.

A *hymn* is a religious lyric.

Dramatic poetry presents human life in speech and action.

A *tragedy* is a serious drama which presents its hero in a losing struggle ending in his death.

A *comedy* does not end in death, and is usually cheerful and humorous.

The *dramatic monologue* is a poem in which a dramatic situation is presented, or perhaps a story is told, by one speaker.

Satire in verse aims to correct abuses, to ridicule persons, etc.

Didactic poetry has the purpose of teaching.

Transcriber's Note:

The following errors have been corrected in this text:

Page [41](#): added period after "Southey in 1774"

Page [89](#): put blank line between lines 18 and 19 of Canto Second

Page [98](#): moved line number 255 of Canto Second to correct position (in the original the line number was at line 254)

Page [165](#): changed "by their monarch's si" to "... side"

Page [196](#): changed "by" to "my" in "When foeman bade me draw my blade;"

Page [212](#): changed "shreik" to "shriek" in "the women shriek;"

Page [253](#): changed comma to period after "a harp unseen"

Page [256](#): changed "364" to "363" in note on line 343 of Canto Second

Page [258](#): changed "364" to "363" in note on line 116 of Canto Third

Page [260](#): added period after "150" in note on line 150 of Canto Fourth

Page [262](#): added period after "from the calendar"

Page [262](#): changed "Robinhood" to "Robin Hood" in "Bold Robin Hood and all his band."

Page [268](#): changed "p. 5" to "p. 6" in question "Does Scott keep ..."

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