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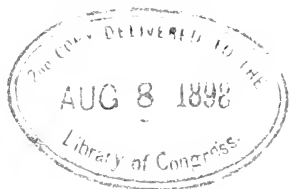
WITH EXPLANATORY NOTES

THE LAY OF  
 THE LAST MINSTREL

SCOTT

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SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE LAY  
OF  
THE LAST MINSTREL

BY  
SIR WALTER SCOTT

*WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES*



NEW YORK  
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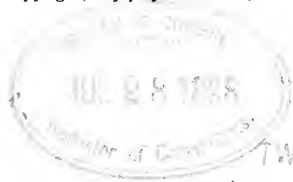
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## I

### SHORT LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

**W**ALTER SCOTT was born in Edinburgh on the 15th of August, 1771. He was the ninth of twelve children, of whom the first six died young. When Walter was only eighteen months old he suffered from a fever, which left him lame all his life. He was shortly afterward sent for change of air to his grandfather's house at Sandyknowe, where the shepherd would often take him out and lay him down under the rocks beside the sheep. Scott used to say in after-life, that "the habit of lying on the turf there among the sheep and the lambs had given his mind a peculiar tenderness for these animals, which it had ever since retained."

In childhood his hair was light chestnut, turning to brown in youth. His mouth was large and good-tempered, his eyes light blue, his eyebrows bushy. In spite of his lameness, he could climb rocks with the most daring, and he soon learned to ride. He was fond of declaiming poetry, but his progress at school was not steady: he protested against the study of Greek. Out of school he was known as a leader in two different accomplishments: he could tell his schoolfellows stories of wonderful adventures, which always held their attention; or he could lead them across the "kittle nine stanes" under the castle to attack the boys of the town.

After leaving the High School, Edinburgh, Scott was sent to

a school at Kelso, where he seems to have worked with more interest.

Scott's father was a lawyer. As soon therefore as Walter left school he attended the law classes at the University, where he was noted for his remarkable memory. In the second year of his apprenticeship an illness compelled him to keep his bed for many weeks, and he now began to study the great campaigns of history, as well as to learn Italian. On his recovery, he loved nothing better than scouring the country in search of old battlefields or sieges; so that his father in anger said he was better fitted for a peddler than a lawyer. It was on such expeditions that Scott learned to know the speech and ways of the peasantry, whom he describes so well in his books. Of course, when it became known among the lawyers that Walter Scott was always reading Border legends, or studying the fights of old; that he was tramping about the Highlands when he should have been in his chambers, and that he actually wrote verses, solicitors were not very anxious to employ his services. In fact, the most he ever made in one year was £230.

In 1797 he married Miss Charpentier, the daughter of a French royalist of Lyons, though his income was barely sufficient to keep himself. His first venture at publication was a verse translation of a German specter-ballad, which was no great success; but he had long been collecting the songs of the country-side in Liddesdale, and in 1802 he brought out the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, with notes, which showed great antiquarian learning. He also wrote ballads of his own, in imitation of the old. This was his first literary success.

He was living now in a cottage at Lasswade, on the Esk, six miles from Edinburgh. Scott had made the dining-table with his own hands, and was very proud of his various exploits in

carpentering. Here he used to sit up late, and work far into the morning hours; but this gave rise to serious headaches, which induced him to change his habits in this respect.

In 1804 Scott quitted Lasswade for Ashestiel, in Selkirkshire, where he lived in a pretty house belonging to his cousin. Here he began his life of sport. He would rise at five, and work steadily till breakfast; by noon he had finished his day's work, and was ready to ride forth with dog and gun or fishing-tackle. Salmon spearing by torchlight was a favorite amusement with him. His dogs and his horses he treated as personal friends. On the death of his deerhound Camp, he refused an invitation to dinner, giving as his reason "the death of an old friend."

In 1805 his poem the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* appeared, of which 44,000 copies were sold before 1830. For this work Scott received £769, a large sum in those days. But for *Marmion* he received 1000 guineas in 1808.

In 1812 Scott obtained the Clerkship of Session, and thought he might indulge himself in his passion for land. He bought a mountain farm five miles lower down the Tweed, at Abbotsford, whither he transferred his family. He says, "We had twenty-five cartloads of the veriest trash in nature, besides dogs, pigs, ponies, poultry, cows, calves, bare-headed wenches, and bare-breeched boys." For this farm Scott gave £4000; but half of this sum he borrowed from his brother, and half he raised on the security of a poem not yet written. The ruins of Melrose Abbey could be seen from the grounds, which had, in fact, once belonged to the abbot. Abbotsford was one of the causes which helped to ruin Scott. He was not content with his mountain farm; before long he had spent £29,000 in the purchase of land alone. Another cause was his partnership with the Ballantynes. James Ballantyne had been Scott's

friend at school, and this prompted Scott first to help and then to join the Ballantynes in their publishing business at Edinburgh. In 1813 there were signs of something being wrong in the publishing house; all through that year and the next Scott feared their bankruptcy.

But in 1814 he finished a Jacobite story—*Waverley*, which had so enormous a sale that the crash was for a while averted. In the next fourteen years Scott wrote twenty-three novels, besides shorter tales. It is computed that in his lifetime he must have earned £140,000 by his literary work. But all this was too little.

In 1820 George IV. made Walter Scott a baronet, and from this time Sir Walter launched out into greater extravagances. He began to rebuild Abbotsford on a large scale, and his sons became a great expense to him. He was forced to borrow on the security of four unnamed and unwritten works of fiction.

On January, 1826, the crash came, and it involved him in a debt of £117,000. About this time too his wife died, and he himself felt the first touch of the paralysis which afterward killed him. These were blows enough to daunt most men; perhaps the blow to his pride was the heaviest. He says in his diary: “I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament House—felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cæteris*; and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent.”

No; Scott came of a line of fighting ancestors, and he was not one to sit down tamely under difficulties. This misfortune was the touchstone of his character, and brought out all its beauty and generosity. He might have declared himself bankrupt, and have risen again with debts partly paid off; but “for this,” he says, “in a court of honor I should deserve to

lose my spurs. No ; if they permit me I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself."

He did not wait long before he began work. Two days after the failure he calmly went on with the writing of *Woodstock*. "I have been rash in anticipating funds to buy land; but then I made from £5000 to £10,000 a year, and land was my temptation. I think nobody can lose a penny by me, that is one comfort. My children are provided for : thank God for that ! I was to have gone home on Saturday to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish, but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things ! I must get them kind masters." Again he writes in a more cheerful strain : "I experience a sort of determined pleasure in confronting the very worst aspect of this sudden reverse ; in standing, as it were, in the breach that has overthrown my future, and saying, 'Here I stand, at least an honest man.'"

In the next six years he had placed £120,000, the proceeds of his writings, at the disposal of his creditors ; but the strain on his mind had been too great. In 1831 Sir Walter went abroad, in the hope that change of scene might restore elasticity to his jaded brain. But he was brought home almost in a dying state, and passed away in the autumn of 1832 at his own loved Abbotsford, one month after completing his sixtieth year. About seven years before he had written in his diary : "Square the odds and good-night, Sir Walter, about sixty. I care not, if I leave my name unstained and my family property settled. *Sat est vixisse.*"

It is interesting to note in the lives of literary men how true

is the old saying, *Poeta nascitur, non fit*. We can trace the genesis of many of the qualities which made Scott what he was. In the first place, Sir Walter was no idle dreamer, trusting to the inspiration of the moment. He had the patience and laboriousness of an antiquary. He wrote with a rampart of heavy books of reference lying around him on the floor of his study. We cannot be far wrong in believing that he owed his accurate and painstaking spirit of research to his father, the plodding methodical Writer to the Signet. Again, Scott's mother was a well-educated woman, and had the talent of vivid description. Of her Scott says: "She had a mind peculiarly well stored with much-acquired information and natural talent; and as she was very old, and had an excellent memory, she could draw, without the least exaggeration or affectation, the most striking pictures of the past age. If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me."

It is observed that mental qualities pass most frequently from mother to son, and from father to daughter. Sir Walter Scott seems to have inherited the talent of both his parents. But we can also trace in his grandfather the same speculative, happy-go-lucky spirit which ruined Scott. For Robert Scott is said to have once borrowed £30 from a shepherd, in order to purchase some sheep. Accompanied by the shepherd he went into Northumberland to look at a flock; but when the shepherd returned to the inn to recommend the sheep, he found that his master had already invested the £30 in a hunter, which he was then galloping to and fro. Hence it was that Sir Walter in the days of his fallen fortunes used to say: "Blood will out. My building and planting was but his buying the hunter before he had stocked his sheep-walk over again."

*Poeta nascitur*; that is to say, he inherits from parents and ancestors the qualities which they have developed. If they have not left him the gifts of insight and observation, of sentiment and happy expression, in vain will he attempt to produce the manufactured article—*non fit*. But something, and a good deal, must be attributed to the personal energy of the heir of genius. Mental power, like a keen rapier, may be kept bright and serviceable, or may be allowed to rust from disuse. Scott's long struggle against fate; his employment of that capacity for taking trouble which some say constitutes genius, reads a salutary lesson to those who think that "clever people need not work." Rather is it true that clever people cannot help working.

## II. CHRONOLOGY

Wordsworth born, 1770.

Scott born, 1771.

Coleridge born, 1772.

Scott entered Edinburgh Grammar School, 1778.

Entered the College, 1783.

Apprenticed to his father, 1786.

Studied law in Edinburgh University, 1790.

Became an advocate, 1792.

Married, 1797.

Appointed Sheriff of Selkirk, 1799.

*Border Minstrelsy*, appeared, 1802.

Went to Ashiestiel to live, 1804.

*Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805.

Battle of Trafalgar, 1805.

*Lady of the Lake*, 1810.

Removed to Abbotsford, 1812.

*Waverley*, 1814.

Battle of Waterloo, 1815.

Made Baronet, 1818.

Failed, 1826.

Died, 1832.

## III. SCOTT'S LITERARY POSITION

Scott would not now, judged by the standards of modern taste, be regarded as one of the greatest poets. He lacked subjective insight, and did not see in nature what his contemporary, Wordsworth, saw and taught others to see, nor did he attain to any great perfection of technique. He was, however, one of the greatest masters of sustained verse narrative; and had unsurpassed skill in description. He was a strong, simple, healthy-minded gentleman, with deep feelings, but a hatred of showing them, with a love for things old and strange, a delight in the pomp and circumstance of chivalry, in weird legends and the picturesqueness of romance, and a power of expressing and communicating his enthusiasm in vigorous and stirring verse. Regarding Scott both as poet and as writer of fiction, he must be reckoned beyond question the greatest this century has produced. Hardly any literary reputation ever rose so high; hardly any reputation at all ever spread so wide. Carlyle writes, "No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott: the good and the not so good which all Scotchmen inherit ran through every fiber of him."

His best poems are his songs and lyrics, but his fame rests most securely on his novels—and on his bravery in the face of adversity and the heroic efforts he made to leave an unstained name.

## IV. THE COMPOSITION OF "THE LAY"

When, in the years 1800-1802, Scott was engaged in collecting the Border ballads which he published in the latter year under the title of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, the Countess of Dalkeith, the wife of the Duke of Buccleuch's heir, proposed to him that he



should write a poem, to be included in the *Minstrelsy*, on the legend of Gilpin Horner, a traditionary goblin, whose story she had heard from one of her husband's tenants. Scott thereupon wrote a few stanzas, intending to work up a short romance for the third volume of his *Minstrelsy*. These stanzas he showed to two friends in whose critical ability he had confidence. Scott inferred from the guardedness of their comments that they held no high opinion of the merit of his work, and accordingly threw the manuscript in the fire, and determined to abandon the project. He subsequently learned that their silence was due, not to disapproval, but to their unwillingness to pass judgment on a poem whose style and subject were so novel. Upon the expression of their desire to see more of the poem, Scott took up the work again, and it grew under his hands until it was too long for its intended setting in the *Border Minstrelsy*. That Scott himself was conscious of the confusion and inconsistency into which the enlargement of his original plan led him is evidenced by the following extract from a letter to his friend Miss Seward:

“At length the story appeared so uncouth that I was fain to put it into the mouth of an old minstrel, lest the nature of it should be misunderstood, and I should be suspected of setting up a new school of poetry instead of a feeble attempt to imitate the old. In the process of the romance, the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities, I suppose) to slink downstairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there.”

The poem was published in 1805, as has been said, when Scott was thirty-three years old. It was inscribed “To the Right Honourable Charles, Earl of Dalkeith,” and bore the motto:

“Dum relego, scripsisse putet, quia plurima cerno,  
Me quoque, qui feci, judice, digna lini.”

(“As I read my lines again, I am ashamed that ever

I wrote them; for many things I see which, even in the judgment of me who made them, are worthy only to be blotted out."—*Ovid, Epist. ex Ponto, I. v. 16*.)

Its success was immediate, and, within twenty-five years, 44,000 copies had been sold. Scott's profit on the poem was £769 8s.

## V. THE METER OF "THE LAY"

*The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is written in the romantic rhyming measure of English poetry called iambic tetrameter. The normal verse is of four feet, each consisting of an unaccented, followed by an accented syllable. The rhythm of *The Lay* was inspired principally by Coleridge's *Christabel*, which was recited to Scott by a mutual friend. *Christabel* is written in a meter which, Coleridge says in his preface, "is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle, namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless, this occasional variation in the number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion."

Scott adopted a modification of this principle. In speaking of the irregular stanza, he said that "the liberty which it allowed the author to adapt the sound to the sense, seemed to be exactly suited to such an extravaganza as I meditated on the subject of Gilpin Horner."

It will be noticed that the introduction and the interludes between the Cantos are in rhymed couplets, while the *Lay* proper consists of couplets variously combined with trimeters and quatrains.

## VI. THE FORM OF "THE LAY"

In Scott's original conception of the poem it was to have been a modernization of the ancient ballad, with Gilpin Horner, the legendary goblin, as its central figure. One of the friends, however, to whom Scott brought the first stanzas for criticism thought "that some sort of prologue might be necessary to place the mind of the hearers in the situation to understand and enjoy the poem." Scott says: "I entirely agree with my friendly critic in the necessity of having some sort of pitch-pipe, which might make readers aware of the object, or rather the tone, of the publication. . . I therefore introduced the old minstrel as an appropriate prolocutor by whom the lay might be sung or spoken, and the introduction of whom betwixt the Cantos might remind the reader at intervals of the time, place, and circumstances of the recitation. This species of *cadre*, or frame, afterward afforded the poem its name."

The events narrated are supposed to occupy three nights and three days.

## VII. CRITICAL OPINIONS

*The Lay* owed much of its success to its simplicity. There is no subtle mental analysis; the characters are easily understood. The figure of the Minstrel,—old, poor, saddened by memories of the brighter past, beset by conflicting impulses as he came in sight of Brankesome,—seized the attention of the reader, who felt at once a sympathy with the pathetic figure, and an interest in the tale he wished to tell. His picture was so naturally and so vividly drawn. The lines in which is depicted his embarrassment when he tries to recall the old half-forgotten strain delighted Pitt, who said: "This is a sort of thing which I might have expected

in painting, but could never have fancied capable of being given in poetry." This simplicity and naturalness is maintained throughout the poem, joined with a vividness of imagination, a descriptive power, a briskness of narrative, and a genuine love of nature, which enable the reader to see the scenes as Scott saw them, and with the same enjoyment. We have a wonderful picture of Melrose Abbey; we see the rough Borderer, and dash along with him on his midnight ride; we hear the bugle-note and the clash of arms; we are carried right into the midst of scenes of mediæval romance. But we also feel the freshness and brightness of the still morning as we watch fair Margaret stealing through the wood to meet her lover, and we see the young lord, face to face with the baying bloodhound, his cheeks wet with tears, but his courage undismayed, raising his little bat on high, as one day he will raise a more formidable weapon. Nothing is more admirable than the way in which these varying and contrasted scenes are set before us by means of varying rhythm and diction.

The defects of *The Lay*, as a work of art are manifest. The style is in many places rough and unpolished. Scott wrote at a great pace, and though his language always flows easily on, the words are not always well chosen from an artistic point of view. Scott had little natural ear for music, and was not fastidious as to the harmony of his verse. The uncouth names here and there introduced would be a great blemish on the work if it were not that Scott himself made no great pretensions. "I am sensible," he said, "that if there be anything good about my poetry . . . it is a hurried frankness of composition which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active disposition." This "hurried frankness" is no doubt responsible for other defects in versification. Unlike Coleridge, Scott perhaps considered "the mere ends of convenience." Hence the occurrence of faulty rhymes, of

the same words over and over again at the end of the lines, of instances of inconsistency in the sequence of tenses. Scott said himself, in explaining the rapidity with which the poem was completed, "There was little occasion for pause or hesitation, when a troublesome rhyme might be accommodated by an alteration of the stanza, or where an incorrect measure might be remedied by a variation of the rhyme."

Probably no author of the highest mark has been so little conscious of his greatness as Scott. His amazing success left the manly simplicity of his nature untouched. His warmth of affection for homely folk, his pleasures and his duties, his gentleness and his courtesy,—he was a gentleman, it was said, even to his dogs,—were unaffected by the popularity that made his name everywhere familiar. Whatever was lovely and of good report was loved by him, and the stamp of a healthy nature is left upon all that he has written.—*John Dennis*.

Far-seeing toleration, profound reverence, a critical insight into the various shades of thought and feeling, a moderation which turns to scorn the falsehood of extremes, a lofty sense of Christian honor, purity, and justice, breathe through every volume of the romances of Walter Scott.—*Dean Stanley*.

Looking at *The Lay* critically and calmly, from our present point of view, we can hardly concur with the extremely high verdicts which the men of that time passed on it. It is certainly not a great poem, and as certainly it is not, in the main, a piece of consummate wit. But it has many very beautiful passages and spirit-stirring scenes, and these are set in a framework of the most exquisite construction, superior, perhaps, to anything of the kind in the compass of poetry—that even of the *Queen's Wake*, which has been so much admired, not excepted. The whole has a gayety and a gracefulness of movement, blended with a supernatural

awe and weird grandeur about it which may be best imaged in its own lines:

“He knew by the streamers that shot so bright,  
*That spirits were riding the northern light.*”

The poem has more of lyrical fire, and unmitigated, elastic energy, than any of those which succeeded it.—*Gilfillan's Life of Scott.*

His poems are historical narrations, true in all things to the spirit of history, but everywhere over-spread with those bright and breathing colors which only genius can bestow on reality; and when it is remembered that the times in which the scenes are laid and his heroes act were distinguished by many of the most energetic virtues that can grace or dignify the character of a free people, and marked by the operation of great passions and important events, everyone must feel that the poetry of Walter Scott is, in the noblest sense of the word, national; that it breathes upon us the bold and heroic spirit of perturbed but magnificent ages, and connects us, in the midst of philosophy, science, and refinement, with our turbulent but high-minded ancestors, of whom we have no cause to be ashamed, whether looked at in the fields of war or in the halls of peace. He is a true knight in all things—free, courteous, and brave. War, as he describes it, is a noble game, a kingly pastime. He is the greatest of all war-poets. His poetry might make a very coward fearless.—*William Cullen Bryant.*

The grace and pathos of Scott's Introduction to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* at once predispose every reader in his favor, even now. To his contemporaries, in addition to this, it bore the stamp of genuine original power. As far as we are concerned, the very currency of the coin, and the many spurious imitations struck from it, have somewhat dimmed its splendor, and impaired its character in that respect; still, though

Scott, like his own aged harper, may have known a better day, that venerable and picturesque figure can never cease to interest us.—*Sir Francis Doyle.*

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## THE LAY \* OF THE LAST MINSTREL

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### INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold,  
The Minstrel was infirm and old;  
His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,  
Seem'd to have known a better day;  
The harp, his sole remaining joy, 5  
Was carried by an orphan boy.  
The last of all the bards was he,  
Who sung of Border chivalry;

---

In annotating *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott's own words have been used whenever practicable, not only because they furnish the most authoritative commentary on the poem, but because they show the marvelous capacity of his memory and how large an element it was in his imagination. The editor is especially indebted to the admirable notes and introduction of the London edition of *The Lay*, published by Blackie & Son. The summaries at the heads of the Cantos are from Lord Jeffrey's well-known article in the *Edinburgh Review*. The purpose of the present notes is twofold: to give the student a full understanding of the author's meaning, and to arouse or increase his appreciation of *The Lay* as English poetry.

\* **Lay**, from the French "lai," a narrative poem, with or without music.

2. **Minstrel** or Bard, old French name for poet; given especially to the poets of Wales and Ireland.

8. **Border**, the English and Scotch border.

For, well-a-day! their date was fled,  
 His tuneful brethren all were dead; 10  
 And he, neglected and oppress'd,  
 Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.  
 No more, on prancing palfrey borne,  
 He carol'd light as lark at morn;  
 No longer courted and caress'd, 15  
 High placed in hall, a welcome guest,  
 He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,  
 The unpremeditated lay:  
 Old times were changed, old manners gone;  
 A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne; 20  
 The bigots of the iron time  
 Had call'd his harmless art a crime.  
 A wandering harper, scorn'd and poor,  
 He begg'd his bread from door to door;  
 And tuned, to please a peasant's ear 25  
 The harp a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower  
 Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:

13-18. Notice the alliteration.

13. **palfrey**, a saddle-horse, as distinguished from a war-horse. The word is generally applied to a lady's horse.

16. **high placed in hall**, the nobleman's table was raised above the servants' table. The place at table depended on the guest's social rank.

17. **pour'd**, expressive of the ease and freedom of the Minstrel's song.

18. **unpremeditated**, composed at the time; extempore.

20. **A stranger**, William III., Stadtholder of Holland, became king of England in 1689: this fixes the date of the supposed last minstrel.

21. **bigots of the iron time**, Puritans of the time of the Commonwealth.

27. **Newark**, in Selkirkshire, on the Yarrow. The castle was built by James II. of Scotland. It came into the possession of the Buccleuch family. The Duchess of Monmouth (see l. 27) was brought up there.

The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—  
 No humbler resting-place was nigh. 30  
 With hesitating step, at last,  
 The embattled portal arch he pass'd,  
 Whose ponderous grate and massy bar  
 Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,  
 But never closed the iron door 35  
 Against the desolate and poor.  
 The Duchess mark'd his weary pace,  
 His timid mien, and reverend face,  
 And bade her page the menials tell,  
 That they should tend the old man well: 40  
 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, 45  
 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! 50  
 A braver ne'er to battle rode;  
 And how full many a tale he knew,  
 Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:  
 And, would the noble Duchess deign  
 To listen to an old man's strain, 55

37. **Duchess**, Anne, Countess of Buccleuch (1651-1732), widow of James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded for treason by order of James II., his uncle, in July, 1685, after the defeat of his rebellion at the battle of Sedgemoor.

44 **Monmouth's bloody tomb**. See note above.

49-50. **Earl Francis** was the father, **Earl Walter**, the grandfather of the Duchess. Both were the Earls of Buccleuch.

Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,  
 He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,  
 That, if she loved the harp to hear,  
 He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd; 60  
 The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.  
 But, when he reach'd the room of state,  
 Where she, with all her ladies, sate,  
 Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:  
 For, when to tune his harp he tried, 65  
 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! 70  
 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 75  
 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;

57. Sooth, truth. *Cf.* "in sooth," etc.

60. boon, favor asked for.

69. came wildering, came in confusion.

73. according glee, joyful notes sounding in harmony; or, perhaps, "agreeing with" or responding to the minstrel's rising gayety of heart.

78. churl, from old English *Ceorl*. The word has successively meant "one of the lowest rank of freeman," "a man not of gentle birth," "a peasant," and is used to-day in the sense of a surly, boorish man.

He had played it to King Charles the Good,	80
When he kept court in Holyrood;	
And much he wished, yet feared, to try	
The long-forgotten melody.	
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,	
And an uncertain warbling made,	85
And oft he shook his hoary head.	
But when he caught the measure wild,	
The old man raised his face and smiled;	
And lighten'd up his faded eye,	
With all a poet's ecstasy!	90
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,	95
In the full tide of song were lost;	
Each blank, in faithless memory void,	
The poet's glowing thought supplied;	
And, while his harp responsive rung,	
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.	100

80-81. Charles I. visited Scotland for the first time in June, 1633, with a large and brilliant train, among whom was Laud, then Bishop of London. He lived in the royal palace of Holyrood, at the Eastern border of Edinburgh, in the Abbey Church of which the ceremony of coronation was performed.

87. **Measure**, rhythm, "swing" of the music : or, perhaps, here the music itself.

89. **lightened**. The subject is *eye*.

91. **cadence**, properly the fall or modulation of tone in speaking or singing, but here the word has the sense of "rhythmical movement."

92. **Swept** expresses rapid, free movement. *Cf.* Lycidas, 17 :—  
"Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string."

99-100. **rung, sung**. The correct past tenses are "rang" and "sang."



## CANTO FIRST

The poem opens with a description of the warlike establishment of Branksome Hall, and the first incident that occurs is a dialogue between the Spirits of the adjoining mountain and river, who, after consulting the stars, declare that no good fortune can ever bless the mansion "till pride be quelled and love be free." The lady, whose forbidden studies had taught her to understand the language of such speakers, overhears their conversation, and vows, if possible, to retain her purpose in spite of it. She calls a gallant knight of her train, therefore, and directs him to ride immediately to the Abbey of Melrose, and there to ask from the Monk of St. Mary's Aisle the mighty book that was hid in the tomb of the Wizard, Michael Scott. The remainder of the First Canto is occupied with the night journey of the warrior.

### I

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,  
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;  
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,  
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—

---

1. **Branksome tower.** In the reign of James I. of Scotland the head of the Buccleuch clan came into possession of Branksome, and made it the principal seat of his family. In 1570-71 it was destroyed by the English; the work of repair was begun in the same year by a Sir Walter Scott; and finished by his widow in 1574. Branksome is in the valley of the Teviot.

2. **Ladye,** see note to l. 113 below

**bower,** an old English word meaning bedroom.

3. **by word and by spell.** Cf. Spenser's *Shepherd's Calender*, *Glosse for March*: "Spell is a kind of verse or charme, that in

Jesu Maria, shield us well! 5  
 No living wight, save the Ladye alone,  
 Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

## II

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;  
 Knight, and page, and household squire,  
 Loiter'd through the lofty hall, 10  
 Or crowded round the ample fire:  
 The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,  
 Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,  
 And urged, in dreams, the forest race,  
 From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor. 15

## 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 20  
 Waited, duteous, on them all:

---

elder tymes they used often to say over every thing that they would have preserved, as the night spel for theeves, and the wood spell. And herehence I thinke, is named the gospel, as it were God's spell or worde."

5. Cf. Coleridge's, *Christabel*, Part I. l. 54: "Jesu, Maria, shield her well."

6. wight, person.

7. Had dared, would have dared.

15. Teviot-stone, a river of Roxburghshire, flowing N. E. to the Tweed.

Eskdale-moor, mountainous district in the N. W. of the Esk Valley.

18. of name, well born.

19. to bower from stall, to the door of the private apartments.

They were all knights of mettle true,  
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

## IV

Ten of them were sheath'd in steel,  
With belted sword, and spur on heel:                   25  
They quitted not their harness bright,  
Neither by day, nor yet by night:  
    They lay down to rest,  
    With corslet laced,  
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;                   30  
    They carved at the meal  
    With gloves of steel,  
And they drank the red wine through the helmet  
    barr'd.

## V

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,  
Waited the beck of the warders ten;                   35  
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,  
Stood saddled in stable day and night,  
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,  
And with Jedwood-ax at saddlebow;

---

26. *harness*, armor. *Cf.* 1 Kings xxii. 34. "A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness."

30. *buckler*, a small round shield.

24-33. These lines indicate the state of watchfulness and readiness in which the knights constantly were. Sudden attacks were common on the border.

36. *wight*, strong. Another word than "wight" in l. 10.

38. *frontlet*, head-covering.

38. *Jedwood-ax*, an ax mounted on a long staff. "The Jedwood ax was . . . used by horsemen, as appears from the arms of Jedburgh. . . It is also called a Jedwood or Jeddard staff."—*Scott*.



A hundred more fed free in stall:— 40  
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-hound baying:  
They watch to hear the war-horn braying; 45  
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, 50  
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, 55  
Beside his broken spear.  
Bards long shall tell  
How Lord Walter fell!

---

42. dight, ready; saddled and armored.

46. **St. George's red cross**, the English banner. St. George is the patron saint of England.

49. **Scroop, Howard, and Percy** were lords on the English side; at different times Wardens of the Marches.

51. **Warkworth**, the seat of the Percys in Northumberland.

**Naworth**, near Carlisle.

**Carlisle**, a famous border city.

57-58. "Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch succeeded to his grandfather, Sir David, in 1492. He was a brave and powerful baron, and warden of the West Marches of Scotland. His death was the consequence of a feud betwixt the Scotts and the Carrs."—*Scott*.

When startled burghers fled, afar,  
 The furies of the Border war; 60  
 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, 65  
 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; 70  
 Implored, in vain, the grace divine  
 For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:  
 While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,  
 While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,  
 The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar, 75  
 The havoc of the feudal war,  
 Shall never, never be forgot!

---

59. burghers, men of a burgh or borough ; citizens.

61. Dunedin=Edinburgh, Edwin's Town. Dun=a hill fort, *Dunedin*, therefore, =Edwin's Fort, named after a Northumbrian prince.

62. falchion, straight blades curved at the point.

63. slogan, the war-cry of a clan.

69-72. With view to ending the feud between the Scotts and the Carrs, an agreement was made in 1529 between the heads of the clans, binding themselves to go on pilgrimage to the four principal shrines of Scotland, "for the benefit of the souls of those of the opposite name who had fallen in the quarrel. . . But either it never took effect, or else the feud was renewed shortly afterwards."—*Scott*.

73. Cessford, the seat of the Carrs, in Roxburghshire.

74. Ettrick, in Selkirkshire, where the Buccleuchs had one of their earliest estates.

## IX

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier  
 The warlike foresters had bent;  
 And many a flower, and many a tear, 80  
 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 lock'd the source of softer woe; 85  
 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, 90  
 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, 95  
 Hung Margaret o'er her slaughtered sire,  
 And wept in wild despair,  
 But not alone the bitter tear  
 Had filial grief supplied;

---

81. Teviot, see note on line 1, above.

87-93. Cf. Tennyson's song preceding Canto VI. of *The Princess*—

"Home they brought her warrior dead;  
 She nor swoon'd nor uttered cry;  
 All her maidens, watching, said,  
 'She must weep or she will die.'

"Rose a nurse of ninety years,  
 Set his child upon her knee;  
 Like summer tempest came her tears—  
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'"

For hopeless love, and anxious fear, 100  
 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, 105  
 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. 110

## 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. 115  
 Men said, he changed his mortal frame  
 By feat of magic mystery;

106. *Mathouse-burn*. Burn, a brook (Old English, *burna*).

*Melrose*, in the north of Roxburghshire, near the Tweed. The battle of Melrose, here probably alluded to, was in 1526.

109-110. "The Cranstouns are an ancient border family whose chief seat was at Crailing, in Teviotdale. They were at this time in feud with the clan of Scott."—*Scott*.

112. clerk, scholar.

113. Lady Buccleuch was Dame Janet Beaton, of the same family as the famous Cardinal Beaton. The Scotch branch of the family was settled in Fifeshire, but was of French origin, appearing as the Bethunes in Picardy; deriving their name from a small town in Artois.

114. *the art that none may name*, magic.

115. *in Padua*. "Padua was long supposed, by the Scottish peasants, to be the principal school of necromancy."—*Scott*.

For when, in studious mood, he paced  
 St. Andrew's cloistered hall,  
 His form no darkening shadow traced 120  
 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. 125  
 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, 130  
 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, 136  
 The ban-dogs bay and howl;

---

125. *viewless forms of air*, invisible spirits supposed to hover in the air, whence they did good or ill to men.

127. *Lord David*. "Branksome Castle was enlarged and strengthened by Sir David Scott, the grandson of Sir William, its first possessor."—*Scott*.

131. *scaur*, a steep rocky bank.

137-139. The howling of dogs and the screeching of owls were held to portend death or disaster.

137. *ban-dogs*, mastiffs. Originally "band-dogs," because they were chained up.

And from the turrets round,  
 Loud whoops the startled owl.  
 In the hall, both squire and knight 140  
 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, 145  
 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, 150  
 And he call'd 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, 155

---

150-151. Simple people personify the forces of nature. In Scotland, as late as Scott's day, the belief in spirits, fairies, and elves was rife. Poets have made large use of the superstition.

151. **Fell**, hill.

154. **pen**, a hill-summit. **Craik-cross** and **Skelf-hill Pen** are hills on opposite sides of the Teviot.

Merry elves their morris pacing,  
 To aërial 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.                    165  
 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,            170  
 In utter darkness round the pole;

156. *morris*. The morris-dance was performed by persons in fantastic costumes, having bells attached to their hoods and other parts of their dress.

159. *trip it*. Cf. L’Allegro, 33:—“ Come, and trip it as ye go.”

163. *polluted*, *i.e.*, by the blood shed in “ feudal hate.”

170. *Arthur’s slow wain*. The constellation Ursa Major, commonly called “ Charles’s wain ” or “ wagon.”

*Arthur* is a popular corruption of “ Arcturus,” the Latin name.

The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;  
 Orion's studded belt is dim;  
 Twinkling faint, and distant far,  
 Shimmers through mist each planet star;      175  
     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 ceast,      180  
     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;      185  
 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,      190  
 And your streams ascend,  
     Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

## XIX

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,  
 Where many a bold retainer lay,

---

172-173. Northern bear, Orion; names of constellations.  
 studded belt, Orion is figured as a man with a sword at his side, the belt of which is formed by three stars.

176. may, can.

their high decree. In the Middle Ages the stars were believed not only to appear as signs of future events, but even to influence them.



And, with jocund din, among them all, 195  
 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. 200  
 Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,  
 Share in his frolic gambols bore,  
 Albeit their hearts of rugged mold,  
 Were stubborn as the steel they wore.  
 For the gray warriors prophesied, 205  
 How the brave boy, in future war,  
 Should tame the Unicorn's pride,  
 Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

## XX

The Lady forgot her purpose high,  
 One moment, and no more; 210  
 One moment gazed with a mother's eye,  
 As she paused at the arched door:  
 Then from amid the armed train,  
 She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

---

197. *fancied*, he was "playing soldier."

*moss-trooper*. "This was the usual appellation of the marauders upon the Borders; a profession diligently pursued by the inhabitants on both sides."—*Scott*.

198. *truncheon*, the wooden shaft.

200. *foray*, expeditions in quest of plunder.

202. *frolic*, gay. Usually a noun, but the adjectival use is the earlier.

207-208. *Unicorn's pride*, *Crescent and the Star*. A reference to the coats of arms of the Carrs and Buccleuchs respectively. "Unicorn" must be pronounced with a strongly trilled "r" to make the two syllables required by the meter. *Cf.* IV. 258, where "Rangleburn" must be similarly pronounced.

214. *William of Deloraine*. William Scott, commonly called

## XXI

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,                    215  
 As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;  
 Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,  
 Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;  
 By wily turns, by desperate bounds,  
 Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;                    220  
 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,                                225  
 Moonless midnight, or matin prime:  
 Steady of heart and stout of hand,  
 As ever drove prey from Cumberland;  
 Five times outlawed he had been,  
 By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.                230

## XXII

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,  
 Mount thee on the wightest steed;

---

"Cut-at-the-Black," a kinsman of the Buccleuchs. He had a grant of the lands of Deloraine in Ettrick Forest, which belonged to the Buccleuchs, in return for services rendered. Sir Walter Scott has invested him with the attributes of the typical borderer of the time.

215. **stark**, stiff, strong. Now used only in the sense of "completely" as in "stark naked," etc. *Cf. Lady of the Lake*, Canto V. stanza xx. :

"King James shall mark,  
 If age has tamed these sinews stark."

217. **Tarras moss**, marshy district about the Tarras, a tributary of the Esk.

221. **Eske** (or **Esk**), a river of Dumfriesshire, flowing into the Solway Firth.

**Liddel**, tributary of the Esk.

230. Edward VI. of England and **Mary Stuart**, daughter of James V. of Scotland.

Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,  
 Until thou come to fair Tweedside;  
 And in Melrose's holy pile 235  
 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: 240  
 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; 245  
 Stay not thou for food or sleep:  
 Be it scroll, or be it book,  
 Into it, Knight, thou must not look;  
 If thou readest, thou art lorn!  
 Better had'st thou ne'er been born."— 250

## XXIV

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,  
 Which drinks of the Teviot clear;

---

235, 236. *Melrose's holy pile* . . . *St. Mary's aisle*. The abbey of the Monastery at Melrose was founded by King David I. in 1136, and dedicated to St. Mary. It is situated about two furlongs south of the Tweed. (*Cf.* the fine description in Canto II.

238, 250. Explained in Canto II. stanza xv.

241. *St. Michael's night*, September 29th (Michaelmas). St. Michael was the leader of the hosts of heaven against Satan; see *Paradise Lost*, books xi. and xii. He is represented as holding a flaming sword; this is probably the *cross of bloody red* in line 243.

251. Notice the onomatopœia, *i. e.*, the correspondence between

Ere break of day," the warrior 'gan say,  
 "Again will I be here:  
 And safer by none may thy errand be done, 255  
 Than, noble dame, by me;  
 Letter nor line know I never a one,  
 Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee."

## XXV

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,  
 And soon the steep descent he past, 260  
 Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,  
 And soon the Teviot side he won.  
 Eastward the wooded path he rode,  
 Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;  
 He pass'd the Peel of Goldiland, 265  
 And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;  
 Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,  
 Where Druid shades still flitted round;

---

the sound of the words and the sound of that which they describe ; here, the galloping of a horse.

258. **Hairibee**, "the place of executing the Border marauders at Carlisle. The *neck-verse* is the beginning of the 51st Psalm, *Miserere mei*, etc., anciently read by criminals claiming the benefit of clergy."—*Scott*.

261. **barbican**, "generally a small round tower for the station of an advanced guard placed just before the outward gate of the castle yard."—*Nares' Glossary*.

264. **basnet**, shorter form of basinet, a light steel helmet, fitting close to the skull.

265. **Peel**, a Border tower.

**Goldiland**, on the right bank of the Teviot, a mile and a half above Hawick.

266. **Borthwick**, a tributary of the Teviot.

267. **Moat-hill's mound**, a mound near Hawick.

In Hawick twinkled many a light;  
 Behind him soon they set in night; 270  
 And soon he spurr'd his courser keen  
 Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

## XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;—  
 “Staud, ho! thou courier of the dark.”—  
 “For Branksome, ho!” the Knight rejoin'd, 275  
 And left the friendly tower behind.  
 He turn'd him now from Teviotside,  
 And, guided by the tinkling rill,  
 Northward the dark ascent did ride,  
 And gain'd the moor at Horsliehill; 280  
 Broad on the left before him lay,  
 For many a mile, the Roman way.

## XXVII

A moment now he slack'd his speed,  
 A moment breathed his panting steed;  
 Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band, 285  
 And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.  
 On Minto-craggs the moonbeams glint,  
 Where Barnhill hew'd his bed of flint;

---

269. **Hawick**, fifty miles S. E. of Edinburgh, in Roxburghshire, at confluence of Teviot with Slitrig.

272. **Hazeldean**, on the left bank of the Teviot. “The estate of Hazeldean belonged formerly to a family of Scotts.”—*Scott*.

280. **Horsliehill**, N. W. of Hazeldean, between that and Minto-craggs.

282. **Roman way**, “an ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire.”

286. **brand**, old word for “sword,” probably so called from its flashing in light.

287. **Minto-craggs**, rocks about two miles north of Hazeldean.

288. **Barnhill**, a famous robber.

Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,  
 Where falcons hang their giddy nest, 290  
 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, 295  
 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, 300  
 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, 305  
 Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

## XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,  
 And the water broke o'er the saddlebow;

---

295-298. The reference is to Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto (1722-77), an able statesman and orator, who also wrote verses, and more particularly to the line in his poem, *Amynta* :

"Ambition, I said, would soon cure me of love."

296. warbling Doric reed, pastoral poetry. The first pastoral poets wrote in the Doric dialect of Greek.

300. "The family of Riddel have been very long in possession of the barony called Riddell, or Ryedale."—*Scott*.

301. Aill, a tributary of the Teviot.

Above the foaming tide, I ween,  
 Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;      310  
 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,      315  
 Was daggled 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,      320  
 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;

---

311. *barded*, "or barbed—applied to a horse accoutered with defensive armor."—*Scott*.

counter, breast.

316. *daggled*, wetted. (Sw. *dagga*, dew.)

319. *Bowden Moor*, in Roxburghshire.

*march-man*, man of the "marches" or borders.

321. "Halidon was an ancient seat of the Kerrs (Carrs) of Cessford, now demolished."—*Scott*. On Halidon Hill the battle of Melrose was fought, 1333.

323-330. The feud arose thus: In 1526 James V., then a minor, was governed by the Douglasses, and wished to escape their control. He therefore wrote secretly to Buccleuch, asking him to meet him at Melrose on his home-coming, and take him out of the Douglasses' hands. Buccleuch obeyed, but his company was completely routed by the Douglasses with the aid of the Carrs and others, though in the pursuit the chief of the Carrs was slain by Elliot, one of Buccleuch's servants. Twenty-six years later, in 1552, this Sir Walter Scott was slain by the Carrs in the streets of Edinburgh.

When Royal James beheld the fray, 325  
 Prize to the victor of the day;  
 When Home and Douglass, in the van,  
 Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,  
 Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear  
 Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear. 330

## XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,  
 And soon the hated heath was past;  
 And far beneath, in luster wan,  
 Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran:  
 Like some tall rock with lichens gray, 335  
 Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.  
 When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,  
 Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.  
 The sound, upon the fitful gale,  
 In solemn wise did rise and fail, 340  
 Like that wild harp, whose magic tone  
 Is waken'd by the winds alone.  
 But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;  
 He meetly stabled his steed in stall,  
 And sought the convent's lonely wall. 345

HERE paused the harp; and with its swell  
 The Master's fire and courage fell:  
 Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,  
 And, gazing timid on the crowd,

---

327. *van*, foremost part of the army. An abbreviation of *vanguard* from Fr. "*avant-garde*."

335. *lichens*, mosses. *Gray* qualifies *rock*, not *lichens*.

336. *Abbaye*, the French word from which "*Abbey*" is derived.

341. *that wild harp*, an *Æolian harp*.



He seem'd to seek, in every eye,  
350 If they approved his minstrelsy;  
And, diffident of present praise,  
Somewhat he spoke of former days,  
And how old age, and wand'ring long,  
Had done his hand and harp some wrong. 355  
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, 360  
And much they long'd the rest to hear.  
Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,  
After meet rest, again began.





## CANTO SECOND

When he delivers his message the monk appears filled with consternation and terror, but leads him at last through many galleries and chapels to the spot where the Wizard was interred; and, after some account of his life and character, the warrior heaves up the tombstone, and is dazzled by the streaming splendor of an ever-burning lamp, which illuminates the sepulcher of the enchanter. With trembling hand he takes the book from the side of the deceased, and hurries home with it in his bosom. In the meantime, Lord Cranstoun and the lovely Margaret have met at dawn in the woods adjacent to the castle, and are repeating their vows of true love, when they are startled by the approach of a horseman. The lady retreats, and the lover rides away.

### I

IF thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,  
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;  
For the gay beams of lightsome day  
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.  
When the broken arches are black in night,      5  
And each shafted oriel glimmers white;

---

4. **Gild, but to flout**, *i. e.*, the same light which gilds also shows up all the defects caused by time, and so seems to mock at the ruins.

6. **Shafted**. The lights in the window are divided by "shafts" or mullions.

**oriel**, a projecting window, in shape usually half a six-sided figure, resting on a bracket or corbell.

When the cold light's uncertain shower  
 Streams on the ruin'd central tower;  
 When buttress and buttress, alternately,  
 Seem framed of ebon and ivory; 10  
 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— 15  
 Then view St. David's ruin'd pile;  
 And, home returning, soothly swear,  
 Was never scene so sad and fair!

## II

Short halt did Deloraine make there;  
 Little reck'd he of the scene so fair: 20  
 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: 25  
 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.

---

12. "The buttresses ranged along the sides of the ruins of Melrose Abbey are, according to the Gothic style, richly carved and fretted, containing niches for the statues of saints and labeled with scrolls, bearing appropriate texts of scripture."—*Scott*.

16. *St. David's ruin'd pile*. Cf. note on I. 235, 236.

29. *livings*, endowments for the support of the clergy.

## III

Bold Deloraine his errand said; 31  
 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, 35  
 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. 40

## 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, 45  
 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; 50  
 "And, darest thou, warrior! seek to see  
 What heaven and earth alike would hide?"

---

37. *crest*, an ornamental addition to the helmet, indicating the rank of the wearer. Later it was used as synonymous with plume.

39. *aventayle*, the movable visor of the helmet.

42. *the fated hour*. *Cf.* lines 160-164.

My breast, in belt of iron pent,  
 With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;  
 For threescore years, in penance spent 55  
 My knees those flinty stones have worn;  
 Yet all too little to atone  
 For knowing what should ne'er be known.  
 Would'st thou thy every future year  
 In ceaseless prayer and penance drie, 60  
 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, 65  
 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.”—

60. *drie*, to endure, with the added sense of suffering. *Cf.* the Scottish expression “drie one’s weird.”

61. *latter end*, a Biblical expression for “death.”

63. *will I, will I do*.

64-7. “The Borderers were very ignorant about religious matters. But however deficient in real religion, they regularly told their beads, and never with more zeal than when going on a plundering expedition.”—*Scott*.

65. *Mass*, the Roman Catholic communion service.

66. *patter*, mumble rapidly. *Cf.* *Marmion*, VI. stanza xxvii. :

“Fitz-Eustace, you, with Lady Clare,  
 May bid your beads, and patter prayer.”

*Ave Mary*, the first words of a Latin prayer beginning *Ave Maria, gratia plena*, used by Roman Catholics.

## VII

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,  
 And again he sighed heavily; 71  
 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: 75  
 Now, slow and faint, he led the way,  
 Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay;  
 The pillar'd arches were over their head,  
 And beneath their feet were the bones of the  
 dead.

## VIII

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright, 80  
 Glisten'd 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; 85  
 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, 90  
 And hurl the unexpected dart.

---

88. Castile, fair because of its romantic historical and legendary associations.

90. jennet, a small Spanish horse; the object of "wheel."

He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,  
That spirits were riding the northern light.

## IX

By a steel-clench'd postern door,  
They enter'd now the chancel tall; 95  
The darken'd roof rose high aloof  
On pillars lofty and light and small:  
The keystone, that lock'd each ribbed aisle,  
Was a fleur-de-lys, or a quatre-feuille;  
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim;  
And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,  
With base and with capital flourish'd around,  
Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had  
bound.

## X

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven  
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven, 105  
Around the screened altar's pale;  
And there the dying lamps did burn,

---

93. **northern light**, the Aurora Borealis, the electrical display of lights seen in northern latitudes.

94. **postern door**, first a back door, later any small door.

96. **aloof**, aloft.

98. **keystone**, the stone at the apex of an arch.

**ribbed aisle**, the stones or timbers supporting an arched roof are called ribs.

99. **fleur-de-lys**, here an architectural ornament.

**quatre-feuille**, an ornament consisting of four leaves joined in the form of a rounded cross.

100. **corbels**, "the projections from which the arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face, or mask."—*Scott*.

104. **scutcheon**, the shield on which the coat of arms is painted.

107. The ever-burning lamp was used as the symbol of the ever-living soul.

Before thy low and lowly urn,  
 O gallant chief of Otterburne!  
 And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale! 110  
 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 foliaged tracery combined; 115  
 Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand  
 'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,  
 In many a freakish knot, had twined;  
 Then framed a spell, when the work was done,  
 And changed the willow-wreaths to stone. 120  
 The silver light, so pale and faint,  
 Showed many a prophet, and many a saint,

---

108. urn, tomb, this sense being derived from the fact that the Romans burned their dead and inclosed the ashes in urns.

109. "The famous and desperate battle of Otterburn was fought 15th August, 1388, betwixt Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James, Earl of Douglas. . . Percy was made prisoner, and the Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose, beneath the high altar. 'His obsequye was done reverently, and on his bodye layde a tombe of stone, and his baner hangyng over hym.'"—*Scott*.

110. "William Douglas, called the Knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II., and was so distinguished for his valor that he was called the Flower of Chivalry. Nevertheless, he tarnished his renown by the cruel murder of Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, originally his friend and brother in arms." He was appointed "successor to his victim as Sheriff of Teviotdale. But he was soon after slain, while hunting in Etrick Forest, by his own godson and chieftain. . . His body . . . was carried . . . to Melrose, where he was interred with great pomp."—*Scott*.



Whose image on the glass was dyed;  
 Full in the midst, his Cross of Red  
 Triumphant Michael brandished, 125  
 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); 130  
 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 mine eyes thine arms appear, 135  
 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, 140

---

124-126. Satan is styled "the Apostate" (one who has forsaken his faith), in the sixth book of *Paradise Lost*, in which the combat between Satan and Michael is described.

129, 130. "A large marble stone, in the chancel of Melrose, is pointed out as the monument of Alexander II., one of the greatest of our early kings."—*Scott*.

138. *Michael Scott*. Scott tells us that Sir Michael Scott of Balwearie flourished during the thirteenth century, but by a poetical anachronism he is here placed in a later era. Dante mentions him as a renowned magician (*Inferno*, Canto XX.).

140. *Salamanca's cave*. The sciences supposed to involve the mysteries of magic were regularly taught in Toledo, Seville, and Salamanca. In the latter city these schools were held in the mouth of a deep cavern.

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,     145  
 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,     150  
 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.     155  
 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,     160  
 That never mortal might therein look;  
 And never to tell where it was hid,  
 Save at his Chief of Branksome’s need:

---

141. listed, pleased, from the Old English *lystan*, to give pleasure. *Cf.* Chaucer’s use of *lust*.

142. Notre Dame, the cathedral in Paris dedicated to “Our Lady,” the Virgin Mary.

145. Eildon Hills extend south of Melrose.

153. sign, some magical summons.

And when that need was past and o'er,  
 Again the volume to restore. 165  
 I buried him on St. Michael's night,  
 When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,  
 And I dug his chamber among the dead,  
 When the floor of the chancel was stained red,  
 That his patron's cross might over him wave, 170  
 And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

## XVI

"It was a night of woe and dread,  
 When Michael in the tomb I laid,  
 Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,  
 The banners waved without a blast"— 175  
 —Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd  
 one!—

I tell you, that a braver man  
 Than William of Deloraine, good at need,  
 Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed;  
 Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread, 180  
 And his hair did bristle on 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: 185

---

166. *St. Michael's Night*, Michaelmas, September 29.

169. Lunar rays passing through stained glass do not "stain with red," as do solar rays, but poetic license permits the disregard of science here, as in Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*, XXV. :

"Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast."

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; 190  
 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; 195  
 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 200  
 How the light broke forth so gloriously,  
 Streamed upward to the chancel roof,  
 And through the galleries far aloof!  
 No earthly flame e'er blazed so bright:  
 It shone like heaven's own blessed light, 205  
     And, issuing from the tomb,  
 Showed the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,  
 Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,  
     And kissed his waving plume.

---

187. **eternal doom**, the Last Judgment.

193. **expand**, open.

196. **Amain**, with force; often used in the sense of "with speed." *Cf.* II. 393, and IV. 185.

207. **cowl**, the monk's hood.

## XIX

Before their eyes the Wizard lay, 210  
 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, 215  
     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, 220  
 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, 225  
 And trampled down the warriors slain,  
     And neither known remorse nor awe;  
 Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;  
 His breath came thick, his head swam round,  
     When this strange scene of death he saw. 230  
 Bewilder'd and unnerved he stood,

---

214. palmer, "one who bore a palm branch in memory of having been to the Holy Land."—*Skeat*.

amice, a palmer's hood, lined with gray fur.

215. baldric, a leathern belt worn over the shoulder, and having the sword suspended from it.

221. fellest, most cruel, most terrible.

227. remorse, used in its old sense of pity.

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. 235

## XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,  
 Thus unto Deloraine he said:—  
 " Now speed thee what thou hast to do,  
 Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;  
 For those, thou mayst not look upon, 240  
 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, 246  
 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; 250  
 And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,  
 With wavering steps and dizzy brain,  
 They hardly might the postern gain.

236. death-prayer, prayer for the dead.

253. postern, originally, a small back door or gate; later, any small door or gate. *Cf.:*

" He by a privy postern took his flight."—*Spenser*.

'Tis said, as through the aisles they passed,  
 They heard strange noises on the blast;           255  
 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,                   260  
 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           265  
 O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,  
 Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!”—  
 The Monk returned him to his cell,  
 And many a prayer and penance sped;       269  
 When the convent met at the noontide bell—  
 The Monk of St. Mary’s aisle was dead!  
 Before the cross was the body laid,  
 With hands clasp’d fast, as if still he prayed.

## XXIV

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,  
 And strove his hardihood to find:           275  
 He was glad when he passed the tombstones gray,  
 Which girdle around the fair Abbaye;

261. **brought to day**, brought to light.269. **sped**, sent on its way.275. **hardihood**, courage.

For the Mystic Book, to his bosom prest,  
 Felt like a load upon his breast;  
 And his joints, with nerves of iron twined      280  
 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 he might.      285

## 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,      290  
 And waken'd every flower that blows;  
 And peeped forth the violet pale,  
 And spread her breast the mountain rose.  
 And lovelier than the rose so red,  
 Yet paler than the violet pale,      295  
 She early left her sleepless bed,  
 The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

280. nerves, sinews.

281. The leaves of the aspen quiver at the slightest breath of wind. *Cf.* Marmion, Canto VI. xxx. :

" Variable as the shade  
 By the light quivering aspen made."

282. Full fain, very glad.

283. Cheviot, a hill, twenty miles east of Branksome, which gives its name to the whole chain.

287. Carter, "a mountain on the border of England, above Jedburgh."—*Scott*.



## XXVI

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,  
 And don her kirtle so hastilie;  
 And the silken knots, which in hurry she would  
                   make, 300  
 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; 305  
 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, 310  
 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. 315

## 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.

---

299. *don* = *do* + *on*, In Old English *do* meant "place." So *doff* = *do* + *off*, take off.

He was stately, and young, and tall; 320  
 Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:  
 And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,  
 Lent her cheek a livelier red;  
 When the half sigh her swelling breast  
 Against the silken riband prest; 325  
 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 330  
 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,  
     And how the knight, with tender fire, 335  
     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, 340  
 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! 345  
 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. 350

## 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 355  
 Through all the border, far and near.  
 'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode  
 Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trode,

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352. eld, age.

353. **The Baron's Dwarf.** "The idea of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page is taken from a being called Gilpin Horner, who appeared, and made some stay, at a farm house among the Border-mountains. A gentleman of that country has noted down the following particulars concerning his appearance :

"The only certain, at least most probable, account that ever I heard of Gilpin Horner was from an old man, of the name of Anderson, who was born, and lived all his life at Todshaw-hill, in Eskedale-muir, the place where Gilpin appeared and stayed for some time. He said there were two men, late in the evening, when it was growing dark, employed in fastening the horses upon the uttermost part of their ground, when they heard a voice at some distance, crying, "*Tint! Tint! Tint!*" [lost]. One of the men, named Moffat, called out, "What deil has tint you? Come here." Immediately a creature of something like a human form appeared. It was surprisingly little, distorted in features, and misshapen in limbs. As soon as the two men could see it plainly, they ran home in a great fright, imagining they had met with some goblin. By the way, Moffat fell and it ran over him, and was home at the house as soon as either of them, and stayed there a long time; but I cannot say how long. It was real flesh and blood, and ate and drank, was fond of cream, and, when it could get at it would destroy a great deal. It seemed a mischievous creature; and any of the children whom it could master, it would beat and scratch

He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"  
 And, like tennis-ball by racket tossed, 360  
 A leap, of thirty feet and three,  
 Made from the gorse this elfin shape,  
 Distorted like some dwarfish ape,  
 And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.  
 Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd; 365  
 '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 the first at the castle door.

## XXXII

Use lessens marvel, it is said: 370  
 This elvish Dwarf with the Baron stay'd;

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without mercy. It was once abusing a child belonging to the same Moffat who had been so frightened by its first appearance; and he, in a passion, struck it so violent a blow upon the side of the head that it tumbled upon the ground: but it was not stunned, for it set up its head directly and exclaimed, "Ah, hah, Will o' Moffat, you strike sair!" (viz. *sore*). After it had stayed there long, one evening, when the women were milking the cows in the loan, it was playing among the children near by them, when suddenly they heard a loud shrill voice cry three times, "*Gilpin Horner!*" It started, and said, "*That is me, I must away,*" and instantly disappeared, and was never heard of more.' As much has been objected to Gilpin Horner, on account of his being supposed rather a device of the author than a popular superstition, I can only say that no legend which I ever heard seemed to be more universally credited; and that many persons of very good rank, and considerable information, are well known to repose absolute faith in the tradition.'—*Scott*.

365. Some whit, somewhat. Whit is Old English wiht, a person or thing. Cf. the expression "not a whit," and the words "aught," contracted from a wiht, one whit, and "naught" from na wiht, no whit.

367. rade, rode. Cf. OE. rad.

370. Familiarity breeds contempt.

Little he ate, and less he spoke,  
 Nor mingled with the menial flock:  
 And oft apart his arms he toss'd,  
 And often mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!" 375  
     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. 380  
 All between Home and Hermitage,  
 Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

## XXXIII

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,  
 And took with him this elvish Page,  
     To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes: 385  
 For there, beside our Ladye's lake,  
 An offering he had sworn to make,  
     And he would pay his vows.  
 But the Ladye of Branksome gathered a band  
 Of the best that would ride at her command:

---

376. *litherlie*, ill-natured, from OE. *lythre*, bad.

378. *full fain*, see note on line 282 above.

381. *Home and Hermitage*, famous castles at the northeastern and southern extremities of the Border respectively. The phrase means "all those who dwell in the Border country." Cf. "From Dan to Beersheba."

382. *Goblin*, from *κόβαλος*, rogue.

385. *Mary's Chapel of the Lowes*, a chapel near the Yarrow, taking its name from an adjoining lake called the Loch of the Lowes.

386. *our Lady's lake*, *St. Mary's Loch*, an expansion of the Yarrow.

389. On 25th June, 1557, Dame Janet Beaton, Lady Buccleuch, was accused in the Court of Justiciary of coming with two hundred armed men of the Scott clan to the kirk of St. Mary of the Lowes,

The trysting-place was Newark Lee. 391  
 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. 395  
 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, 400  
 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. 405  
 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; 410  
 The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein:  
 Vaulted the knight on his steed amain,

---

"and breaking open the doors of the said kirk, in order to apprehend the laird of Cranstounne for his destruction. . . It is said that upon this rising the kirk of St. Mary was burned by the Scotts."—*Scott*.

391. *Lee*, a grassy plain; usually spelt *lea*.

392. *Wat of Harden*, a Walter Scott and an ancestor of the poet. Harden is near Branksome.

393. *John of Thirlestane*, Sir John Scott. Thirlestane is between Harden and Buccleuch.

396. *Douglas-burn*, a tributary of the Yarrow.

410. *cushat dove*, wood-pigeon.

And, pondering deep that morning's scene,  
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

---

WHILE thus he poured the lengthened tale, 415  
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. 420  
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 425  
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 430  
Swelled his old veins, and cheered his soul;  
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,  
Ere thus his tale again began.

---

420. blood, a common metaphor for wine.

Velez, in Malaga, the best wine-producing province of Spain.

Scorched refers to the heat of the tropical sun.





### CANTO THIRD

Advancing, he finds it to be the messenger from Branksome, with whom, as an hereditary enemy, he thinks it necessary to enter immediately into combat. The poor knight, fatigued with his nocturnal adventures, is dismounted at the first shock, and falls desperately wounded to the ground; while Lord Cranstoun, relenting to the kinsman of his beloved, directs his page to attend him to the castle, and gallops home before any alarm can be given. Lord Cranstoun's page is something unearthly. It is a little misshapen dwarf whom he found one day when he was hunting in a solitary glen, and took home with him. It never speaks, except now and then to cry, "Lost! lost! lost!" and is, on the whole, a hateful, malicious little urchin, with no good quality but his unaccountable attachment and fidelity to his master. This personage, on approaching the wounded Borderer, discovers the mighty book in his bosom, which he finds some difficulty in opening, and has hardly had time to read a single spell in it when he is struck down by an invisible hand, and the clasps of the magic volume shut suddenly more closely than ever. This one spell, however, enables him to practice every kind of illusion. He lays the wounded knight on his horse and leads him into the castle, while the warders see nothing but a wain of hay. He throws him down unperceived at the door of the lady's chamber, and turns to make good his retreat. In passing through the court, however, he sees the young heir of Buccleuch at play, and, assuming the form of one of his companions, tempts him to go out with him to the woods, where, as soon as they pass a rivulet, he assumes his own shape and bounds away. The bewildered child is met by two English archers, who make prize of him, and carry him off, while the goblin page returns to the



castle, where he personates the young baron, to the great annoyance of the whole inhabitants. The lady finds the wounded knight, and eagerly employs charms for his recovery, that she may learn the story of the disaster. The lovely Margaret in the meantime is sitting in her turret gazing on the western star, and musing on the scenes of the morning, when she discovers the blazing beacons that announce the approach of an English enemy. The alarm is immediately given, and bustling preparations made throughout the mansion for defense.

## I

AND said I that my limbs were old,  
 And said I that my blood was cold,  
 And that my kindly fire was fled,  
 And my poor wither'd heart was dead,  
     And that I might not sing of love?—                   5  
 How could I to the dearest theme,  
 That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,  
     So foul, so false a recreant prove!  
 How could I name Love's very name,  
 Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!                   10

## 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.

---

1. And said I. *Cf.* II. 346-51.

11-17. These famous lines were perhaps inspired by Coleridge's *Love*, which begins

" All thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
 Whatever stirs this mortal frame  
 All are but ministers of Love,  
 And feed his sacred flame."

Scott's verse continually shows the influence of Coleridge.  
*Cf.* note on I. 5.

Love rules the court, the camp, the grove, 15  
 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— 21  
 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, 25  
 Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay;  
 His armor red with many a stain:  
 He seem'd in such a weary plight,  
 As if he had ridden the livelong night;  
 For it was William of Deloraine. 30

## 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.

---

24. pricking, spurring. *Cf.* Spenser's *Faëry Queene*, bk 1. line 1:  
 "A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine."

25. dapple, spotted.

31. whit. *Cf.* note on II. 366.

33. "The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot, with an emphatic Border motto, *Thou shalt want ere I want.*"—*Scott.*

34. in his rest. The rest was a loop in which the spear was supported when couched for the charge.

Few were the words, and stern and high, 35  
 That marked the foemen's feudal hate;  
 For question fierce, and proud reply,  
 Give signal soon of dire debate.  
 Their very coursers seemed to know  
 That each was other's mortal foe, 40  
 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, 45  
 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. 50  
 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, 55  
 And his plumes went scattering on the gale;  
 The tough ash spear, so stout and true,  
 Into a thousand flinders flew:

---

47-48. *Cf.* II. Stanza vi.

53. *dint*, blow.

58. *flinders*, splinters.

But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,  
 Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;  
 Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,       61  
 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,       65  
 Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.  
 The Baron onward passed his course;  
 Nor knew—so giddy roll'd his brain—  
 His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

## VII

But when he rein'd his courser round,       70  
 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,       75  
 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;       80  
 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;

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61. jack, a leathern coat worn over the coat of mail.

acton, a padded tunic worn under the coat of mail.

65. girthing, girth, the strap which held the saddle in place.

His lord's command he ne'er withstood, 85  
 Though small his pleasure to do good.  
 As the corslet off he took,  
 The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!  
 Much he marvel'd a knight of pride,  
 Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride: 90  
 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, 95  
 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; 100  
 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 105  
 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, naught was truth. 110

---

103. *glamour*, optical illusion.  
*might*, power.

108. *sheeling*, a shepherd's hut.

## X

He had not read another spell,  
 When on his cheek a buffet fell,  
 So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,  
 Beside the wounded Deloraine.  
 From the ground he rose dismayed                    115  
 And shook his large 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;                    120  
 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;                    125  
 It was not given by man alive.

## XI

Unwillingly himself he address'd,  
 To do his master's high behest:

---

124-126. Scott quotes an anecdote told him by Dr. Henry More, about an eccentric old gentleman, who, said Dr. More, "told me he had used all the magical ceremonies of conjuration he could, to raise the devil or a spirit, and had a most earnest desire to meet with one, but never could do it. But this he told me, when he did not so much as think of it, while his servant was pulling off his boots in the hall, some invisible hand gave him such a clap upon the back that it made all ring again; 'so,' thought he now, 'I am invited to the converse of my spirit,' and therefore so soon as his boots were off, and his shoes on, out he goes into the yard and next field, to find out the spirit that had given him this familiar clap on the back, but found none neither in the yard nor field next to it."

125. So mot I thrive, So may I prosper.

128. behest, command.

He lifted up the living corse,  
 And laid it on the weary horse; 130  
 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, 135  
 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, 140  
 Was always done maliciously;  
 He flung the warrior on the ground,  
 And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

## XII

As he repass'd the outer court,  
 He spied the fair young child at sport: 145  
 He thought to train him to the wood;  
 For, at a word, be it understood,  
 He was always for ill, and never for good.  
 Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay  
 Led him forth to the woods to play; 150  
 On the drawbridge the warders stout  
 Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

---

132. **beards**, used for "faces." The figure consisting of using a part for the whole, is called Synecdoche.

134. **wain**, wagon.

136. **bower**, outer room, as "ben" is the inner or bed room.

140. **gramarye**, magic.

145. *Cf.* I. 89.

146. **train**, to entice away.

147. **at a word**, in short.

152. **lurcher**, a kind of hunting-dog.

## XIII

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,  
 Until they came to a woodland brook;  
 The running stream dissolved the spell,           155  
 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:           160  
 But his awful mother he had in dread,  
 And also his power was limited;  
 So he but scow'd on the startled child,  
 And darted through the forest wild;  
 The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,       165  
 And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"—

## XIV

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,  
 And frighten'd as a child might be,  
 At the wild yell and visage strange,  
 And the dark words of gramarye,           170  
 The child, amidst the forest bower,  
 Stood rooted like a lily flower;

---

155. "It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, specters, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable *Tam o' Shanter* turns entirely upon such a circumstance. The belief seems to be of antiquity. Brompton informs us, that certain Irish wizards could, by spells, convert earthen clods, or stones, into fat pigs, which they sold in the market, but which always reassumed their proper form when driven by the deceived purchasers across a running stream."  
 —*Scott*.

157. *vilde*, a corruption of "vile."



And when at length, with trembling pace,  
 He sought to find where Branksome lay,  
 He fear'd to see that grisly face 175  
 Glare from some thicket on his way.  
 Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,  
 And deeper in the wood is gone.—  
 For aye the more he sought his way,  
 The farther still he went astray.— 180  
 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 blood-hound, 185  
 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 ween you would have seen with joy 190  
 The bearing of the gallant boy,  
 When, worthy of his noble sire,  
 His wet cheek glowed 'twixt fear and ire!  
 He faced the blood-hound manfully,  
 And held his little bat on high: 195  
 So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,  
 At cautious distance hoarsely bayed.

---

175. **grisly**, horrible.

188. **wilderred**, bewildered.

190. **ween**, think, believe.

192. **sire**, *Cf.* I. 58.

But still in act to spring;  
 When dashed an archer through the glade,  
 And when he saw the hound was stayed,           200  
     He drew his tough bow-string;  
 But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!  
 Ho! shoot not, Edward—'Tis a boy!"

## XVI

The speaker issued from the wood  
 And checked his fellow's surly mood,           205  
     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;                   210  
 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, St. George's cross,           215  
     His barret-cap did grace;  
 His bugle-horn hung by his side  
     All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;  
 And his short falchion, sharp and clear,  
 Had pierced the throat of many a deer.       220

---

206. *ban-dog*, a mastiff; a contraction from "band-dog."

209. *fallow*, brownish.

210. *fro*, from. *Cf.* the phrase "to and fro."

216. *barret-cap*, a small flat cap.

218. *baldric*, belt.

219. *falchion*, a short curved sword.

## XVII

His kirtle, made of forest green,  
 Reach'd scantly to his knee;  
 And, at his belt, of arrows keen  
 A furbish'd sheaf bore he;  
 His buckler scarce in breadth a span,                   225  
 No larger fence had he;  
 He never counted him a man,  
 Would strike below the knee,  
 His slacken'd bow was in his hand,  
 And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.

## XVIII

He would not do the fair child harm,                   231  
 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.                   235  
 "Now, by St. George," the archer cries,  
 "Edward, methinks we have a prize!  
 This boy's fair face, and courage free,  
 Show he is come of high degree."—

## XIX

"Yes! I am come of high degree,                   240  
 For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;  
 And if thou dost not set me free,  
 False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!

---

221. kirtle, tunic.

224. furbish'd, polished.

225. buckler, a small shield.

226. fence, protection.

243. Southron, Southerner.

For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,  
 And William of Deloraine, good at need,           245  
 And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;  
 And, if thou dost not let me go,  
 Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,  
 I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow! ”—

## XX

“ Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy!           250  
 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; 255  
 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,                   260  
 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,           265

---

244. Harden, a few miles north of Buccleuch.

250. Gramercy, thank you; here used mockingly.

255. wardens, guards.

259. good Lord Dacre, Lord Dacre of the North, one of the English commanders at the battle of Pinkie, 1547.

He wrought the castle much annoy.  
 The comrades of the young Buecleuch  
 He pinched, and beat, and overthrew;  
 Nay, some of them he well nigh slew.  
 He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire, 270  
 And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,  
 He lighted the match of his bandelier  
 And woefully scorched the hackbuteer.  
 It may be hardly thought or said,  
 The mischief that the urchin made, 275  
 Tül 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 280  
 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, 286  
 Perchance he in the Book had read;  
 But the broken lance in his bosom stood,  
 And it was earthly steel and wood.

---

270. Maudlin, popular pronunciation of Magdalene.  
 tire, head-dress.

271. Sym, short for Symon.

272. bandelier, a cartridge-holding belt.

273. hackbuteer, musketeer.

277. possessed, *sc.*, with an evil spirit.

285. moss-trooper, a border warrior. Moss=marsh.

287. *Cf.* I 257.

## XXIII

She drew the splinter from the wound, 290  
 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 wash'd it from the clotted gore, 295  
 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 gall'd his wound.  
 Then to her maidens she did say, 300  
 That he should be whole man and sound,  
 Within the course of a night and day.  
 Full long she toil'd; for she did rue  
 Mishap to friend so stout and true.

## XXIV

So pass'd the day—the evening fell, 305  
 'Twas near the time of curfew bell;  
 The air was mild, the wind was calm,  
 The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;  
 E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,  
 Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour. 310  
 Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd  
 The hour of silence and of rest.  
 On the high turret sitting lone,  
 She waked at times the lute's soft tone;  
 Touch'd a wild note, and all between 315  
 Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.

---

306. curfew-bell, the signal for all lights and fires to be put out.

316. bower, here bower of branches.

Her golden hair stream'd free from band,  
 Her fair cheek rested on her hand,  
 Her blue eyes sought the west afar,  
 For lovers love the western star. 320

## 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?— 325  
 Oh, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!  
 Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,  
 For well she knew the fire of death!

## XXVI

The Warder view'd it blazing strong,  
 And blew his war-note loud and long, 330  
 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;

---

320. Cf. Longfellow, *The Evening Star*:

“Lo! in the painted oriel of the west,  
 Like a fair lady at her casement, shines  
 The evening star, the star of love and rest!

Oh my beloved, my sweet Hesperus!  
 My morning and my evening star of love!”

And Tennyson, *The Gardener's Daughter*, 162, 163:

“And love's white star  
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the dusk.”

321. Penchryst Pen or mountain, near Branksome.

322. ken, sight.

Far downward, in the castle yard, 335  
 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. 340

## 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, 345  
 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, 350  
     That ever are true and stout—  
 Ye need not send to Liddesdale;  
 For when they see the blazing bale,  
 Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—  
 Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life! 355  
 And warn the warder of the strife.  
 Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,  
 Our kin, and clan, and friends to raise."

---

336. *cresset*, a cup-shaped vessel for holding fire.

341. *Seneschal*, steward.

345. *bale*, beacon-fagot.

346. *Priestthaughswire*, a hill near Branksome.

349. "'Mount for Branksome,' was the gathering word of the Scotts."—*Scott*.



## XXVIII

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,  
 Heard, far below, the coursers' tread, 360  
     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, 365  
     And out! and out!  
     In hasty route,  
     The horsemen galloped forth;  
 Dispensing to the South to scout,  
     And East, and West, and North, 370  
 To view their coming enemies,  
 And warn their vassals and allies.

## XXIX

The ready page, with hurried hand,  
 Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,  
     And ruddy blush'd the heaven: 375  
 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; 380  
 Each with warlike tidings fraught;  
 Each from each the signal caught;  
 Each after each they glanced to sight,  
 As stars arise upon the night.

---

361. **harness**, armor.

374. **need-fire**, the beacon.

377. **blood-flag**, blood-red flag.

They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn, 385  
 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; 390  
 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, 395  
 Sent forth the larum peal;

385. *tarn*, a mountain lake.

386. *earn*, eagle.

387. *cairn*. "The cairns or piles of loose stones, which crown the summit of most of our Scottish hills, and are found in other remarkable situations, seem usually, though not universally, to have been sepulchral monuments. Six flat stones are commonly found in the center, forming a cavity of greater or smaller dimensions, in which an urn is often placed. The author is possessed of one, discovered beneath an immense cairn at Roughlee, in Liddesdale. It is one of the most barbarous construction; the middle of the substance alone having been subjected to the fire, over which, when hardened, the artist had laid an inner and outer coat of unbaked clay, etched with some very rude ornaments; his skill apparently being inadequate to baking the vase, when completely finished. The contents were bones and ashes, and a quantity of beads made of coal. This seems to have been a barbarous imitation of the Roman fashion of sepulture."—*Scott*. (Gael. *carn*, rock.)

388. *urns*, tombs.

389. *Dunedin*, Edinburgh=Edwin's fort.

390. *Soltra*, *Dumpender Law* or hill, mountains in Berwickshire.

391. *Lothian*, the county of Edinburgh.

the *Regent*, Mary of Guise, the mother of Mary, Queen of Scots, who was then in France.

392. *bowne*, make ready.

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: 400  
 Was frequent heard the changing guard,  
 And watchword from the sleepless ward;  
 While, wearied by the endless din,  
 Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

## XXXI

The noble Dame, amid the broil, 405  
 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, 410  
 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 naught  
     But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men, 415  
 Who came to gather in blackmail;  
 And Liddesdale, with small avail,  
     Might drive them lightly back agen.  
 So passed the anxious night away,  
 And welcome was the peep of day. 420

---

405. broil, used in its old sense of "confusion."

416. blackmail, "protection money extracted by freebooters."  
 —*Scott*.

417. with small avail, with a small band; *Cf.* our use of  
 "force" for a body of soldiers; *Cf.* "powers" in I. 49.

418. agen, old spelling of "again."

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,                   425  
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,                   430  
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.

---

432-433. Notice the alliteration.

The first two stanzas of this Canto consist of a reference to the contrast between the troubled time when his son was killed and the peace that has succeeded.





## CANTO FOURTH

The English force, under the command of the Lords Howard and Dacre, speedily appears before the castle, leading with them the young Buccleuch, and propose that the lady should either give up Sir William of Deloraine (who had been her messenger to Melrose), as having incurred the guilt of March treason, or receive an English garrison within her walls. She answers, with much spirit, that her kinsman will clear himself of the imputation of treason by single combat, and that no foe shall ever get admittance into her fortress. The English lords, being secretly apprised of the approach of powerful succors to the besieged, agree to the proposal of the combat, and stipulate that the boy shall be restored to liberty or detained in bondage according to the issue of the battle. The lists are appointed for the ensuing day, and a truce being proclaimed in the meantime, the opposing bands mingle in hospitality and friendship.

### I

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide

The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;  
No longer steel-clad warriors ride

Along thy wild and willow'd shore;  
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill, 5  
All, all is peaceful, all is still,

As if thy waves, since Time was born,  
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,

---

1. on thy silver tide, reflected on the surface of the water.

2. bale-fires, beacons.

8. The Teviot is a tributary of the Tweed.

Had only heard the shepherd's reed,  
 Nor started at the bugle-horn. 10

## II

Unlike the tide of human time,  
 Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,  
 Retains each grief, retains each crime  
 Its earliest course was doom'd to know;  
 And, darker as it downward bears, 15  
 Is stain'd with past and present tears.

Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,  
 It still reflects to Memory's eye  
 The hour my brave, my only boy,  
 Fell by the side of great Dundee. 20  
 Why, when the volleying musket play'd  
 Against the bloody Highland blade,  
 Why was not I beside him laid!—  
 Enough—he died the death of fame;  
 Enough—he died with conquering Græme. 25

## III

Now over border, dale, and fell,  
 Full wide and far was terror spread;  
 For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,  
 The peasant left his lowly shed.  
 The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent 30  
 Beneath the peel's rude battlement;

---

15. bears, tends, moves.

20. Great Dundee, Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, who fell at the battle of Killiecrankie, in 1689, while fighting for James II.

25. Græme, a famous leader.

26. Here the lay is resumed.

31. peel. a small square tower.

And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,  
 While ready warriors seized the spear.  
 From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye  
 Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy, 35  
 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!  
 WattTinlinn, from the Liddel-side, 40  
 Comes wading through the flood.  
 Full off the Tynedale snatchers knock  
 At his lone gate, and prove the lock;  
 It was but last St. Barnabright  
 They sieged him a whole summer night, 45  
 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, 50  
 "I think 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."

---

35. *dun*, dark, brown.

38. *gate-ward*, gatekeeper.

40. *Watt Tinlinn*. "This person was, in my younger days, the theme of many a fireside tale. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale. Watt was by profession a *sutor* [*i. e.*, a shoemaker], but by inclination and practice an archer and warrior."—*Scott*. *Watt* is an abbreviation of "Walter."

40. *Liddel*, a tributary of the Esk.

42. *snatchers*, cattle thieves.

44. *St. Barnabright*, St. Barnabas' Day, June 11.

47. *twanged the yew*, shot with his yew bow.

51. *Warden-Raid*, "An inroad commanded by the Warden in person."—*Scott*.

## V

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman  
 Entered the echoing barbican.  
 He led a small and shaggy nag,  
 That through a bog, from hag to hag, 55  
 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, 60  
 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 leather jack, as fence enow, 65  
 On his broad shoulders loosely hung;  
 A Border ax behind was slung;  
 His spear, six Scottish ells in length,  
 Seemed newly dyed with gore;  
 His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength, 70  
 His hardy partner bore.

## VI

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show  
 The tidings of the English foe:—  
 “Belted Will Howard is marching here,

---

53. *barbican*, a small tower outside the gates for the protection of the guard.

55. *hag*, “the broken ground in a bog.”—*Scott*.

56. *Billhope*, in Liddesdale.

64. *Morion*, a kind of helmet having no visor.

65. *Jack* (*Cf.* *jacket*), a leathern coat worn over the coat of mail.

65. *enow*, enough.

68. *Scottish ells*, a Scottish ell is nearly equal to our yard.



And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear, 75  
 And all the German hackbut-men,  
 Who have long lain at Askerten:  
 They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,  
 And burn'd my little lonely tower:  
 The fiend receive their souls therefor! 80  
 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, 85  
 Fast upon my traces came,  
 Until I turn'd at Priestthaugh Scrogg,  
 And shot their horses in the bog,  
 Slew Fergus with my lance outright—  
 I had him long at high despite: 90  
 He drove my cows last Fastern's night."

## VII

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,  
 Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;

---

74. **Belted Will Howard**, Lord William Howard, son of the Duke of Norfolk. He was Warden of the Western Marches. *Cf.* V. 264.

75. **Lord Dacre**. "There were two powerful branches of that name. The first family, called Lord Dacres of the South, held the castle of the same name, and are ancestors to the present Lord Dacre. The other family, descended from the same stock, were called Lord Dacres of the North, and were barons of Gilsland and Graystock."—*Scott*.

76. **hackbut-men**, musketeers.

77. **Askerten**, a castle in the north of Cumberland.

85. Fictitious names.

87. **Priestthaugh Scrogg**, a hill near Branksome.

90. "I held him long in great hatred."

91. **Fastern's night**, the night before Ash-Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. It was the custom to spend it in feasting and revelry.

As they could judge by ken, 94  
 Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand  
 Three thousand arméd Englishmen—  
 Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,  
 From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,  
 Came in, their Chief's defense to aid. 99  
 There was saddling and mounting in haste,  
 There was pricking o'er moor and lea;  
 He that was last at the trysting-place  
 Was but lightly held of his gaye ladye.

## VIII

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,  
 From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height, 105  
 His ready lances Thirlestane brave  
 Array'd beneath a banner bright.  
 The tressured fleur-de-luce he claims

---

94. ken, sight.

98. Aill, a tributary of the Teviot.

Ettrick shade, in Selkirkshire.

103. lightly held, litt'e esteemed.

104. St. Mary's silver wave, St. Mary's Loch.

105. Gamescleugh, see note on Thirlestane.

106. Thirlestane. "Sir John Scott of Thirlestane flourished in the reign of James V., and possessed the estates of Thirlestane, Gamescleugh, etc., lying upon the river of Ettrick, and extending to St. Mary's Loch, at the head of Yarrow. It appears, that when James had assembled his nobility, and their feudal followers, at Fala, with the purpose of invading England, and was, as is well known, disappointed by the obstinate refusal of his peers, this baron alone declared himself ready to follow the King wherever he should lead. In memory of his fidelity, James granted to his family a charter of arms, entitling them to bear a border of fleur-de-luce, similar to the tressure in the royal arms, with a bundle of spears for the crest; motto, *Ready, aye ready*."—Scott.

108. tressured, bordered with a kind of lace plaiting.

To wreathe his shield, since royal James,  
 Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave, 110  
 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; 115  
 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, 120  
     With many a moss-trooper, came on;  
 And azure in a golden field,  
 The stars and crescent graced his shield,  
     Without the bend of Murdieston.  
 Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower, 125  
 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; 130

---

110. **Fala**, in Edinburghshire.

120. **aged Knight**, Walter Scott of Harden, a noted freebooter.

124. He was descended from a younger son of the Buccleuch family who lived before they acquired the state of Murdieston, and could not therefore bear the arms of the latter family.

The **bend** is a straight-lined figure drawn crosswise on the shield.

125, 126. Castles on the Harden estate.

127. **Borthwick**, a tributary of the Teviot.

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,      135  
 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;      140  
     Five stately warriors drew the sword  
     Before their father's band;  
 A braver knight than Harden's lord  
     Ne'er belted on a brand.

## X

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,      145  
     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.—      150  
 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,      155  
 Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.

---

140. Dinlay, a mountain in Liddesdale.

144. brand, sword.

145. This and the following two stanzas were not in the first edition.

146. Todshawhill (fox-wood hill), near Branksome.

The Earl into fair Eskdale came,  
 Homage and seignory to claim:  
 Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot he sought,  
 Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."  
 —"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,      161  
 Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;  
 Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,  
 I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."—  
 Word on word gave fuel to fire,      165  
 Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,  
 But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,  
 The vassals there their lord had slain.  
 Sore he plied both whip and spur,  
 As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir;  
 And it fell down a weary weight,      171  
 Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

## XI

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,  
 Full fain avengèd would he be.  
 In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke,      175  
 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;      180

---

158. seignory, rule.

159. Galliard, gay; heriot, a tax exacted by the owner of a property from the family of a tenant who had died.

164. Bucksfoot, the horse's name.

177. cast, the number cast or released at once.

179. Beshrew, may it be accursed; an old oath.

180. landed, a participle formed from a noun. *Cf.* "belted Knight," etc.

But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,  
 For he lent me his horse to escape upon."  
 A glad man then was Branksome bold,  
 Down he flung him the purse of gold;  
 To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain, 185  
 And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.  
 He left his merry men in the midst 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. 190  
 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, 195  
 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. 200  
 Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot,  
 To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.

---

185. *amain*, with speed. It sometimes means "with force." For the former use *cf.* II. 196 and V. 27; for the latter II. 393.

187. *merry men*, the stock word for the followers of an outlaw chief; "merry" thus became a permanent epithet, *i. e.*, an adjective which is so frequently attached to a noun as to make with it a common phrase. *Cf.* "green wood," "Merrie England," etc.

189. *wended*, went.

196. *rue*, repent.

197. *wind*, blow.

Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,  
 With rusty spur and miry boot."—  
 He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse,                   205  
 That the dun deer started at fair Craikcross;  
 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.                   211  
 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.                   215  
 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-Haugh men call it still.  
 The Scotts have scattered the Beattison clan,  
 In Eskdale they left but one landed man.           221  
 The valley of Esk, 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;                   225  
 From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,  
     From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,

---

206. Craikcross, a hill near the Teviot.

210. Pentoun-linn, a deep pool near the Teviot.

212. *Sc.*, "If you had been there."

217. bore, pierced.

Trooped man and horse, and bow and spear;  
 Their gathering word was Bellenden.  
 And better hearts o'er Border sod 230  
 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, 235  
 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; 240  
 The red cross, on a southern breast,  
 Is broader than the raven's nest:  
 Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to  
 wield,  
 And o'er him hold his father's shield."

## XIV

Well may you think, the wily page 245  
 Cared not to face the Ladye sage.  
 He counterfeited childish fear,  
 And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,  
 And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.  
 The attendants to the Ladye told, 250  
 Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,  
 That wont to be so free and bold.

---

229. *Bellenden*, the center of the Scotts' estates.

235. *his father's friend*, no one man in particular, but all those who were friendly to his father.

241. *the red cross*, the cross of St. George, the patron saint of England, which was worn on the breasts of the English soldiers.

246. *cared not to face*, because of her skill in magic.

249. *plain'd*, complained, lamented.



Then wrathful was the noble dame;  
 She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—  
 "Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;      255  
 Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—  
 Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide  
 To Rangleburn's lonely side.—  
 Sure some fell fiend has cursed our line,  
 That coward should e'er be son of mine! "      260

## XV

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,  
 To guide the counterfeited lad.  
 Soon as the palfrey felt the weight  
 Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,  
 He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,      265  
 Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.  
 It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil  
 To drive him but a Scottish mile;  
 But as a shallow brook they cross'd,  
 The elf, amid the running stream,      270  
 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,      275  
 And pierced his shoulder through and through.

---

255. faintness, faintheartedness.

258. Rangleburn, a hill. It is pronounced as a four-syllable word by rolling the *r*. Cf. "Unicorn," I. 207.

267. mickle, much.

268. Scottish mile, a little longer than an English mile.

273. urchin, the original meaning was "hedge-hog." Cf. *The Tempest*, I. ii. 326.

274. clothyard shaft, an arrow as long as a yardstick.

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, 280  
 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. 285  
 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, 290  
 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. 295

## 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,

---

277. *imp*, this word originally meant "offspring," "child," and did not have the bad sense which it has since acquired.

291. *Almayn*, German. See lines 76, 77, and stanza xviii.

293. *copse*, a grove of small trees.

295. *helm*, helmet.

296. *forayers*, men sent on foraging expeditions; here scouts.

299. *Kendal*, a town in Westmoreland, then famous for the manufacture of green cloth.

Obedient to the bugle blast, 300  
 Advancing from the wood were seen.  
 To back and guard the archer band,  
 Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand:  
 A hardy race, on Irthing bred,  
 With kirtles white, and crosses red, 305  
 Arrayed beneath the banner tall  
 That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall;  
 And minstrels, as they marched in order,  
 Played, " Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the  
 Border."

## XVIII

Behind the English bill and bow, 310  
 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. 315  
 The camp their home, their law the sword,  
 They knew no country, own'd no lord:  
 They were not arm'd like England's sons,  
 But bore the levin-darting guns;  
 Buff coats, all frounced and 'broider'd o'er, 320  
 And morsing-horns and scarfs they wore;

---

303. **billmen**, men armed with bills, long-handled axes.

304. **Irthing**, a tributary of the Eden, near the border.

305. **crosses red**, the red cross of St. George.

310. **bill and bow**, billmen and bowmen.

311. **mercenaries**, hired soldiers.

319. **levin**, lightning.

320. **frounced**, fringed.

321. **morsing-horns**, powder flasks.

Each better knee was bared, to aid  
 The warriors in the escalade;  
 All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,  
 Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung. 325

## 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, 330  
 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 lady-love. 335  
 So rode they forth in fair array,  
 Till full their lengthen'd lines display;  
 Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,  
 And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

## XX

Now every English eye, intent 340  
 On Branksome's armèd towers was bent;

322. better knee, right knee.

323. escalade, the scaling of walls.

324. ragged tongue, the guttural German speech.

325. Teutonic, the Germans, as the English, belong to the Teutonic branch of the human race.

330. glaive, sword.

331. battle, used for "army."

333. To gain his spurs, a squire, on being made a knight, was presented with a pair of spurs. "To win one's spurs," then, means "to win the honor of knighthood," and hence "to win honor," as here.

334. favor, a love token.

337. display, extend.

So near they were, that they might know  
 The straining harsh of each cross-bow;  
 On battlement and bartizan  
 Gleam'd ax, and spear, and partisan; 345  
 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, 350  
 The seething pitch and molten lead  
 Reek'd, like a witch's caldron red.  
 While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,  
 The wicket opes, and from the wall  
 Rides forth the hoary Seneschal. 355

## XXI

Armed he rode, all save the head,  
 His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;  
 Unbroke by age, erect his seat,  
 He ruled his eager courser's gait;  
 Forced him, with chastened fire, to prance, 360  
 And, high curveting, slow advance:  
 In sign of truce, his better hand  
 Displayed a peeled willow wand;

---

344. **bartizan**, a small overhanging turret projecting from the angles of a wall.

345. **partisan**, a long staff with a steel blade at the end.

346. **falcon and culver**, small cannon.

351. **seething**, boiling.

352. **Reek'd**, smoked.

353. **bridges**, drawbridges.

355. **Seneschal**, steward of the castle.

360. **with chastened fire**, with subdued spirit.

362. **better hand**. *Cf.* line 322 above.

His squire, attending in the rear,  
 Bore high a gauntlet on a spear. 365  
 When they espied him riding out,  
 Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout  
 Sped to the front of their array,  
 To hear what this old knight should say.

## XXII

“Ye English warden lords, of you 370  
 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 your mercenary band 375  
 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, 380  
 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 Seneschel, 385  
 To seek the castle's outward wall,

---

365. “A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when anyone broke his word, to expose this emblem, and proclaim him a faithless villain at the first Border meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded.”—*Scott*.

377. reads, advises.

swith, quickly.

384. took the word, spoke up.

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; 390  
 Each chief around lean'd on his spear,  
 To see the pursuivant appear.  
 All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,  
 The lion argent deck'd his breast;  
 He led a boy of blooming hue— 395  
 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 400  
 '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: 405  
 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.

---

387. **pursuivant**, messenger or herald.

394. **argent**, in heraldry, the color silver; the silver lion is the crest of the Howards.

400. **irks**, distresses.

403. **Wardenry**, that part of the country under the rule of a warden.

404. **contemning**, despising.

407. **flemens-firth**, a refuge for outlaws.

409. **march-treason**, the name of several offenses against the Border or March law, among which was riding against the opposite side in time of truce.

**pain**, punishment.

It was but last St. Cuthbert's even 410  
 He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,  
 Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,  
 And slew his brother by dint of glaive.  
 Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame  
 These restless riders may not tame, 415  
 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, 420  
 Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

## XXV

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,  
 And stretch'd his little arms on high;  
 Implored for aid each well-known face,  
 And strove to seek the Dame's embrace. 425  
 A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,  
 Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;  
 She gazed upon the leaders round,  
 And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;  
 Then, deep within her sobbing breast 430  
 She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;  
 Unaltered and collected stood,  
 And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

---

410. St. Cuthbert's even, the night before March 20, St. Cuthbert's Day.

413. dint, force; blow.

418. warrison, here used in the sense of "war sound."

421. King Edward, Edward VI.



## XXVI

" Say to your Lords of high emprise,  
 Who war on women and on boys, 435  
 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 440  
 But William may count with him kin and blood.  
 Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,  
 When English blood swelled Ancram's ford;  
 And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,  
 And bare him ably in the flight, 445  
 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. 450  
 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."

---

434. of high emprise, who undertake important enterprises; ironical.

442. Knighthood could originally be conferred by anyone who was himself a knight.

443. "The Battle of Ancram Moor, or Penielheuch, was fought A. D. 1545. The English, commanded by Sir Ralph Evers and Sir Brian Latoun, were totally routed, and both their leaders slain in the action. The Scottish army was commanded by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, assisted by the Laird of Buccleuch and Norman Lesley."—*Scott*.

444. wight, swift and strong.

447. For, as for.

453. slogan, war cry.

lyke-wake, the watching of a dead body before its burial.  
 dirge, a song of mourning.

## XXVII

Proud she looked round, applause to claim— 455  
 Then lightened Thirlestane's eye of flame;  
     His bugle Watt of Harden blew;  
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,  
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,  
 "St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!" 460  
 The English war cry answered wide,  
     And forward bent each Southern spear;  
 Each Kendal archer made a stride,  
     And drew the bowstring to the ear;  
 Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown; 465  
 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, 470  
 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; 475  
 The lances, waving in his train,  
 Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;

---

458. Pensils, small pennons.

470. What make you? What are you doing?

473. toils, snare.

474. Ruberslaw, a hill in Teviotdale.

475. The Douglas, the head of the Douglas clan.  
 weapon-schaw, a muster of forces.

And on the Liddel's northern strand,  
 To bar retreat to Cumberland,  
 Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good,      480  
 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.      485  
 An exile from Northumberland,  
     In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;  
 But still my heart was with merry England,  
     And cannot brook my country's wrong;  
 And hard I've spurr'd all night, to show      490  
 The mustering of the coming foe."

## XXIX

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried,  
 "For soon yon crest, my father's pride,  
 That swept the shores of Judah's sea,  
 And waved in gales of Galilee,      495  
 From Branksome's highest towers display'd,  
 Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—

481. the eagle and the rood, the arms of Lord Maxwell.

482. Jedwood, the people of Jedwood, a town near Branksome.

Eske, a tributary of the Solway Firth.

Teviotdale, the valley of the Teviot.

484. Merse, part of Berwickshire.

Lauderdale, the western part of Berwickshire.

485. Home, head of the family whose seat was Home Castle in Berwickshire.

487. Liddesdale, the valley of the Liddel.

489. brook, endure.

494. See note on 75 above.

Judah's sea, Galilee.

Level each harquebuss on row;  
 Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;  
 Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry, 500  
 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? 505  
 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, 510  
 Ere conscious of the advancing aid:  
 Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine  
 In single fight, and, if he gain,  
 He gains for us; but if he's cross'd,  
 'Tis but a single warrior lost: 515  
 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;

---

498. harquebuss, musket.

505. the blanche lion, the “ lion argent ” of line 394.

509. Certes, surely.

desperate policy, to set 3000 English against 10,000 Scots would only be justified in desperate circumstances.

511. Ere conscious of, before she knew. Lord Howard did not know that the magic art of the Ladye furnished her with secret intelligence.

514. cross'd, defeated.

And yet his forward step he stayed, 520  
 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. 525

## 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, 530  
 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, 535  
 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, 540  
 Unharming Scotts, by Scotts unharmed,  
 In peaceful march, like men unarmed,  
 Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

---

528. **parleying strain**, notes sounding parley, or meeting for discussion.

530. **right**, behalf.

534. **list**, the space marked out for fighting.

538. **foil**, defeat.

## XXXIII

Unconscious of the near relief,  
 The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,           545  
     Though much the Ladye sage gainsayed;  
 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               550  
     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 inclosed with speed,       555  
 Beneath the castle, on a lawn:  
 They fix'd the morrow for the strife,  
 On foot, with Scottish ax and knife,  
     At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;  
 When Deloraine, from sickness freed,           560  
 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,               565

545. proffer, offer.

546. gainsayed, opposed.

548. **Jedwood's recent sack.** In 1545 the English, under the Earl of Hertford, afterward the Protector Somerset, plundered Jedwood.

549. **the Regent**; when, in 1542, James V. died, the Earl of Ar-ran made himself Regent for the infant Mary, Queen of Scots, and held the office till 1554.

551. prescience, foreknowledge.

552. **the art**, the magic art.

Such combat should be made on horse,  
 On foaming steed, in full career,  
 With brand to aid, when as the spear  
     Should shiver in the course:  
 But he, the jovial Harper, taught                   570  
 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.                                 575  
 He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue  
 Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,  
     Or call his song untrue:  
 For this, when they the goblet plied,  
 And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,           580  
     The Bard of Reull he slew.  
 On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,  
 And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;  
 Where still the thorn's white branches wave,  
 Memorial o'er his rival's grave.                         585

567. in full career, at full speed.

568. when as, when.

570. the jovial Harper, the minstrel's teacher. "One of our ancient Border minstrels, called Rattling Roaring Willie. This name was probably derived from his bullying disposition; being, it would seem, such a roaring boy as is frequently mentioned in old plays."—*Scott*.

574. Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws, a collection of regulations for the conduct of Border warfare made by a Lord Archibald Douglas in the fourteenth century.

577. tax . . . with wrong, find fault.

581. See note on line 570 above. *Scott* gives an account of a quarrel the Harper had with a brother minstrel whom he killed. The murdered minstrel was known by the name of Sweet Milk, from a place on Rule Water so called.

584. thorn's white branches. "A thorn tree marks the scene of the murder, which is still called Sweet Milk Thorn."—*Scott*.

## XXXV

Why should I tell the rigid doom,  
 That dragg'd my master to his tomb,  
     How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,  
 Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,  
 And wrung their hands for love of him,           590  
     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,                   595  
 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           600  
 Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.  
 With many a word of kindly cheer,—  
 In pity half, and half sincere,—  
 Marveled the Duchess how so well  
 His legendary song could tell—                   605  
 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;   610  
 Of chiefs, who under their gray stone

---

588. Ousenam's maidens. Willie was taken while sleeping in a meadow near Ousenam Water, and carried to Jedburgh or Jedtown for execution.

591. Air, assizes.



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;      615  
In sooth, 'twas strange this old man's verse  
Could call them from their marble hearse.

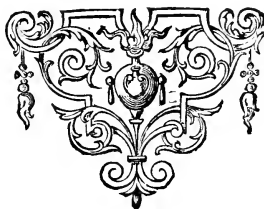
The Harper smiled, well-pleased; for ne'er  
Was flattery lost on poet's ear:  
A simple race! they waste their toil      620  
For the vain tribute of a smile;  
E'en when in age their flame expires,  
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:  
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,  
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.      625

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

---

614. *minion*, favorite.

617. *hearse*, used for tomb.





## CANTO FIFTH

Deloraine, being wounded, was expected to appear by a champion, and some contention arises for the honor of that substitution. This, however, is speedily terminated by a person in the armor of the warrior himself, who encounters the English champion, slays him, and leads the captive young chieftain to the embraces of his mother. At this moment Deloraine himself appears, half clothed and unarmed, to claim the combat which has terminated in his absence; and all flock around the stranger who had personated him so successfully. He unclasps his helmet, and behold! Lord Cranstoun of Teviotdale! The lady, overcome with gratitude, and the remembrance of the Spirit's prophecy, consents to forego the feud, and to give the fair hand of Margaret to the enamored baron.

### I

CALL it not vain:—they do not err,  
Who say, that when the Poet dies,  
Mute Nature mourns her worshiper,  
And celebrates his obsequies:

---

1. Call it not vain. The minstrel knows that the fancy *is* vain, but the love that he bears to his old master and fellow-minstrels, the mention of whom, at the end of the last Canto, occasions this lament, makes him appeal to his hearers to allow him to cherish the fancy.

3. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*:

“Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o’ergrown  
And all their echoes mourn,”

and Shelley's *Adonais*, xiv.:

“And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.”

Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone, 5  
 For the departed Bard make moan;  
 That mountains weep in crystal rill;  
 That flowers in tears of balm distill;  
 Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,  
 And oaks, in deeper groan, reply; 10  
 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, 15  
 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. 20  
 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, 25  
 Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead;  
 Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,  
 And shrieks along the battle plain.  
 The Chief, whose antique crownlet long  
 Still sparkled in the feudal song, 30

---

13. The minstrel now gives up his first fancy, and indulges in another, that the mountains and groves are haunted by spirits of those about whom the poet has sung.

Mortal urn, the tomb,

Now, from the mountain's misty throne,  
 Sees, in the thanedom once his own,  
 His ashes undistinguish'd lie,  
 His place, his power, his memory die:  
 His groans the lonely caverns fill, 35  
 His tears of rage impel the rill:  
 All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,  
 Their names unknown, their praise unsung.

## III

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,  
 The terms of truce were scarcely made, 40  
 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, 45  
 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; 50  
 The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,  
 Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!

---

32. **thanedom**, the lands which he ruled as thane.

46. "Flashed moment by moment, reflecting the sun's rays."

49. **Vails**, avails.

50. **Middle Marches**, one of the three parts into which the Border lands were divided.

51. Robert Bruce committed his heart to a Lord James Douglas, to be carried to the Holy Land, and "the bloody heart" was thereafter emblazoned on the banners of the Douglas clan.

Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,  
 Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne  
 Their men in battle-order set; 55  
 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, 60  
 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!" 65

## 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;

---

53. **Spurn.** *Sc.*, "the earth"; curvet.

54. **Seven spears of Wedderburne**, the seven sons of Sir David Home of Wedderburne, who was slain at Flodden Field.

56. **Swinton.** "At the battle of Beaugé, in France, the Duke of Clarence, brother of Henry V., was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet of precious stones which he wore round his crest."—*Scott*.

59. **Nor list I**, nor does it please me.

60. **Lammermore**, a ridge in Berwickshire.

62. **the crest of old Dunbar.** "The Earls of Home, descendants of the Dunbars, carried a lion rampant, argent" (heraldic terms for the figure of a lion on its hind legs, worked in silver). The family war-cry was "A Home! A Home!"—*Scott*.

63. **Hepburn's mingled banners.** "The Hepburns, a powerful family in East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with the Homes."—*Scott*.

69. **Meet**, suitable.

And told them,—how a truce was made, 70  
 And how a day of fight was ta'en  
 'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;  
 And how the Ladye prayed them dear,  
 That all would stay the fight to see,  
 And deign, in love and courtesy, 75  
 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 80  
 Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.  
 Accepted Howard, than whom knight  
 Was never dubb'd more bold in fight;  
 Nor, when from war and armor free,  
 More famed for stately courtesy: 85  
 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 90  
 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, 95

---

71. ta'en, taken, fixed.

83. dubbed, made a knight by being tapped on the shoulder with the flat of the sword.

87. pavilion, tent.

91. set, made.

93. Cf. Acts ix. 1.: "breathing out threatenings and slaughter."

They met on Teviot's strand;  
 They met and sate them mingled down,  
 Without a threat, without a frown,  
     As brothers meet in foreign land:  
 The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,      100  
 Still in the mailèd gauntlet clasp'd,  
     Were interchanged in greeting dear;  
 Visors were raised and faces shown,  
 And many a friend, to friend made known,  
     Partook of social cheer.      105  
 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.      110

## 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:      115  
 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,      120

---

101. mailed gauntlet, a steel-covered glove.

106. drove the jolly bowl about. This may mean "Passed the wine cup around," but it is more probable that it refers to the game of bowls.

107. draughts, checkers.

115. had, would have.

119. whinger, a short knife or poniard.

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, 125  
 In peaceful merriment, sunk down  
 The sun's declining ray.

## VIII

The blithesome sights of wassail gay  
 Decayed not with the dying day;  
 Soon through the latticed windows tall 130  
 Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,  
 Divided square by shafts of stone,  
 Huge flakes of ruddy luster shone;  
 Nor less the gilded rafters rang  
 With merry harp and beakers' clang: 135  
 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 revelers o'er their bowls proclaim 140  
 Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

## IX

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,  
 At length the various clamors died:

---

128. **wassail**, merriment, revelry. From the Old English "waes hael," "be of good health," a common drinking salutation.

130. **latticed**, having a frame composed of strips crossing one another like network.

132. **divided square**, divided into squares by the stone lattice-work.



And you might hear from Branksome hill,  
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;           145  
 Save when the changing sentinel  
 The challenge of his watch could tell;  
 And save, where, through the dark profound,  
 The clanging ax and hammer's sound  
 Rung from the nether lawn;                   150  
 For many a busy hand toiled there,  
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,  
 The list's dread barriers to prepare  
 Against the morrow's dawn.

## X

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,           155  
 . Despite the Dame's reproving eye;  
 Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,  
 Full many a stifled sigh;  
 For many a noble warrior strove  
 To win the Flower of Teviot's love,           160  
 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;           165  
 While yet the banner'd hosts repose,

---

148. the dark profound, the wide, deep space between Branksome hill and the "nether lawn."

So Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ii. 438:

"the void profound of unessential night,"

and Pope (*Iliad*, xxiv. 107), speaking of the sea:

"She plunged, and instant shot the dark profound."

150. nether, lower.

152. pales, palings.

163. all, used intensively, as in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, iii.:

"All in a hot and copper sky."

165. By times, betimes, early.

She view'd the dawning day:  
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,  
First woke the loveliest and the best.

## XI

She gazed upon the inner court, 170  
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,— 175  
A stately warrior pass'd below;  
But when he raised his plumed head—  
Blessed Mary! can it be?—  
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,  
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,  
With fearless step and free. 181  
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—  
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,  
His blood the price must pay!  
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears, 185  
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

---

182. sign, make a sign.

185. Queen Mary, Mary of Guise, widow of James V., and at this time Regent.

188. hazard, risk.

189. spell, see note on I. 3.

Of that sly urchin page: 190  
 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, 195  
 For all the vassalage:  
 But oh! what magic's quaint disguise  
 Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!  
 She started from her seat;  
 While with surprise and fear she strove, 200  
 And both could scarcely master love—  
 Lord Henry's at her feet.

## XIII

Offt have I mused, what purpose bad  
 That foul, malicious urchin had  
 To bring this meeting round; 205  
 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 210  
 Sorrow, and sin, and shame;  
 And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,  
 And to the gentle Ladye bright,  
 Disgrace, and loss of fame.

---

192. *glamour*, see note on III. 103.

193. *Hermitage*, a castle in Roxburghshire, the property of the Douglas family. Hence a Knight from Hermitage would be welcome at Branksome.

196. *For all*, in spite of all.

197. *quaint*, in its Old English sense of "strange."

207. *sprite*, spirit.

But earthly spirit could not tell 215  
 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; 220  
     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, 225  
 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; 230  
 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, 235  
 The combatants' approach to view,

---

215. **earthly spirit.** In this case, the page.

217-222. *Cf.* Byron's *Giaour*:

"Yes, love, indeed, is light from heaven,  
     A spark of that immortal fire  
     With angels shared, by Allah given,  
     To lift from earth our low desire."

219. **fantasy, fancy.**

230. **port,** "A martial piece of music adapted to the bagpipes."—  
*Scott.*

234. **Ettrick wood,** in Selkirkshire.

And bandied many a word of boast,  
About the knight each favor'd most.

## XV

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;  
For now arose disputed claim, 240  
Of who should fight for Deloraine,  
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane:  
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,  
And frowning brow on brow was bent;  
But yet not long the strife—for, lo! 245  
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,  
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,  
In armor sheath'd from top to toe,  
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.  
The Dame her charm successful knew, 250  
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

## XVI

When for the lists they sought the plain,  
The stately Ladye's silken rein  
Did noble Howard hold;  
Unarmèd by her side he walk'd, 255  
And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd  
Of feats of arms of old.

---

237. bandied, exchanged.

243. 'gan, with the apostrophe, a shortened form of began; without the apostrophe it is the past tense of the Old English *ginnan*. The meaning is the same.

244. Cf. *Richard II.* I. i. 15: "face to face  
And frowning brow to brow."

250. Cf. III. stanza xxiii.

252. for, in order to reach. Cf. IV. 28.

Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff  
 Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,  
     With satin slash'd and lined;                               260  
 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;                               265  
 Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still  
 Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

## XVII

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,  
 Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,  
     Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:                               270  
 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;                               275  
 Without his aid, her hand in vain  
 Had strove to guide her broidered rein.

---

258. Flemish ruff, a frilled collar, originally made in Flanders.

259. buff, a kind of leather, of the color of the same name.

264. Bilboa, a town near the N. E. coast of Spain, famous for its steel.

Marchmen, dwellers in the marches or borderlands.

269. palfrey, a saddle horse. See note to Introduction, 13.

270. foot cloth, a long saddle cloth.

271. wimple, the linen covering for the head and neck, now worn only by nuns.

274. Angus, Archibald Douglas, seventh Earl of Angus.

277. Had strove, would have striven.

He deemed, she shuddered at the sight  
 Of warriors met for mortal fight;  
 But cause of terror, all unguessed, 280  
 Was fluttering in her gentle breast,  
 When, in their chairs of crimson placed,  
 The Dame and she the barriers graced.

## XVIII

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,  
 An English Knight led forth to view; 285  
 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, 290  
 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, 295  
     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, 300  
 Till thus the alternate Heralds spoke:—

---

280. **cause of terror**, Cranstoun had told Margaret of his determination to impersonate Deloraine.

290. **leading-staffs**, batons carried as marks of authority.

293. **Like vantage**, equal advantage.

295. **King of England**, Queen of Scotland.

## 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.           305  
 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,           310  
 Good knight and true, of noble strain,  
 Who sayeth that foul treason's stain,  
 Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat;  
 And that, so help him God above!  
 He will on Musgrave's body prove,           315  
 He lies most foully in his throat."

## LORD DACRE

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

---

302-318. *Cf.* similar speeches in *Richard II. I. iii.*

303. *freely born*, free born.

305. *despiteous*, malicious.

*scathe*, harm.

311. *strain*, descent; family.

313. *coat*, coat-of-arms. Here *cf.* the expression "Blot on the 'scutcheon."



## LORD HOME

—“ God defend the right! ”—

Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,  
 When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang 320  
     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, 325  
 Ye lovely listeners, to hear  
 How to the ax the helms did sound,  
 And blood pour'd down from many a wound;  
 For desperate was the strife and long,  
 And either warrior fierce and strong. 330  
 But, were each dame a listening knight,  
 I well could tell how warriors fight!  
 For I have seen war's lightning flashing,  
 Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,  
 Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,  
 And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife, 336  
 To yield a step for death or life.—

## XXII

'T is done, 't is done! that fatal blow  
 Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;

---

324. did close, came to close quarters.

334. claymore, a large broadsword.

338-367. Note how the use of the present tense makes the description more real.

He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no! 340  
 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!— 345  
 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;— 350  
 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; 355  
 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, 360  
 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! 365

---

344. *gorget*, throat armor.

346. *bootless*, useless.

348. *shriven*, to "shrive" a man is to hear his confession and give him absolution.

359. *darkening eye*, eye to which all things are becoming dark.

364. *ghostly*, spiritual.

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; 370  
His beaver did he not unclasp,  
Marked not the shouts, nor felt the grasp  
Of gratulating hands.  
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,  
Mingled with seeming terror, rise 375  
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: 380  
He cross'd the barriers at a bound,  
And wild and haggard look'd around,  
As dizzy, and in pain;  
And all, upon the armèd ground,  
Knew William of Deloraine! 385  
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 plumèd helm was soon undone— 390  
“Cranstoun of Teviot-side!

---

371. **beaver**, a movable part of the helmet covering the lower portion of the face.

373. **gratulating**, congratulating.

378. **panic**, here an adjective.

387. **Vaulted**, leaped.

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

## XXV

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,  
And often press'd him to her breast; 395  
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 kneelèd at her feet.  
Me lists not tell what words were made, 400  
What Douglas, Home, and Howard, said—  
—For Howard was a generous foe—  
And how the clan united pray'd  
The Ladye would the feud forgo,  
And deign to bless the nuptial hour 405  
Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

## XXVI

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,  
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,  
Then broke her silence stern and still,—  
“Not you, but Fate, has vanquish'd me. 410  
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,

---

400. Me lists not tell, I do not care to tell.

404. feud, a quarrel between families.

405. bless the nuptial hour, consent to the marriage.

408. prophecy, *cf.* I. 177-179.

413. quell'd, put down, conquered.

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, 420  
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, 425

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, 430

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 435

Her mystic arts in view of day;  
But well she thought, ere midnight came,  
Of that strange page the pride to tame,

---

423. All, used intensively.

429. *gramarye*, as in III. 140. From Old French *gramaire*, “grammar,” the “grammar” having been regarded as a book of secret science from which one could learn how to confound the devil.

430, *dight*, clad.

From his foul hands the Book to save,  
 And send it back to Michael's grave.— 440  
 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. 445  
 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, 450  
 Another, in his arms and shield,  
 Against fierce Musgrave ax did wield,  
     Under the name of Deloraine.  
 Hence, to the field, unarmed, he ran,  
 And hence his presence scared the clan, 455  
 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: 460  
 He would not waken old debate,  
 For he was void of rancorous hate,  
     Though rude, and scant of courtesy;

---

440. The grave of Michael Scott at Melrose Abbey, from which the Book had been taken by Deloraine.

456. *wraith*, "the spectral apparition of a living person."

459. *what hap had proved*, what the result had been.

461. *debate*, strife.

462. *rancorous*, spiteful.

In raids he spilt but seldom blood,  
 Unless when men-at-arms withstood, 465  
 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 look'd down; 470  
 Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,  
 Though half disguisèd with a frown;  
 And thus, while sorrow bent his head,  
 His foeman's epitaph he made:—

## XXIX

" Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here! 475  
 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, 480  
 Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,  
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.  
 And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,  
 And thou wert now alive, as I,  
 No mortal man should us divide, 485  
 Till one, or both of us, did die:  
 Yet rest thee God! for well I know  
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.

---

474. epitaph, strictly speaking, an inscription on a tomb, here used more in the sense of "eulogy."

480. Naworth Castle, Lord Howard's castle near Carlisle.

481. mark, a mark is worth about \$3.30 in our money.

482. long of, because of; usually "along of."

In all the northern counties here,  
 Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear, 490  
 Thou wert the best to follow gear!  
 'T was pleasure, as we look'd behind,  
 To see how thou the chase could'st wind,  
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,  
 And with the bugle rouse the fray! 495  
 I'd give the lands of Deloraine,  
 Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

## XXX

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band  
 Were bowning back to Cumberland.  
 They raised brave Musgrave from the field, 500  
 And laid him on his bloody shield;  
 On leveled lances, four and four,  
 By turns the noble burden bore.  
 Before, at times, upon the gale,  
 Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail; 505  
 Behind, four priests, in sable stole,  
 Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:

---

490. word, watchword.

Snaffle, spur, and spear, Scott says that he took this from Drayton's *Polyolbion*, song 13 :

"The lands that over Ouse to Berwick forth do bear.  
 Have for their blazon had the snaffle, spur, and spear."

491. to follow gear, to go in pursuit of those who had carried off booty.

499. bowning, going. Cf. III. 292.

506. in sable stole, a black tunic reaching to the ground. Cf. *Il Penseroso*, 35 :

"And sable stole of cypress lawn,  
 Over thy decent shoulders drawn."

507. requiem, a hymn for the repose of the souls of the dead, so called from the first word of the Latin: *Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine* (give eternal rest to them, O Lord).



Around, the horsemen slowly rode;  
 With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;  
 And thus the gallant Knight they bore, 510  
 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; 515  
 Now seems it far, and now anear,  
 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, 520  
 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, 525  
 Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,  
 Wander a poor and thankless soil,  
 When the more generous Southern Land  
 Would well requite his skillful hand.

---

511. *Leven*, a small river in Cumberland.

512. *Holme Coltrame*, an abbey in North Cumberland.  
*nave*, the body of a Church.

516. *anear*, near; *cf.* Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, 310 :  
 "And soon I heard a roaring wind :  
 It did not come anear."

521. *loads the gale*, fills the air.

523. *stave*, in the sense of "stanza."

527. *Wander*, usually used intransitively; for the transitive use,  
*cf.* the expressions "walk the street," "sail the sea," etc.

The aged Harper, howsoe'er 530  
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; 535  
High was the sound, as thus again  
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain.

---

535. Misprized, did not do justice to.





## CANTO SIXTH

The rites of betrothment are then celebrated with great magnificence, and a splendid entertainment given to all the English and Scottish chieftains whom the alarm had assembled at Branksome. Lord Cranstoun's page plays several unlucky tricks during the festival, and breeds some dissension among the warriors. To soothe their ireful mood the minstrels are introduced, who recite three ballad pieces of considerable merit. Just as their songs are ended a supernatural darkness spreads itself through the hall; a tremendous flash of lightning and peal of thunder ensue, which break just on the spot where the goblin page had been seated, who is heard to say, "Found! found! found!" and is no more to be seen when the darkness clears away. The whole party is chilled with terror at this extraordinary incident, and Deloraine protests that he distinctly saw the figure of the ancient wizard, Michael Scott, in the middle of the lightning. The lady renounces forever the unhallowed study of magic; and all the chieftains, struck with awe and consternation, vow to make a pilgrimage to Melrose to implore rest and forgiveness for the spirit of the departed sorcerer. With the description of this ceremony the Minstrel closes his lay.

### I

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!

---

1. The main interest of the narrative ceased with the betrothal of Margaret and Lord Cranstoun. The last canto serves to get rid of the goblin page, who was left unaccounted for.

The first two stanzas are in answer to the question of the ladies, why the minstrel wandered through "the poor and thankless soil of Scotland," when "the more generous Southern land" was open to him.

Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,  
 As home his footsteps he hath turn'd, 5  
 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; 10  
 Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
 The wretch, concentered all in self,  
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
 And, doubly dying, shall go down  
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung, 15  
 Unwept, unhonor'd, and unsung.

## II

O Caledonia! stern and wild,  
 Mect nurse for a poetic child!  
 Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,  
 Land of the mountain and the flood, 20  
 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, 25  
 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.

---

8. raptures, joyful strains of music. Cf. Milton's *Comus*, 247:  
 "with these raptures move the vocal air  
 To testify his hidden residence."

11. pelf, wealth.

14. doubly dying, in body and in fame. Cf. V. 20.

17. Caledonia, poetic name for Scotland.

26. seems as, it seems as if.

By Yarrow's streams still let me stray, 30  
 Though none should guide my feeble way;  
 Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,  
 Although it chill my wither'd cheek;  
 Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,  
 Though there, forgotten and alone, 35  
 The Bard may draw his parting groan.

## III

Not scorned like me! to Branksome Hall  
 The Minstrels came, at festive call;  
 Trooping they came, from near and far,  
 The jovial priests of mirth and war; 40  
 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, 45  
 Rose the portcullis' iron grate;  
 They sound the pipe, they strike the string,  
 They dance, they revel, and they sing,  
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

## IV

Me lists not at this tide declare 50  
 The splendor of the spousal rite,  
 How mustered in the chapel fair  
 Both maid and matron, squire and knight;

---

32. down Ettrick break, blow in gusts down the valley of the Ettrick. Lines 30-33 are inscribed on Scott's monument in the market-place of Selkirk.

43. Of late, when the hostile armies met before Branksome.

46. portcullis, an iron grating.

Me lists not tell of ouches rare,  
 Of mantles green, and braided hair, . 55  
 And kirtles furr'd with miniver;  
 What plumage waved the altar round,  
 How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;  
 And hard it were for bard to speak  
 The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek; 60  
 That lovely hue which comes and flies,  
 As awe and shame alternate rise!

## v

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high  
 Chapel nor altar came not nigh;  
 Nor durst the rites of spousal grace, 65  
 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: 70  
 Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,  
 Who tamper with such dangerous art.

---

54. *ouches*, golden ornaments studded with gems. *Cf.* Exodus xxviii. 11: "Thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold."

56. *miniver*, a white fur with black spots.

57. *What plumage*, the plumes of what knights.

58. *chainlets*, small chains.

68. "Popular belief, though contrary to the doctrines of the Church, made a favorable distinction betwixt magicians, and necromancers or wizards; the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league and compact with, those enemies of mankind."—*Scott*.

70. *in planetary hour*, the time at which the particulars planets concerned were favorable to the exercise of the "mighty words and signs."

But this for faithful truth I say,  
 The Ladye by the altar stood,  
 Of sable velvet her array, 75  
 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. 80

## VI

The spousal rites were ended soon:  
 'Twas now the merry hour of noon,  
 And in the lofty archèd hall  
 Was spread the gorgeous festival.  
 Steward and squire, with heedful haste, 85  
 Marshal'd the rank of every guest;  
 Pages, with ready blade, were there,  
 The mighty meal to carve and share:  
 O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,  
 And princely peacock's gilded train, 90  
 And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,

---

78. *guarded*, bordered.

79. *merlin*, "a merlin, or sparrow hawk, was actually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, the constant attendant of a knight or baron."—*Scott*.

89. *capon*, a fattened cock.

*heron-shew*, a young heron.

90. *peacock*. "The peacock was considered during the times of chivalry, not merely as an exquisite delicacy, but as a dish of peculiar solemnity. After being roasted, it was again decorated with its plumage, and a sponge, dipped in lighted spirits of wine, was placed in its bill."—*Scott*.

91. *boar-head*. "The boar's head was also a usual dish of feudal splendor. In Scotland it was sometimes surrounded with little banners, displaying the colors and achievements of the baron at whose board it was served."—*Scott*.

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, 95  
 Above, beneath, without, within!  
 For, from the lofty balcony,  
 Rung trumpet, shalm, and psaltery:  
 Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,  
 Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd; 100  
 Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,  
 To ladies fair; and ladies smiled,  
 The hooded hawks, high perch'd on beam,  
 The clamor join'd with whistling scream,  
 And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,  
 In concert with the stag-hounds' yells. 106  
 Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,  
 From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;  
 Their tasks the busy sewers ply,  
 And all is mirth and revelry. 110

## VII

The Goblin Page, omitting still  
 No opportunity of ill,  
 Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,  
 To rouse debate and jealousy;

---

92. *cygnet*, a young swan.

94. *spoke his benison*, said grace.

98. *shalm*, a musical instrument, something like a clarinet.

*psaltery*, a stringed instrument, like a harp.

103. *hooded*. When the hawks were not employed in hunting, they had little hoods upon their heads.

105. *bells*, attached to their wings.

108. *Bordeaux*, in S. W. France. *Orleans*, in central France. *The Rhine*, the river flowing through Germany and Holland into the North Sea.

109. *sewers*, table servants.



Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein, 115  
 By nature fierce, and warm with wine,  
 And now in humor highly cross'd,  
 About some steeds his band had lost,  
 High words to words succeeding still,  
 Smote with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill; 120  
 A hot and hardy Rutherford,  
 Whom men call Dickon Draw-the-sword.  
 He took it on the page's saye,  
 Hunthill had driven these steeds away.  
 Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose, 125  
 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 drench'd in blood, 130  
 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, 135  
 That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

## VIII

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye  
 Might his foul treachery espy,

---

115. Conrad, the leader of the German mercenaries. See IV. xviii.

122. "Dickon Draw-the-Sword was son to the ancient warrior called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill, remarkable for leading into battle nine sons, gallant warriors, all sons of the ancient champion."

123. saye, word.

128. bit his glove, a symbol of mortal revenge.

132. lyme-dog, a dog held in by a lyme or leash.

Now sought the castle buttery,  
 Where many a yeoman, bold and free,                   140  
 Revel'd as merrily and well  
 As those that sat in lordly selle.  
 Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise  
 The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;  
 And he, as by his breeding bound,                   145  
 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,                   150  
 Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;  
 While shout the riders every one;  
 Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan,  
 Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,  
 When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.                   155

---

139. buttery, pantry.

142. selle, seat.

143, 144. raise the pledge to, drink the health of.

144. Arthur Fire-the-Braes. "The person bearing this redoubtable *nom de guerre* was an Elliot, and resided at Thorleshope in Liddesdale." He occurs in the list of Border riders, in 1597.

145. as by his breeding bound, as good manners required.

146. it, the cup.

147. To quit them (the English), to discharge the obligation.

149. carouse, here, a full glass.

150. vat, a wooden tub.

152. riders, moss-troopers, raiders.

154, 155. Scott notes: "Two brethren, natives of Galloway, having been banished from that country for a riot, came to Rankleburn in Ettrick Forest," where they were welcomed by the keeper "on account of their skill in winding the horn and in the other mysteries of the chase. Kenneth MacAlpin, then King of Scotland, came, soon after to hunt in the royal forest, and pursued a buck from Ettrick-hough to the glen now called Buckclengh. . . Here the stag stood at bay; and the king and his attendants, who followed on horseback, were thrown out by the steepness of the hill and the morass. John, one of the brethren from Galloway, had

## IX

The wily page, with vengeful thought,

Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,

And swore, it should be dearly bought

That ever he the arrow drew.

First, he the yeoman did molest, 160

With bitter gibe and taunting jest;

Told, how he fled at Solway strife,

And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;

Then, shunning still his powerful arm,

At unawares he wrought him harm; 165

From trencher stole his choicest cheer,

Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;

Then, to his knee sly creeping on,

With bodkin pierced him to the bone:

The venom'd wound, and festering joint, 170

Long after rued that bodkin's point.

The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,

And board and flagons overturn'd.

Riot and clamor wild began;

Back to the hall the Urchin ran: 175

---

followed the chase on foot, and now coming in, seized the buck by the horns, and, being a man of great strength and activity, threw him on his back, and ran with his burden about a mile up the steep hill, to a place called Cracra-Cross, where Kenneth had halted, and laid the buck at the sovereign's feet."

cleuch, a small cañon.

157. Tinlinn's yew, the yew bow with which Tinlinn had wounded him. See IV. 274-281.

158. it should be dearly bought, he should pay dearly.

161. gibe, scornful jest.

162. Solway strife. At Solway Moss, in 1542, the Scotch army was seized with a panic, and ran from a few hundred English horsemen.

166. trencher, a wooden plate.

169. bodkin, a small dagger.

172. spurned, kicked, stamped.

Took in a darkling nook his post,  
And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"

## X

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray  
Should mar the concord of the day,  
Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay. 180  
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,  
The Minstrel of that ancient name:  
Was none who struck the harp so well,  
Within the Land Debateable;  
Well friended, too, his hardy kin, 185  
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. 190

## XI

## ALBERT GRÆME

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

---

176. darkling, dark. Cf. Keats' *Eve of St. Agnes*, 355:  
"Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found."

182. of that ancient name. The Græmes were descended from John Græme, the second son of Malice, Earl of Monteith, who lived in the reign of Henry IV.

184. the Land Debateable, part of the Border lands claimed by both England and Scotland.

187. beeves, oxen.

189. In homely guise, in a simple way.

191-222. A simple narrative, modeled on one of the old ballads, from which Scott took the refrain:

"She lean'd her back against a thorn,  
The sun shines fair on Carlisle wa';  
And there she has her young babe born,  
And the lyon shall be lord of a'."

And she would marry a Scottish knight,  
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun, 195  
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; 200  
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 205  
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! 210

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!

---

193. would, was resolved to.

207. not tasted well, had scarcely tasted.

213. all would, all who would.

And then he took the cross divine, 215  
 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,) 220  
 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, 225  
 Renowned in haughty Henry's court:  
 There rung thy harp, unrival'd long,  
 Fitztraver of the silver song!  
 The gentle Surrey loved his lyre—  
 Who has not heard of Surrey's fame? 230  
 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.

---

215. took the cross, went on a crusade.

224. of loftier port, of more imposing appearance. Cf. "portly."

225. sonnet; the sonnet was first introduced into England by Surrey in the reign of Henry VIII.

226. haughty Henry, Henry VIII.

229. The gentle Surrey. "The gallant and unfortunate Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time; and his sonnets display beauties which would do honor to a more polished age. He was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1546, a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII., who could not bear so brilliant a character near his throne."—*Scott*.

## XIV

They sought, together, climes afar,                   235  
 And oft, within some olive grove,  
 When even came with twinkling star,  
 They sung of Surrey's absent love.  
 His step the Italian peasant stay'd,  
 And deem'd, that spirits from on high,               240  
 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               245  
 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.       250  
 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,             255  
 And chief of all his minstrelsy.

---

238. Surrey's absent love, Geraldine, Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of the Earl of Kildare, whom Surrey saw and loved before his imprisonment at Windsor in 1537.

248. Surrey was beheaded in 1546 on a trumped-up charge of treason by the sentence of Henry VIII.

251. Naworth's iron towers, a castle of the Howards, near Carlisle.

## XVI

## FITZTRAVER

'Twas All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat  
high;

He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,  
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,

When wise Cornelius promised, by his art, 260  
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. 265

## XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,  
To which the wizard led the gallant knight,

257-301. Fitztraver's song is written in what is known as the Spenserian stanza, because it was first used in England by Edmund Spenser (1552-98) in his *Faërie Queene*. It has since been used with success by Byron in *Childe Harold*, Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and Shelley in *Adonais*.

"The song of the supposed bard is founded on an incident said to have happened to the Earl in his travels. Cornelius Agrippa, the celebrated alchemist, showed him in a looking-glass the lovely Geraldine, to whose service he had devoted his pen and his sword. The vision represented her as indisposed, and reclining upon a couch, reading her lover's verses by the light of a waxen taper."—*Scott*.

257. All-Souls' Eve, the night before All-Souls' Day, November 2.

260. Cornelius, Cornelius Henry Agrippa (1486-1535), who was by turns secretary to the Emperor Maximilian I., a soldier in Italy, and a magician and alchemist.

263. hight, promised.



Save that before a mirror, huge and high,  
 A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light  
 On mystic implements of magic might;        270  
 On cross and character, and talisman,  
 And almagest, and altar, nothing bright:  
 For fitful was the luster, pale and wan,  
 As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

## XVIII

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,  
 Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;        276  
 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,        280  
 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!

---

271. **character**, the symbol used by astrologers to represent a planet.

**talisman**, a magical image.

272. **almagest**, a collection of problems in astronomy and geometry made by Claudius Ptolemy (140 A. D.).

276. **Self-emitted**, not a reflected light, but arising of itself. It was a magic mirror.

278. **as feverish dream**, as images seen in a dream.

282. **Agra's silken loom**, Agra is in India, and is famous for its silks. The loom is a weaving instrument.

284 **passing**, surpassingly.

285. **Ind**, India.

O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair, 286  
 Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;  
 All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,  
 And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,  
 Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to  
 find:— 290  
 That favor'd strain was Surrey's raptured line,  
 That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

## XX

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,  
 And swept the goodly vision all away—  
 So royal envy roll'd the murky storm 295  
 O'er my belovèd Master's glorious day.  
 Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay  
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line,  
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,  
 The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine, 300  
 The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of  
 Geraldine!

## XXI

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong  
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song;

289. eburnine, made of ivory. From the Latin *Ebur*, ivory.

295. royal envy. See note on line 248 above.

297. ruthless, without pity.

299. caprice, unreasonable act; whim.

300. The gory bridal bed. Henry VIII. married Jane Seymour the day after Anne Boleyn's execution.

the plunder'd shrine. Henry VIII. dismissed the monks, and broke up the monasteries.

These hated Henry's name as death,  
 And those still held the ancient faith.— 305  
 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 310  
 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!— 315  
 Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland rave,  
 As if grim Odin rode her wave;  
 And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,  
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;  
 For all of wonderful and wild 320  
 Had rapture for the lonely child.

304. *These*, the Southern chiefs, one of whom was Howard, a relative of Surrey.

305. *those*, the Scots, who still held the faith of Rome.

311. *Orcades*, the Orkney Islands.

312. "The St. Clairs are of Norman extraction, being descended from William de St. Clair, second son of Walderne Compte de St. Clair, and Margaret, daughter to Richard Duke of Normandy. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Malice Spar, Earl of Orkney and Stratherne, in whose right their son Henry was in 1379 created Earl of Orkney by Haaco King of Norway. In exchange for this earldom the castle and domains of Ravenscraig or Ravensheuch were conferred on William St. Clair, Earl of Caithness."—*Scott*.

*Erst*, once.

315. *Kirkwall* is the capital of the Orkney Islands. The castle was built by the St. Clairs when Earls of Orkney.

316. *fierce Pentland*, the Pentland Frith, between the Islands and the mainland.

317. *Odin*, the chief god of Norse mythology.

318. *the whilst*, meanwhile.

320. *All of*, everything that was.

## 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, 325  
 The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and blood,  
 Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;  
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,  
 Their barks the dragons of the wave.  
 And there, in many a stormy vale, 330  
 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,— 335  
 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;

323 cull, gather.

325. Lochlin, the Gaelic name for Scandinavia.

330. there, in the Orkneys.

331. Scald. Scandinavian minstrel.

332. Runic column, stone upon which were inscriptions in the runes, or letters of the Norse alphabet.

335. Saga, a Scandinavian heroic tale.

336, 337. "The *jormungandr*, or Snake of the Ocean, whose folds surround the earth, is one of the wildest fictions of the Edda [a collection of the Scandinavian mythical tales]. It was very nearly caught by the god Thor, who went to fish for it with a hook baited with a bull's head."—*Scott*.

338. those dread Maids, "the *Valcyriur*, or Selectors of the Slain, despatched by Odin from Valhalla [the Scandinavian heaven] to choose those who were to die and to distribute the contest. They are well known to the English reader as Gray's Fatal Sisters."—*Scott*. They correspond to the classical Furies.

Of chiefs, who, guided through the gloom 340  
 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 350  
 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. 355

—"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.

---

340-345. "The Northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms and their other treasures. . . Their ghosts were not wont tamely to suffer their tombs to be plundered; and hence the mortal heroes had an additional temptation to attempt such adventures; for they held nothing more worthy of their valor than to encounter supernatural beings."—*Scott*.

347. Roslin, near the Frith of Forth.

355. Rosabelle, a family name in the house of St. Clair. This is one of Scott's best ballads, simple, clearly drawn, vigorous, and powerful.

“ The blackening wave is edged with white: 360

To inch and rock the sea-mews cry;

The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,

Whose screams forbode that death is nigh.

“ Last night the gifted seer did view

A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay; 365

Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:

Why cross the gloomy firth to-day? ”—

“ ’T is not because Lord Lindesay’s heir

To-night at Roslin leads the ball,

But that my ladye-mother there 370

Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

“ ’T is 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 fill’d by Rosabelle.”— 375

O’er Roslin all that dreary night,

A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;

’T was broader than the watch-fire’s light,

And redder than the bright moon-beam.

361. inch, island.

362. *Water-sprite*, a spirit supposed to give warning by its cries of the destruction of ships.

364. *Seer*, one gifted with the power of foreseeing future events.

372. *the ring*. “At the ring” is the correct phrase, as in line 373. “A ring was suspended, not tightly fastened, but so that it could be easily detached, from a horizontal beam resting on two upright posts. The players rode at full speed through the archway thus made, and as they went under, passed their lance points, or aimed at passing them, through the ring and so bore it off.”—*Hales*.

374. *the wine will chide*, will grumble at the wine.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock, 380  
 It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;  
 'T was seen from Dryden's groves of oak,  
 And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,  
 Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie, 385  
 Each Baron, for a sable shroud,  
 Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seem'd all on fire within, around,  
 Deep sacristy and altar's pale;  
 Shone every pillar foliage-bound, 390  
 And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,  
 Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—  
 So still they blaze, when fate is nigh  
 The lordly line of high St. Clair. 395

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!

381. ruddied, turned red.

382. *Dryden's groves*, the oak woods of Dryden house, near Roslin.

383. *Hawthornden*, twelve miles south of Edinburgh, and famous as the residence of the poet Drummond.

384. It was a superstition in the St. Clair family that on the night before the death of any of the Lords of Roslin the chapel appeared in flames.

389. *sacristy*, the room where the vestments were kept.  
*pale*, inclosure.

390. *foliage-bound*, carved about with leaves and flowers. *Cf.* the description of Melrose Abbey in Canto II.

392. *pinnet*, pinnacle.

And each St. Clair was buried there, 400  
 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, 406  
 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; 410  
 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; 415  
 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 darkening air, 420  
 A flash of lightning came;  
 So broad, so bright, so red the glare,  
 The castle seemed on flame.

---

411. *apace*, rapidly.

419. The only thing that the page has hitherto said has been  
 "Lost! lost! lost!"



Glanced every rafter of the hall,  
 Glanced every shield upon the wall; 425  
 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 smoldering smoke, 430  
 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, 435  
     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; 440  
 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, 445  
     And some the waving of a gown.  
 The guests in silence pray'd and shook,  
 And terror dimm'd each lofty look.

---

426. trophied, hung with trophies.

428. bedazzled, by the bright light.

429. levin-brand. *Cf.* IV. 319.

434. larum, another form of "alarum" or "alarm."

442. Gylbin. See note on II. 353.

444. him, himself; reflexive.

But none of all the astonish'd train  
 Was so dismay'd as Deloraine; 450  
 His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,  
 'T was fear'd his mind would ne'er return;  
     For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,  
     Like him of whom the story ran,  
     Who spoke the specter-hound in Man. 455  
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,  
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold—  
     That he had seen, right certainly,  
 A shape with amice wrapp'd around,  
 With a wrought Spanish baldric bound, 460  
     Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;  
 And knew—but how it matter'd not—  
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

## XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,  
 All trembling heard the wondrous tale; 465  
     No sound was made, no word was spoke,  
     Till noble Angus silence broke;  
     And he a solemn sacred plight

---

450. Deloraine was the only one who had seen the corpse of Michael Scott.

454, 455. There was a story that a soldier in the Isle of Man in a fit of drunken bravado went out to face an apparition which appeared in the shape of a black spaniel. He soon returned sober to the guardroom, could not speak a word, and three days later died in agony.

459-461. These lines are repeated from II. 214-216, where see the notes.

462. Deloraine, when asked how he knew, said that it did not matter. His visit to Melrose was secret.

468. plight, pledge.

Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,  
 That he a pilgrimage would take 470  
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake  
 Of Michael's restless sprite.  
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,  
 To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd:  
 Some to St. Modan made their vows, 475  
 Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,  
 Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,  
 Some to our Ladye of the Isle;  
 Each did his patron witness make,  
 That he such pilgrimage would take, 480  
 And monks should sing, and bells should toll,  
 All for the weal of Michael's soul.  
 While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,  
 'T is said the noble Dame, dismay'd,  
 Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid. 485

## XXVIII

Naught 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, 'twere vain 490  
 To wake the note of mirth again.  
 More meet it were to mark the day  
 Of penitence and prayer divine,

---

469. St. Bride of Douglas, the patron saint of the house of Douglas.

482. weal, well-being.

489. Teviot's Flower, Margaret.

492. meet, fitting.

were, would be.

When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,  
Sought Melrose' holy shrine. 495

## XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,  
And arms enfolded on his breast,  
Did every pilgrim go;  
The standers by might hear uneath,  
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath, 500  
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 505  
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 510  
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, 515

---

499. *uneath*, hardly, scarcely.

509. *departed brave*, dead warriors.

512. *niche*, a recess in the wall.

515. *cowl*, a monk's hood.

*scapular*, part of a monk's gown, consisting of two bands, one hanging before, one behind.

And snow-white stoles, in order due,  
 The holy Fathers, two and two,  
     In long procession came;  
 Taper, and host, and book they bare,  
 And holy banner, flourish'd fair                   520  
     With the Redeemer's name.  
 Above the prostrate pilgrim band  
 The mitered Abbot stretched his hand,  
     And blessed them as they kneeled;  
 With holy cross he sign'd them all,                   525  
 And pray'd they might be sage in hall,  
     And fortunate in field.  
 Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,  
 And solemn requiem for the dead;  
 And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,                   530  
 For the departed spirit's weal;  
 And ever in the office close  
 The hymn of intercession rose;  
 And far the echoing aisles prolong  
 The awful burthen of the song,—                   535  
     DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,  
     SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;  
 While the pealing organ rung;  
     Were it meet with sacred strain

516. in order due, in order of ecclesiastical rank.

519. host, the consecrated bread in the Mass.

520. flourish'd, embroidered.

523. mitered, having upon his head a miter, or priest's cap.

526. sage in hall, wise in counsel.

532. in the office close, at the conclusion of the various parts of the ritual.

535. burthen, refrain. Here used for the song itself.

536, 537. The first two lines of a Latin Hymn, part of which is paraphrased below, composed in 1230 by Thomas of Celano. "O day of wrath, O day (when) the firmament shall dissolve into ashes."

To close my lay, so light and vain, 540  
Thus the holy Fathers sung:—

## XXXI

## HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,  
When heaven and earth shall pass away,  
What power shall be the sinner's stay?  
How shall he meet that dreadful day? 545

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

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day, 550  
When man to judgment wakes from clay,  
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,  
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

---

HUSH'D is the harp—the Minstrel gone.  
And did he wander forth alone? 555  
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 560  
The little garden hedged with green,

---

543. *Cf.* 2 Peter iii. 10.

549. *Cf.* 1 Cor. xv. 25.

554. *gone*, from the "room of state" in Newark Castle. See Introduction.

556. *indigence*, want.

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, 565  
 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; 570  
 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, 575  
 And circumstance of chivalry,  
 Till the rapt traveler would stay,  
 Forgetful of the closing day;  
 And noble youths, the strain to hear,  
 Forsook the hunting of the deer; 580  
 And Yarrow, as he rolled along,  
 Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

---

568. Bowhill, "a seat of the Duke of Buccleuch. It stands immediately below Newark Hill, and above the junction of the Yarrow and the Ettrick."—*Lockhart*.

571. throstles, thrushes.

shaw, a wood.

572. haugh, a hill.

577. rapt, enraptured; charmed.

582. Bore burden to, was the accompaniment to.

Of the closing lines of the *Lay* Lockhart says: "In these charming lines he has embodied what was, at the time when he penned them, the chief day-dream of Ashestiel. From the moment that his uncle's death placed a considerable sum of ready money at his command, he pleased himself, as we have seen, with the idea of buying a mountain farm, and becoming not only the 'sheriff' (as he had in former days delighted to call himself), but 'the laird of the cairn and the scaur.'"





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