



The Gay
of the East Minstrel.



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THE LAY
OF
THE LAST MINSTREL

A Poem

IN SIX CANTOS

*Dum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque, qui feci, iudice, digna lini.*

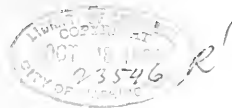


THE LAY
OF
THE LAST MINSTREL

BY
✓
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.
"

Illustrated

33



BOSTON
TICKNOR AND COMPANY
1887

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

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Drawn, engraved, and printed under the supervision of A. V. S. ANTHONY.

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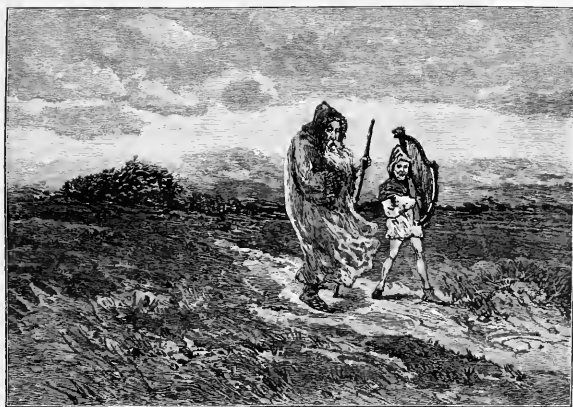




The Day
of the Last
Minstrel

CANTO THE FIRST.

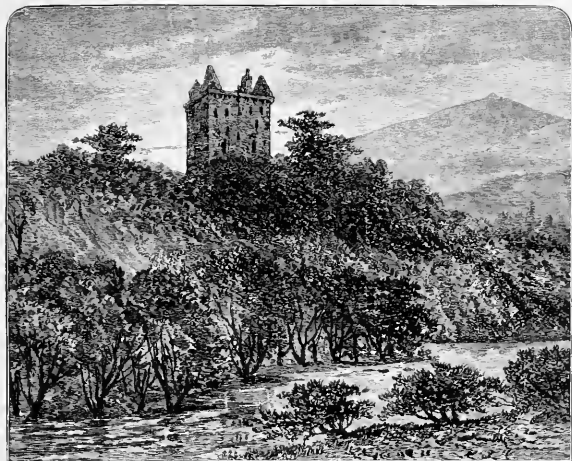
INTRODUCTION



THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His withered cheek and tresses gray
Seemed to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,

Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry ;
For, well-a-day ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead ;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn ;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay :
Old times were changed, old manners gone ;
A stranger filled the Stuart's throne ;
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.

He passed where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower :
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye —
No humbler resting-place was nigh.
With hesitating step at last,



The embattled portal arch he passed,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree:

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

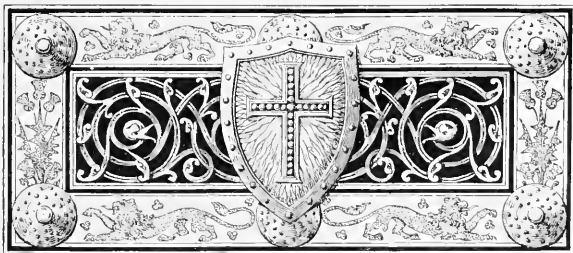
When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buecleuch:
And,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

The humble boon was soon obtained;
The aged Minstrel audience gained.
But, when he reached the room of state,
Where she with all her ladies sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease
Which marks security to please;

And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain.
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had played it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept court in Holyrood;
And much he wished, yet feared, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lightened up his faded eye
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot;

Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost ;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied ;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'T was thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.





I.

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

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all ;
Knight and page and household squire
Loitered through the lofty hall,

Or crowded round the ample fire :
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged in dreams the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

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

IV.

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



V.

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

VI.

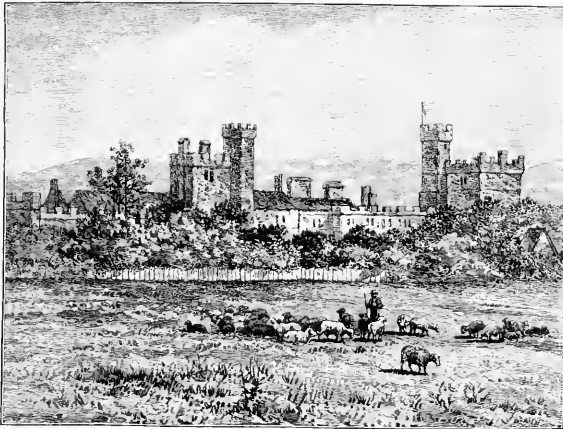
Why do these steeds stand ready dight ?
Why watch these warriors, armed, by night ? —
They watch, to hear the blood-bound baying :
They watch, to hear the war-horn braying :
To see St. George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming :
They watch, against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII.

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

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine
In mutual pilgrimage they drew,
Implored in vain the grace divine
For chiefs their own red falchions slew.
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,



The slaughtered chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

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

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughtered sire,
And wept in wild despair.

But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied,
For hopeless love and anxious fear
Had lent their mingled tide;
Nor in her mother's altered eye



Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran.

All purple with their blood;
And well she knew her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

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

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound
That moans the mossy turrets round.

Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's red side?
Is it the wind, that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?



XIII.

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

XIV.

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



XV.

RIVER SPIRIT.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?" —

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Brother, nay —

On my hills the moonbeams play,
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen.

Merry elves their morris pacing,
To ærial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!" —

XVI.

RIVER SPIRIT.

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

XVII.

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll
In utter darkness round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;

Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower
Till pride be quelled and love be free."

XVIII.

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

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,

And round the hall right merrily
In mimic foray rode.



Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts of rugged mould
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.

For the gray warriors prophesied
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescents and the Star.

XX.

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

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couched Border lance by knee :
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold he knew the paths to cross ;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds ;
In Eske or Liddel fords were none
But he would ride them, one by one ;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow or July's pride ;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight or matin prime :
Steady of heart and stout of hand

As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's king and Scotland's queen.

XXII.

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

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

“O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day,” the warrior gan say,
“Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never one,
Were ’t my neck-verse at Hairibee.”

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he passed,
Soon crossed the sounding barbican,



And soon the Teviot side he won,
Eastward the wooded path he rode,

Green hazels o'er his basnet nod ;
He passed the Peel of Goldiland,
And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand ;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round :
In Hawick twinkled many a light ;
Behind him soon they set in night ;
And soon he spurred his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

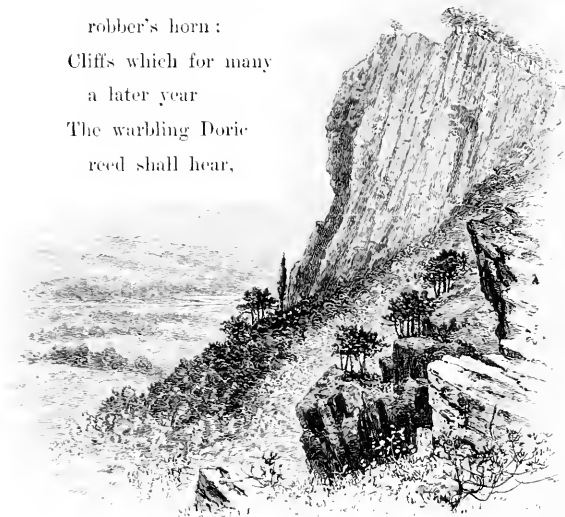
XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark :—
“Stand, ho ! thou courier of the dark.”—
“For Branksome, ho !” the knight rejoined,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turned him now from Teviotside,
 And, guided by the tinkling rill,
 Northward the dark ascent did ride,
 And gained the moor at Horslichill ;
Broad on the left before him lay
For many a mile the Roman way.

XXVII.

A moment now he slacked his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed,
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosened in the sheath his brand.

On Minto-erags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint :
Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest
Mid cliffs from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy :
Cliffs doubling, on their
 echoes borne,
The terrors of the
 robber's horn :
Cliffs which for many
 a later year
The warbling Doric
 reed shall hear,



When some sad swain shall teach the grove
Ambition is no cure for love !

XXVIII.

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

XXIX.

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

XXX.

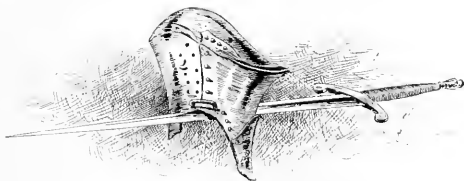
Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,

As glanced his eye o'er Halidon ;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallowed morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes ;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day ;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

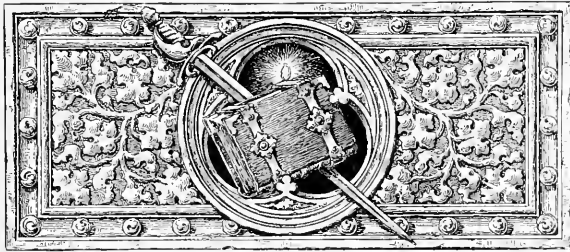
XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past ;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose and fair Tweed ran :
Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he passed, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fall,
Like that wild harp whose magic tone
Is wakened by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reached, 't was silence all ;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

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



CANTO THE SECOND.



I.

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight ;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel glimmers white ;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower :
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory ;
When silver edges the imagery,
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die ;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go — but go alone the while —



Then view St. David's ruined pile:
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little recked he of the scene so fair:
With dagger's hilt, on the wicket strong,
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate —

“Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?” —
“From Branksome I,” the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket opened wide:
For Branksome’s chiefs had in battle stood,
 To fence the rights of fair Melrose;
And lands and livings, many a rood,
 Had gifted the shrine for their souls’ repose.

III.

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

IV.

“The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
 Says that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb.”
From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
 With toil his stiffened limbs he reared;

A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

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

VI.

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

VII.

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



VIII.

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

IX.

By a steel-clenched postern door
They entered now the chancel tall ;
The darkened roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small :
The key-stone that locked each ribbed aisle
Was a fleur-de-lys or a quatre-feuille ;
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim ;
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,

With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X.

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven
Shook to the cold night wind of heaven,
 Around the screened altar's pale :
And there the dying lamps did burn
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne !



And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale !
O fading honors of the dead !
O high ambition, lowly laid !

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone.

By foliated tracery combined ;
Thou wouldst have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand
 In many a freakish knot had twined,
Then framed a spell when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Showed many a prophet and many a saint,
 Whose image on the glass was dyed ;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
 And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kissed the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII.

They sate them down on a marble stone,—
 A Scottish monarch slept below ;



Thus spoke the monk in solemn tone:

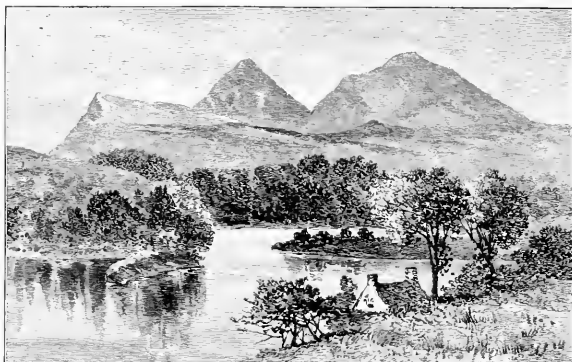
“ I was not always a man of woe ;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God :
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII.

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

XIV.

“ When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened ;
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed :



I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV.

“ I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his chief of Branksome's need;
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.

I buried him on Saint Michael's night,
When the bell tolled one and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

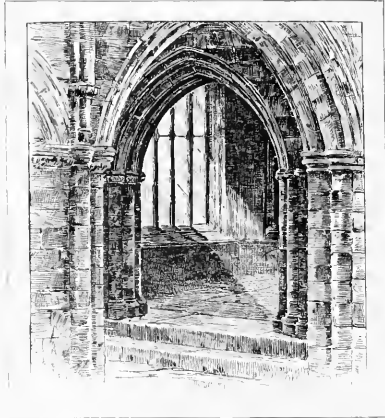
XVI.

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

XVII.

“Lo, warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead:
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night:
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be.”
Slow moved the monk to the broad flag-stone

Which the bloody cross was traced upon :
He pointed to a secret nook ;



An iron bar the warrior took ;
And the monk made a sign with his withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

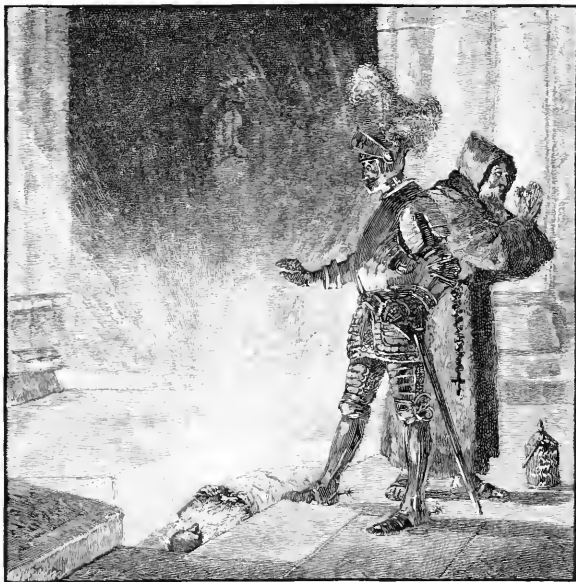
XVIII.

With beating heart to the task he went ;
His sinewy frame o'er the gravestone bent ;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength

That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Streamed upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
 And, issuing from the tomb,
Showed the monk's cowl and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-browed warrior's mail,
 And kissed his waving plume

XIX.

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



XX.

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe,
Yet now remorse and awe he owned:
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.

Bewildered and unnerved he stood,
And the priest prayed fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI.

And when the priest his death-prayer had prayed,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:
“Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those thou mayst not look upon
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!” —
Then Deloraine in terror took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasped and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frowned;
But the glare of the sepulchral light
Perchance had dazzled the warrior’s sight.

XXII.

When the huge stone sunk o’er the tomb,
The night returned in double gloom,
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few;
And as the knight and priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.

'Tis said, as through the aisles they passed,
 They heard strange noises on the blast;
 And through the cloister-galleries small,
 Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
 Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
 And voices unlike the voice of man;
 As if the fiends kept holiday,
 Because these spells were brought to day.
 I cannot tell how the truth may be;
 I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

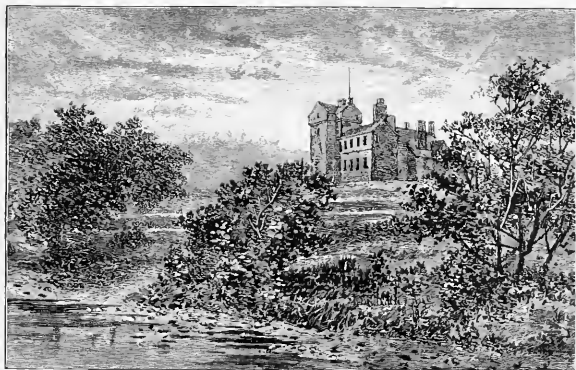
XXIII.

"Now, hie thee hence," the father said,
 "And when we are on death-bed laid,
 O may our dear Ladye and sweet Saint John
 Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!" —
 The monk returned him to his cell,
 And many a prayer and penance sped;
 When the convent met at the noontide bell —
 The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
 Before the cross was the body laid,
 With hands clasped fast, as if still he prayed.

XXIV.

The knight breathed free in the morning wind,
 And strove his hardihood to find:
 He was glad when he passed the tombstones gray

Which girdle round the fair Abbaye ;
For the mystic book, to his bosom pressed,
Felt like a load upon his breast :
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot gray ;
He joyed to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary as well as he might.



XXV.

The sun had brightened Cheviot gray,
The sun had brightened the Carter's side ;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.

The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And wakened every flower that blows ;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI.

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

XXVII.

The ladye steps in doubt and dread
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread ;
The ladye caresses the rough blood-hound
Lest his voice should waken the castle round ;
The watchman's bugle is not blown,

For he was her foster-father's son ;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light,
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII.

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

XXIX.

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy ;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow :
Ye ween to hear a melting tale
Of two true lovers in a dale ;

And how the knight, with tender fire,
 To paint his faithful passion strove,
 Swore he might at her feet expire,
 But never, never cease to love ;
 And how she blushed, and how she sighed,
 And, half consenting, half denied,
 And said that she would die a maid ;—
 Yet, might the bloody feud be stayed,
 Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
 Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX

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

XXXI.

Beneath an oak, mossed o'er by eld,
 The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
 And held his crested helm and spear :
 That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
 If the tales were true that of him ran
 Through all the Border, far and near.
 'T was said, when the Baron a-hunting rode





Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket tossed,
A leap of thirty feet and three
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismayed;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

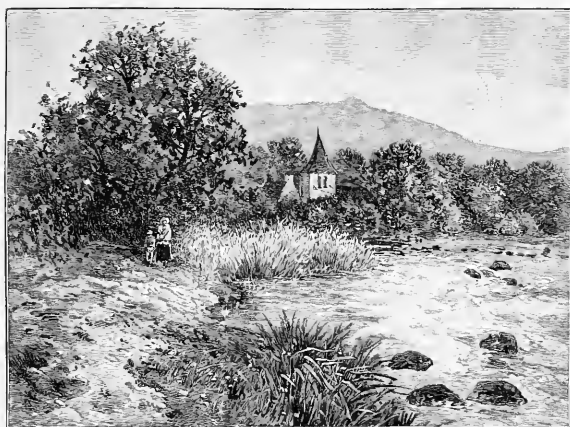
XXXII.

Use lessens marvel, it is said :
This elvish Dwarf with the Baron staid ;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock :
And oft apart his arms he tossed,
And often muttered " Lost ! lost ! lost ! "

 He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
 But well Lord Cranstoun served he ;
And he of his service was full fain ;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
 An it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage
Talked of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIII.

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish page,
 To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes :
For there, beside Our Lady's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
 And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gathered a band
Of the best that would ride at her command :
 The trysting place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,



And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine ;
 They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to St. Mary's lake ere day,
But the chapel was void and the Baron away.
They burned the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIV.

And now, in Branksome's good green wood,
As under the aged oak he stood,

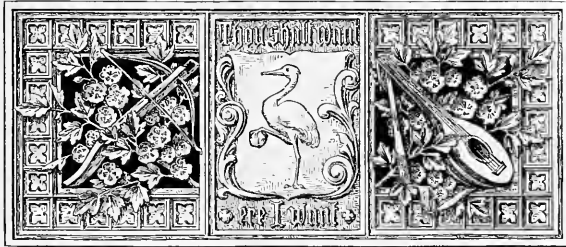
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly ;
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel grove
Flew like the startled cushat-dove :
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein ;
Vaulted the knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.



WHILE thus he poured the lengthened tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail :
Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the withered hand of age
A goblet, crowned with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez' scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop filled his eye,
Prayed God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheered a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaffed ;
And he, emboldened by the draught,
Looked gayly back to them, and laughed.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swelled his old veins and cheered his soul ;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THE THIRD.





I.

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

II.

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed ;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed ;

In halls, in gay attire is seen ;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above ;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III.

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

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He marked the crane on the Baron's crest ;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,

That marked the foemen's feudal hate ;
For question fierce and proud reply
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seemed to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire when wheeled around,
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V.

In rapid round the Baron bent ;
He sighed a sigh and prayed a prayer ;



The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sighed nor prayed,
Nor saint nor ladye called to aid ;
But he stooped his head, and couched his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seemed like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

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

VII.

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

VIII.

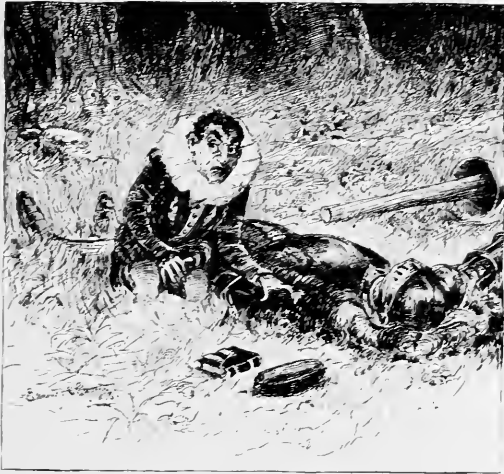
Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode ;
The Goblin-Page behind abode ;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corselet off he took,
The Dwarf espied the Mighty Book !
Much he marvelled a knight of pride
Like a book-bosomed priest should ride :
He thought not to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

IX.

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

X.

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretched him on the plain
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismayed,



And shook his huge and matted head :
One word he muttered, and no more. —
“Man of age, thou smitest sore!” —
No more the elfin page durst try
Into the wondrous book to pry :
The clasps, though smeared with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak. —
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive :
It was not given by man alive.

XI.

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

XII.

As he repassed the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport :
He thought to train him to the wood :
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seemed to the boy some comrade gay

Led him forth to the woods to play ;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII.

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
 Until they came to a woodland brook ;
The running stream dissolved the spell,
 And his own elvish shape he took.
Could he have had his pleasure vilde,
He had crippled the joints of the noble child,
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen :
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited ;
So he but scowled on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild :
The woodland brook he bounding crossed,
And laughed, and shouted, " Lost ! lost ! lost ! " —

XIV.

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

And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He feared to see that grisly face



Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journeyed on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,

The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV.

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
Comes nigher still and nigher;
Bursts on the path a dark bloodhound,



His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wildered child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I woen you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,
When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet check glowed 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the bloodhound manfully,

And held his little bat on high ;
 So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
 At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
 But still in act to spring;
 When dashed an archer through the glade,
 And when he saw the hound was stayed,
 He drew his tough bowstring;
 But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy !
 Ho! shoot not, Edward — 't is a boy !"

XVI.

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

And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII.

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reached scantily to his knee :
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbished sheaf bore he ;
His buckler scarce in breadth a span,
No longer fence had he :



He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee :
His slackened bow was in his hand,
And the leash that was his bloodhound's band.

XVIII.

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

XIX.

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

XX.

"Gramercy for thy good-will, fair boy!
 My mind was never set so high;

But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep good order :
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou 'lt make them work upon the Border.
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see ;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son."



XXI.

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seemed to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play ;

And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinched, and beat, and overthrew;
Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,
And wofully scorched the hackbuteer.
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guessed
That the young Baron was possessed!

XXII.

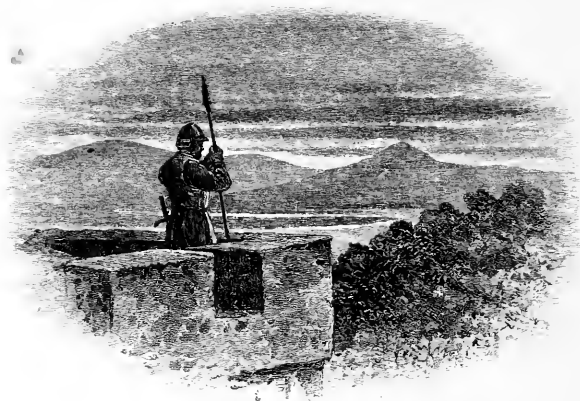
Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispelled,
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wondered to find him lie
On the stone threshold stretched along:
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
Because, despite her precept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

XXIII.

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood;
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;
But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And washed it from the clotted gore,
And salv'd the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turn'd it round and round,
Twisted as if she goll'd his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toiled, for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV.

So pass'd the day—the evening fell,
'T was near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
E'en the rude watchman on the tower
Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret lov'd and bless'd



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

XXV.

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,

And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star?—
O, 't is the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tightened breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

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

XXVII.

The seneschal, whose silver hair
Was reddened by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud:
"On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,

And three are kindling on Priestthaughswire;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout.
Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale
Elliot and Armstrongs never fail. —
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the warden of the strife. —
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise.”

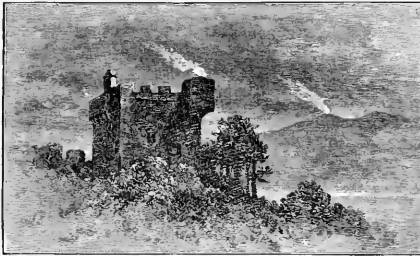
XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard far below the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats with clamor dread
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty rout,
The horsemen galloped forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,





To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.



XXIX.

The ready page with hurried hand
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
 And ruddy blushed the heaven:
For a sheet of flame from the turret high
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
 All flaring and uneven:
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen,
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleamed on many a dusky tarn,

Haunted by the lonely earn ;
On many a cairn's gray pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid ;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw
From Soltra and Dumpender Law,
And Lothian heard the Regent's order
That all should bowne them for the Border.

XXX.

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel ;
The castle-bell with backward clang
Sent forth the larum peal :
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower ;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watchword from the sleepless ward ;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Bloodhound and ban-dog yelled within.

XXXI.

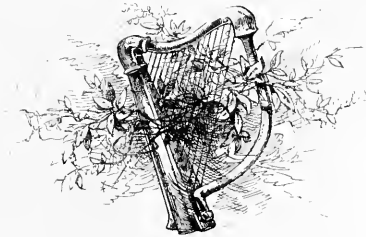
The noble dame, amid the broil,
Shared the gray seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile,
Cheered the young knights, and council sage

Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.

Some said that there were thousands ten;
And others weened that it was nought

But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black-mail;
And Liddesdale, with small avail,

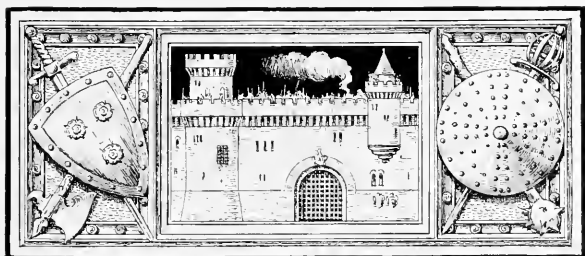
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So passed the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.



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



CANTO THE FOURTH.



I.

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

II.

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,

Retains each grief, retains each crime,
Its earliest course was doomed to know,
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.

Low as that tide has ebbed with me,
It still reflects to memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket played
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid?—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III.

Now over Border dale and fell
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh and mountain cell
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frightened flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Showed southern ravage was begun.

IV.

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried —
“Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood.



Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate and prove the lock;
It was but last Saint Barnabright
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,

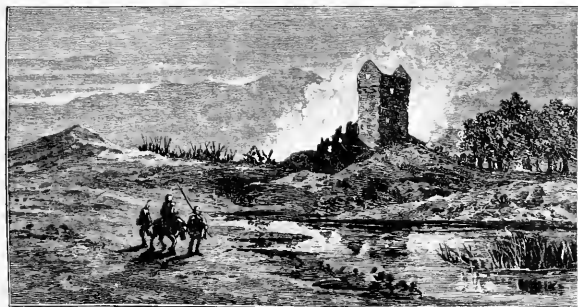
In vain he never twanged the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower
That drove him from his Liddel tower ;
And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
" I think 't will prove a Warden-Raid."

V.

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

VI.

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlim show
The tidings of the English foe: —
“Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Daere, with many a spear,
And all the German hackbut-men



Who have long lain at Askerten:
They crossed the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burn'd my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight,
But I was chased the livelong night.

Black John of Akeshaw and Fergus Græme
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turned at Priestthangh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright —
I had him long at high despite ;
He drove my cows last Eastern's night."

VII.

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

VIII.

From fair Saint Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamesclench's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Arrayed beneath a banner bright.

The tressured fleur-de-luce he claims
To wreath his shield, since royal James,
Encamped by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave
 For faith mid feudal jars ;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
 Would march to southern wars ;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne ;
Hence his high motto shines revealed —
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

An aged knight, to danger steeled,
 With many a mosstrooper, came on ;
And, azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
 Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower ;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood
His wood-embosomed mansion stood ;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plundered England low, —
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.

Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms
In youth might tame his rage for arms;
And still in age he spurned at rest,
And still his brows the helmet pressed,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow.

Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
N'e'er belted on a brand.

X.

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshawhill;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.
Hearken, Ladye, to the tale
How thy sires won fair Eskdale. —
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The earl was gentle and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
High of heart and haughty of word,
Little they recked of a tame liege lord.
The earl into fair Eskdale came,

Homage and seigniory to claim :
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot he sought,
Saying, " Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought." —
" Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he helped me at pinch of need ;
Lord and earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou." —
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so high blazed the Beattison's ire,
But that the earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir ;
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.



XI.

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

If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."

XII.

Loudly the Beattison laughed in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse
That the dun deer started at far Craikerross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the gray mountain-mist there did lances appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din
That the echoes answered from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied and lances broke!
For each scornful word the Galliard had said
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through;
Where the Beattisons' blood mixed with the rill,
The Galliard's Haugh⁴ men call it still.
The Scotts have scattered the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.

The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.



XIII.

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name ;
From Yarrow-clough to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,
Trooped man and horse, and bow and spear ;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye marked the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose :
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,

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

XIV.

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

XV.

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omened elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and reared amain,
Nor heeded bit nor curb nor rein.

It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil



To drive him but a Scottish mile ;
But as a shallow brook they crossed,
The elf, amid the running stream,

His figure changed, like form in dream,
 And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laughed,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon healed again,
Yet, as he ran, he yelled for pain;
And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI.

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs from below
Proclaimed the approaching Southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum:
 And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
 Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
 Shine helm and shield and spear.

XVII.

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurred their fleet coursers loosely round;
 Behind, in close array, and fast,
 The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
 Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Daëre's billmen were at hand:
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white and crosses red,
Arrayed beneath the banner tall
That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall;
And minstrels, as they marched in order,
Played, "Noble Lord Daere, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII.

Behind the English bill and bow
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
 Moved on to fight in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
 And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, owned no lord:
They were not armed like England's sons,

But bore the levin-darting guns;
Buff coats, all frounced and broidered o'er,
And morsing-horns and scarfs they wore;
Each better knee was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;
All as they marched, in rugged tongue
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XIX.

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

XX.

Now every English eye intent
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;

So near they were that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow ;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleamed axe and spear and partisan ;
Falcon and culver on each tower
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower ;
And flashing armor frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reeked like a witch's cauldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary senechal.

XXI.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breastplate spread ;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait ;
Forced him with chastened fire to prance,
And, high curvetting, slow advance :
In sign of truce, his better hand
Displayed a peeled willow wand ;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.
When they espied him riding out,

Lord Howard and Lord Daere stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII.

“Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow and Gilsland brand,
And all you mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads you swith return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest



As scare one swallow from her nest,
 St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
 Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland." —

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

"It irks, high Dame, my noble lords,
 'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
 But yet they may not tamely see,

All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason pain.
It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He pricked to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widowed Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,
And storm and spoil thy garrison;
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV.

He ceased — and loud the boy did cry,
And stretched his little arms on high,
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gushed to her eye the unbidden tear;

She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frowned;
Then deep within her sobbing breast
She locked the struggling sigh to rest,
Unaltered and collected stood,
And thus replied in dauntless mood:—



XXVI.

“Say to your lords of high emprise
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him by oath of march-treason stain,

Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave for his honor's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swelled Ancram ford;
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubbed a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine!
Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
Our moat the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII.

Proud she looked round, applause to claim —
Then lightened Thirlstane's eye of flame;
His bugle Watt of Harden blew;
Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
"Saint Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
The English war-cry answered wide,
And forward bent each Southern spear;

Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown; —
But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman galloped from the rear.

XXVIII.

“Ah! noble lords!” he breathless said,
“What treason has your march betrayed?
What make you here from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;
The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merrymen good
Beneath the eagle and the rood;
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wandered long,



But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong;
And hard I've spurred all night, to show
The mustering of the coming foe." —

XXIX.

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon you crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers displayed,

Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
 Level each harquebuss on row;
 Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
 Up, billmen, to the walls, and cry,
 Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX.

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

XXXI.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
 His brother warden's sage rebuke;

And yet his forward step he stayed,
And slow and sullenly obeyed.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII.

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet called with parleying strain



The leaders of the Scottish band ;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight ;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said : —
“ If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain :
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland.”

XXXIII.

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

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

XXXIV.

I know right well that in their lay
Full many minstrels sing and say,
 Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, whenas the spear
 Should shiver in the course :
But he, the jovial harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
 In guise which now I say ;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
 In the old Douglas' day.
He brooked not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
 Or call his song untrue :

For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stained with blood;
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV.

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

HE paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvelled the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell—

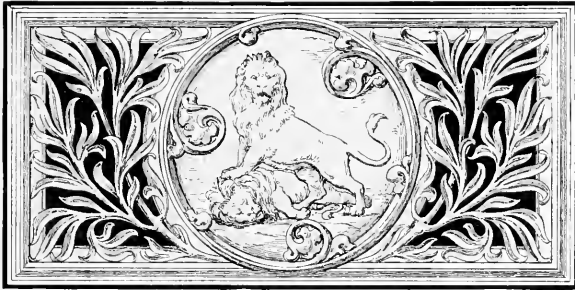


Of ancient deeds, so long forgot ;
Of feuds, whose memory was not ;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare ;
Of towers, which harbor now the hare ;
Of manners, long since changed and gone ;
Of chiefs, who under their gray stone
So long had slept that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled ;
In sooth, 't was strange this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

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

Smiled then, well pleased, the aged man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO THE FIFTH.



I.

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

II.

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

All mourn the minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III.

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

IV.

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
From the fair Middle Marches came ;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name !
Vails not to tell what steeds 'did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
Their men in battle-order set,
And Swinton laid the lance in rest
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
Nor list I say what hundreds more,

From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar
And Hepburn's mingled banners, come
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid,



And told them how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stont Deloraine ;
And how the Ladye prayed them dear
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.

Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary seneschal,
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubbed, more bold in fight,
Nor, when from war and armor free,
More famed for stately courtesy ;
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask
How these two hostile armies met,
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set ;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire. —
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,

By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand:
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasped,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasped,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day:
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

VII.

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers, now in friendship bare,

The social meal to part and share,
 Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
 In the old Border-day ;
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.



VIII.

The blithesome signs of wassail gay
Decayed not with the dying day ;
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone ;

Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang :
 And frequent, on the darkening plain,
 Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watchword of their clan ;
And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas' or Daere's conquering name.

IX.

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

X.

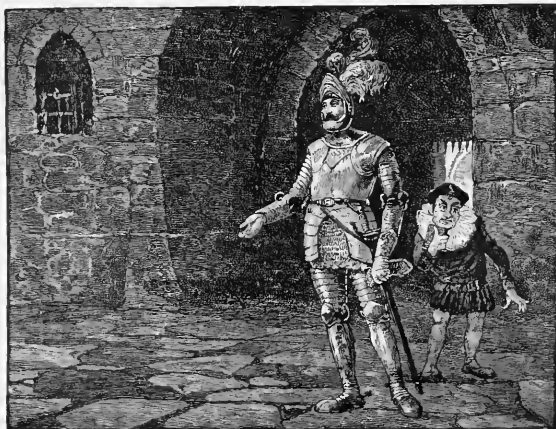
Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye ;

Nor marked she, as she left her seat,
 Full many a stifled sigh;
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
 And many a bold ally.—
With throbbing head and anxious heart.
All in her lonely bower apart,
 In broken sleep she lay:
By times, from silken couch she rose;
While yet the bannered hosts repose,
 She viewed the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI.

She gazed upon the inner court,
 Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
 Had rung the livelong yesterday:
Now still as death; till stalking slow,—
 The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior passed below;
 But when he raised his plumed head—
 Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
 With fearless step and free.

She dared not sign, she dared not speak —
O, if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.



XII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,

A knight from hermitage.
Unchallenged, thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he crossed,
 For all the vassalage ;
But O, what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes !
 She started from her seat ;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love —
 Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII.

Oft have I mused what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
 To bring this meeting round,
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
 In such no joy is found ;
And oft I've deemed, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
 Sorrow, and sin, and shame,
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle Ladye bright
 Disgrace and loss of fame.
But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given

To man alone beneath the heaven :
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly ;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die ;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind. —
Now leave we Margaret and her knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

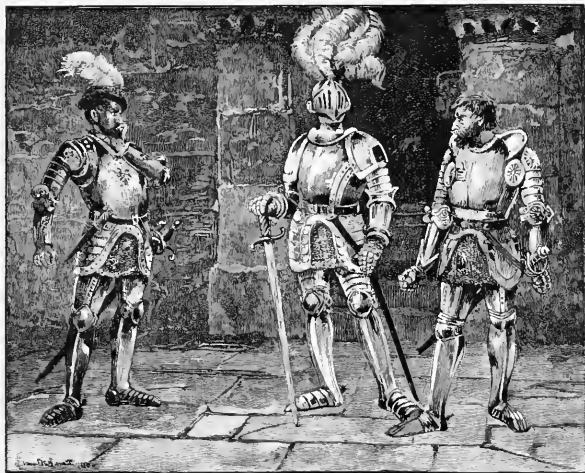
XIV.

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

XV.

Meantime full anxious was the Dame ;
For now arose disputed claim

Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestaine :
 They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent ;
 But yet not long the strife — for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,



Strong, as it seemed, and free from pain,
 In armor sheathed from top to toe,
Appeared, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI.

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

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
 Whose foot-cloth swept the ground ;
White was her wimple and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
 Of whitest roses bound ;

The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried ;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broidered rein.
He deemed she shuddered at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight ;
But cause of terror, all unguessed,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII.

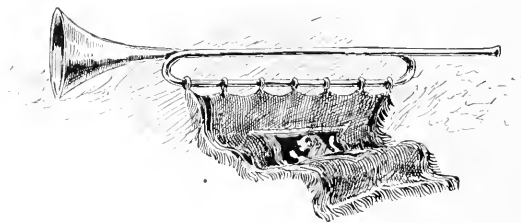
Prize of the field, the young Buceleuch
An English knight led forth to view ;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he longed to see the fight.
Within the lists in knightly pride
High Home and haughty Daere ride ;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field,
While to each knight their care assigned
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look or sign or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,

On peril of his life ;
And not a breath the silence broke
Till thus the alternate heralds spoke : —

XIX.

ENGLISH HERALD.

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



XX.

SCOTTISH HERALD.

“Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth that foul treason’s stain,

Since he bore arms, ne'er soiled his coat;
And that, so help him God above!
He will on Musgrave's body prove,
He lies most foully in his throat." —

LORD DACRE.

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

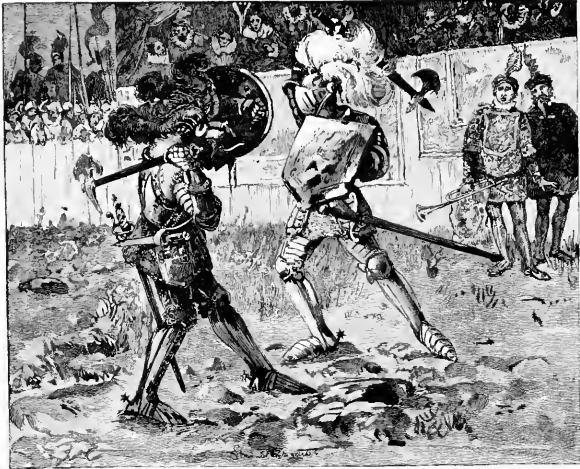
LORD HOME.

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

XXI.

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood poured down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight;

For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
 Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
 Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
 And scorned, amid the reeling strife,
 To yield a step for death or life.



XXII.

'Tis done, 't is done! that fatal blow
 Has stretched him on the bloody plain;
 He strives to rise—brave Musgrave, no!
 Thence never shalt thou rise again!
 He chokes in blood—some friendly hand

Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!—
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven.
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

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

For this fair prize I've fought and won," —
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

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

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then brok her silence stern and still, —
“Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd me:
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quell'd, and love is free.”
She took fair Margaret by the hand,



Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand :

That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she : —

“As I am true to thee and thine,

Do thou be true to me and mine!

This clasp of love our bond shall be,

For this is your betrothing day,

And all these noble lords shall stay,

To grace it with their company.” —

XXVII.

All as they left the listed plain,

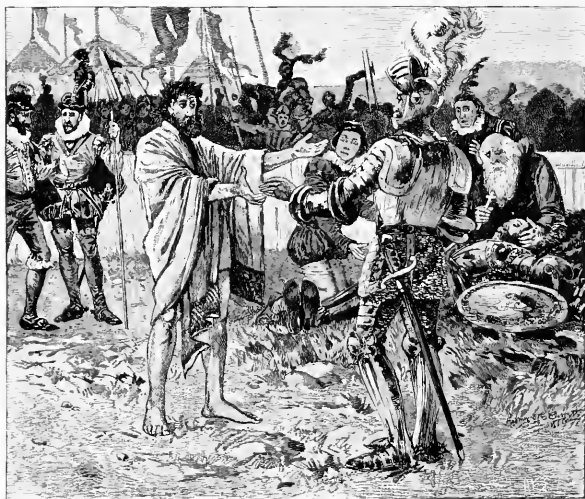
Much of the story she did gain ;

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

XXVIII.

William of Deloraine some chance
Had wakened from his deathlike trance ;

And taught that in the listed plain
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field unarmed he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartilie :



He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
 Though rude and scant of courtesy ;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe :
 And so 't was seen of him, e'en now,
 When on dead Musgrave he looked down ;
Grief darkened on his rugged brow,
 Though half disguised with a frown ;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made :

XXIX.

“Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here,
I ween, my deadly enemy ;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slew'st a sister's son to me ;
And when I lay in dungeon dark,
 Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransomed for a thousand mark,
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
 And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,

Till one, or both of us, did die :
Yet rest thee God ! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Shaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear !
'T was pleasure, as we looked behind,
To see how thou the chase couldst wind,
Cheer the dark bloodhound on his way,
And with the bogle rouse the fray !
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again." —



XXX.

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

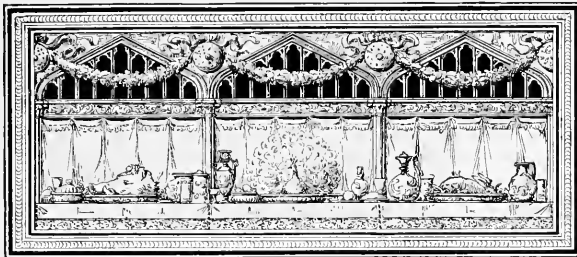


THE harp's wild notes, though hushed the song,
The mimic march of death prolong ;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear,
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep,
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale :
Last,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

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

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

CANTO THE SIXTH.



I.

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,

 This is my own, my native land?
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,

 From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,—
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

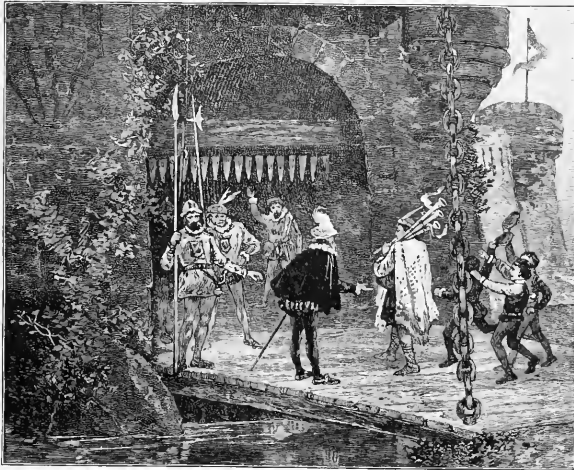
II.

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

III.

Not scorned like me, to Brauksome Hall
The minstrels came, at festive call;

Trooping they came from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war ;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan
They blew their death-note in the van,



But now, for every merry mate
Rose the porteullis' iron grate ;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV.

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

V.

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh,
Nor durst the rights of spousal grace,
So much she feared each holy place.
False slanders these :— I trust right well,
She wrought not by forbidden spell,
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour ;
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art.

But this for faithful truth I say,—
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroidered and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined ;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI.

The spousal rites were ended soon ;
'T was now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshaled the rank of every guest ;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share :
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave,
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within !
For, from the lofty balcony,



Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery :
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
Loudly they spoke and loudly laughed :
Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
The clamor joined with whistling scream,
And flapped their wings and shook their bells,

In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine ;
Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy ;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humor highly crossed,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote with his gauntlet stout Hunthill,
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-Sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose :
Stern Rutherford right, little said,
But bit his glove and shook his head. —
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drenched in blood,

His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 't was said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

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

IX.

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remembered him of Tinninn's yew,
And swore it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.



First, he the yeoman did molest
With bitter gibe and taunting jest :
Told how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife :
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm ;

From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dashed from his lips his can of beer ;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone :
The venom'd wound and festering joint
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
And board and flagons overturned.
Riot and clamor wild began ;
Back to the hall the urchin ran,
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinned, and muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X.

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

XI.

ALBERT GREME.

It was an English lady bright,
 (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
 For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
 When he shone fair on Carlisle wall ;
But they were sad ere day was done,
 Though Love was still the lord of all.

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

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

XII.

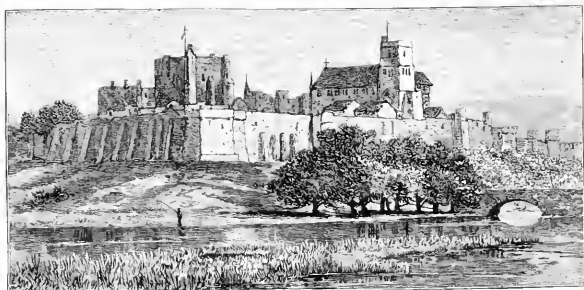
That wine she had not tasted well,
 (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)

When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all.

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

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

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



XIII.

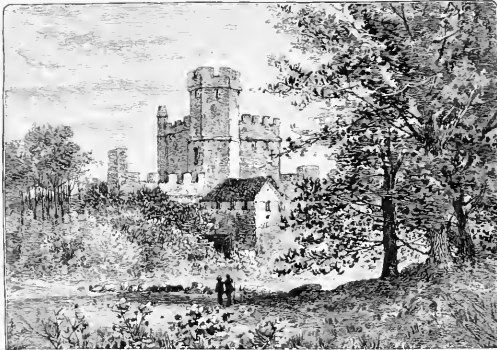
As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port,
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,
Renowned in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey loved his lyre —
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV.

They sought, together, climes afar,
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stayed,
And deemed that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV.

Fitztraver, O, what tongue may say
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp called wrath and vengeance down.



He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades and courtly bowers,
And faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favorite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

FITZTRAYER.

'T was All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised by his art
To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark if still she loved, and still she thought of him.

XVII.

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

XVIII.

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam:

And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX.

Fair all the pageant — but how passing fair
The slender form which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dear check, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,



And pensive read from tablet eburnine
Some strain that seemed her inmost soul to find :—
That favored strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form the Lady Geraldine.

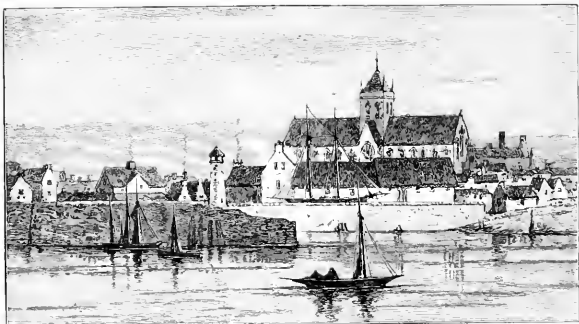
XX.

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

XXI.

Both Scots and Southern chiefs prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song ;
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith.—
Then from his seat with lofty air
Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair,—
St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades ;

Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay ;—
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall !—
Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave ;
And watched the whilst, with visage pale
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail ;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.



XXII.

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might Fancy cull ;
For thither came in times afar
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,

The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
Skilled to prepare the raven's food,
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave ;
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale,
And many a Runic column high
Had witnessed grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold in his youth
Learned many a Saga's rhyme uncouth, —
Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curled,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world ;
Of those dread Maids whose hideous yell
Maddens the battle's bloody swell ;
Of chiefs who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms !
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learned a milder minstrelsy ;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mixed with the softer numbers well.

XXIII.

HAROLD.

O, listen, listen, ladies gay!

No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

“Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!

And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

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

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

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

“’Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If ’t is not filled by Rosabelle.”

O’er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
’T was broader than the watch-fire light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.



It glared on Roslin’s castled rock,
It ruddied all the copsewood glen;
’T was seen from Dreyden’s groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie,
Each baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

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

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

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

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

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce marked the guests the darkened hall,

Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drained by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbor's face,
Could scarce his own stretched hand behold.
A secret horror checked the feast,
And chilled the soul of every guest;
Even the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elvish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, muttered, "Found! found! found!"

XXV.

Then sudden through the darkened air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seemed on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flashed the levin-brand,
And filled the hall with smouldering smoke.

As on the elvish page it broke.

It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,—

From sea to sea the larum rung ;

On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,

To arms the startled warders sprung.

When ended was the dreadful roar,

The elvish dwarf was seen no more !



XXVI.

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all :

That dreadful voice was heard by some
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
 Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
 And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimmed each lofty look.
But none of all the astonished train
Was so dismayed as Deloraine;
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'T was feared his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
At length, by fits, he darkly told,
With broken hint and shuddering cold —
 That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapped around,
With a wrought Spanish baldrie bound,
 Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
And knew — but how it mattered not —
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII.

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale;

No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke ;

And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to Saint Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.

Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
To some blessed saint his prayers addressed :
Some to Saint Modan made their vows,
Some to Saint Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to Our Lady of the Isle ;
Each did his patron witness make
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were prayed,
'Tis said the noble Dame, dismayed,
Renounced for aye dark magic's aid.

XXVIII.

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell ;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's heir :
After such dreadful scene 't were vain

To wake the note of mirth again :
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.



XXIX.

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go ;
The standers-by might hear unneath
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,

Through all the lengthened row:
No lordly look nor martial stride,
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
 Forgotten their renown ;
Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
To the high altar's hallowed side,
 And there they knelt them down.
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave ;
Beneath the lettered stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead ;
From many a garnished niche around
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frowned.

XXX.

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,
And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy fathers, two and two,
In long procession came ;
Taper and host and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourished fair
 With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred abbot stretched his hand,
 And blessed them as they kneeled ;
With holy cross he signed them all,



And prayed they might be sage in hall
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead ;
And bells tolled out their mighty peal
For the departed spirit's weal ;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose ;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burden of the song, —

DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA, —

While the pealing organ rung.

Were it meet with sacred strain

To close my lay, so light and vain,

Thus the holy Fathers sung: —

Hymn for the Dead.

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

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

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

HUSHED is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No: close beneath proud Newark's tower
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower,
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begged before.
So passed the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath,
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,

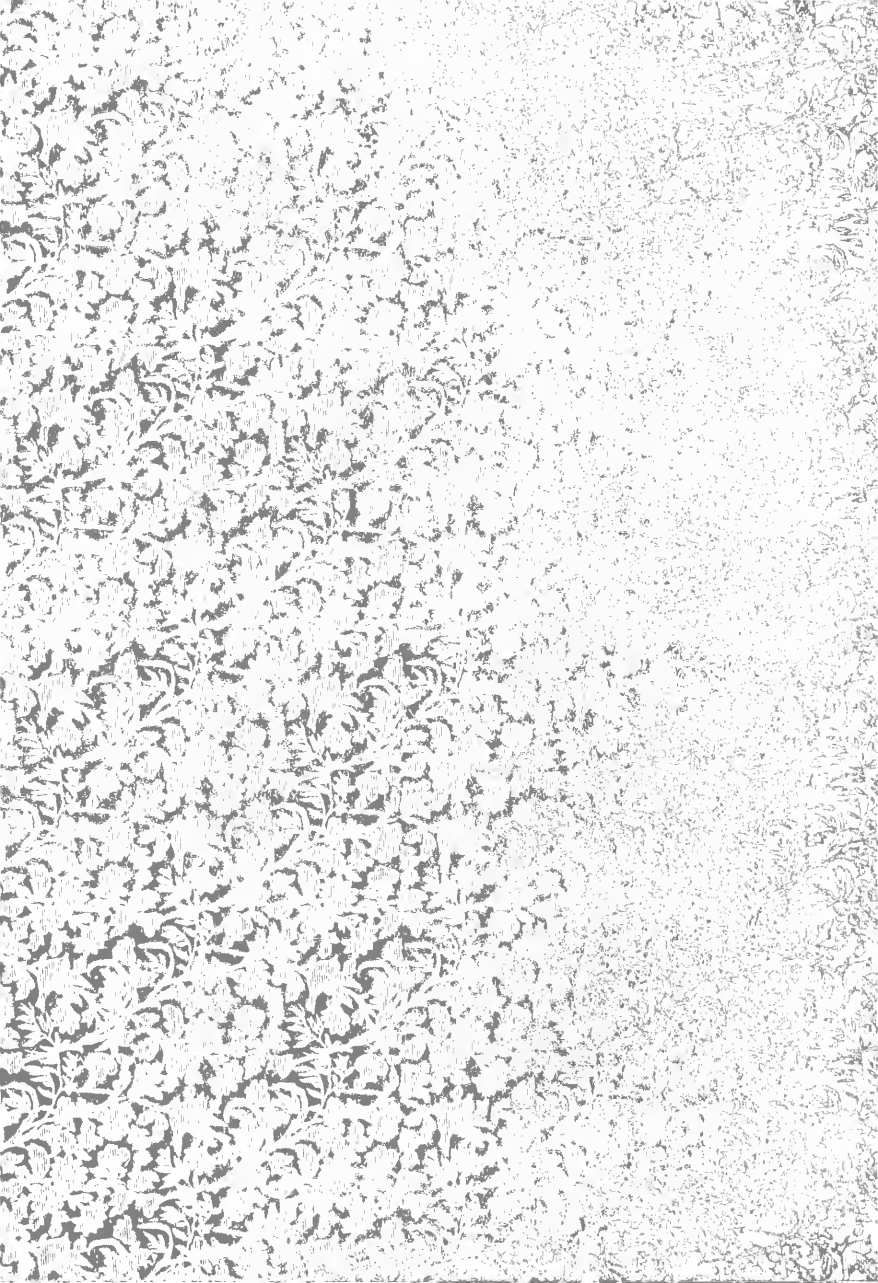
Forgetful of the closing day ;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer ;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.













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