

ASHESTIEL

The book cover is framed by an ornate border. At the top and bottom are horizontal bands of roses. On the left and right sides are tall, fluted columns. Each column is topped with a vase of roses and has a smaller vase of roses at its base. The columns are connected by decorative scrollwork. The entire design is rendered in a light, sketchy line style.

The Lay of The Last Minstrel

By
Sir Walter Scott

Edited by Margaret Andrews Allen

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Edinburgh

Melrose to Edinburgh . . . 32 miles
 Melrose to Branksome . . . 15 miles
 Branksome to Carlisle . . . 35 miles

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh
 Berwick
 Kelso
 Jedburgh
 Branksome
 Carlisle

Tweed R.
 Ettrick R.
 Yarrow R.
 R. Ancrum
 R. Liddel
 Esk R.

ETTRICK FOREST
 NEWARK CASTLE
 BOW HILL
 TODSHAW HILL
 BELFENDEN
 BUCKLAUGH
 THIRLESTANE
 ESKDALEMUIR
 HERMITAGE
 PENTON LINN

ASHESTIEL HILL
 MELROSE
 ABBOTSFORD
 EILDON HILLS
 R. CHEVIOT
 MINTO CRAGS
 HAZELDEAN
 HAWICK
 SKELFILL
 CARPENTRY BEN
 CARTER FELL

ST. MARYS LOCH
 THE CHEVIOT
 NORTHUMBERLAND
 CUMBERLAND
 SOLWAY FIRTH

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 Hermitage
 Skelfhill
 Peppochryst Ben
 Carter Fell
 Minto Crags
 Hazeldean
 Hawick
 Todshaw Hill
 Bow Hill
 Newark Castle
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 Eildon Hills
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 The Cheviot

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HOME CASTLE
 The Cheviot
 CHEVIOT HILLS
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Tweed R.

Ashestiel Hill

Melrose

Kelso

HOME CASTLE

ETTRICK FOREST R.

Abbotsford

Eildon Hills

Newark Castle

Yarrow R.

Boon Hill

Riddel

Ale R.

Ancrem R.

The Cheviot

St. Marys Loch

Todshaw Hill

Thirlestane

Belfenden

Buccleuch

Branksome

Minto Crags

Hazeldean

Hawick

Jedburgh

Carter Fell

Pepchryst Ben

Skelfhill

Hermitage

Eskdalemuir

ESKDALE

Liddell

Penton Linn

CHEVIOT HILLS

NORTHUMBRIA

CUMBERLAND

SOLWAY FIRTH

Carlisle

[illegible]

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Melrose to Branksome . . . 15 miles
Branksome to Carlisle . . . 35 miles

S C O T L A N D

Berwick

Tweed R.

Kelso

HOME CASTLE

Eildon Hills

R. Ancrum

The Cheviot

Jedburgh

Minto Crags

Hazeldean

Hawick

Branksome (CASTLE)

Carter Fell

Papchryst Ben

Skelfhill

Hermitage

Penton Linn

Carlisle

CUMBERLAND

NORTHUMBRIA

ETTRICK FOREST

Newark Castle

Abbotsford

Melrose

R. Tweed

Ashestiel Hill

St. Mary's Loch

Thirlestane

Bellenden

Buccleuch

Eskdalemuir

Esk R.

Larvaes R.

Liddell

SOLWAY FIRTH

INTRODUCTION

I. "THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL"

FEW authors have had so adequate a preparation for a particular undertaking as had Scott for writing "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." The dominant interest of his early life had been the collection of legends, ballads, and sayings of the days of Border warfare, the romantic period of Scottish history, and he realized that unless these quaint relics of the past were put into a permanent form, they would in a few years be lost to the world. He therefore set himself earnestly to the task of transcribing the old ballads, rewriting those that were in mutilated form, and building up anew those that were mere fragments. A part of this interesting collection was published as "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," and is valuable not only for the ballads which it presents but for its historical account of Border folklore.

One of the rude, wild legends that Scott had at first intended to include in "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" was that of Gilpin Horner, an impish dwarf who possessed uncanny powers and was chiefly concerned in stirring up mischief. Scott's biographer,

INTRODUCTION

Lockhart, says that "a single scene of feudal festivity in the hall of Branksome disturbed by some pranks of a nondescript goblin" was all that Scott had contemplated, but an injury received in a volunteer military camp confined him there for some time and "gave him leisure to meditate his theme to the sound of the bugle; and suddenly there flashes on him the idea of extending his simple outline, so as to embrace a vivid panorama of that old Border life of war and tumult, and all earnest passions." Thus the dwarf became only one of the features of the poem, or as Scott himself says, "the dwarf . . . contrived . . . to slink down stairs into the kitchen, and now he must abide there." The poem in its finished form was called "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." It was published in January, 1805, and brought Scott instant fame. Some of his friends had discouraged the attempt of so unusual a task as the writing of a long romance in ballad form, but the result fully justified his own feelings.

The supernatural is the prevailing element of this ballad, and keeps the reader in a state of wonder and suspense. A slender thread of a love story relieves the darker parts of the poem, and further interest is created by putting the narration into the mouth of an aged minstrel. This device has been called "the happiest conception of the framework of a picturesque narrative that ever occurred to any poet—one that Homer might have envied." The minstrel's

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sentiments form the prologue and the epilogue to each of the six cantos, and thus the reader is constantly reminded that the tale is of the long ago. In one of the prologues Scott has given the celebrated description of Melrose Abbey by moonlight, and in another that inspired apostrophe to his native land which is so familiar to us all.

The poem is written in a meter that had not been used before in English. Coleridge had already invented it for his "Lady Christabel," which was not then published, so that while "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" has the distinction of being the first poem to appear in this form of verse, the credit for its introduction into English poetry does not belong to Scott. This meter lends itself easily to recitation, and fits well the idea that the poem is chanted to the accompaniment of the vibrating notes of the minstrel's harp. Frequently the reader will discover a line over which the tongue trips, but this is because modern usage gives a different accent or syllabication from that of Scott's time.

The scene of the Lay is the southeastern part of Scotland, where the river Tweed and the low-lying Cheviot Hills divide Scotland from Northumberland. The Borderers, both English and Scottish, lived the uncertain, stimulating life of marauders. The clans warred among themselves and with each other, the most trivial excuse being sufficient to inflame one clan to a deadly feud with another. The country was

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dotted with powerfully built castles, the seats of the chiefs of the clans, around which the Borderers rallied. There were also isolated peels, strongholds to which the clans could retire in time of danger. Even to-day picturesque ruins of these peels testify to the days when the hills resounded to the warlike notes of the bugle.

In some respects the Border country of Scott's time was not unlike that of the days of the mosstroopers, who are the knights-errant of the Lay. "The people had outlived the old Border traditions of raids and robberies, yet in the seclusion of their valleys they preserved many of the rough reckless manners of their ancestors. Scott has painted them, in 'Guy Mannering,' much as they lived under his own eyes. The wildness of the region, even at the end of the last century, may be gathered from the incidents of one of the poet's raids. His gig was the first wheeled carriage that had ever been seen in Liddesdale. There was no inn or public-house of any kind in the whole valley, which was accessible only through a succession of tremendous morasses. 'In the course of our grand tour, besides the risks of swamping and breaking our necks, we encountered the formidable hardships of sleeping upon peat-stacks, and eating mutton slain by no common butcher, but deprived of life by the judgment of God, as a coroner's inquest would express themselves.' Scott used to boast of being sheriff of the 'cairn and the scaur,' and that he had strolled

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through the wild glens of Liddesdale, 'so often and so long, that he might say he had a home in every farmhouse.'

"The scenery of the Scottish borderland can lay claim to little grandeur. The hills are too bare to be beautiful, and too low to be very impressive. Still the wide tracts of black moss, the gray swells of moor rising into brown, round-backed hills, with here and there a stately cliff of sterner aspect, and the green pastures of the quiet glens, are not without their charm, in spite of the general bare and treeless character of the landscape, which is at first apt to disappoint the visitor from the South. Washington Irving spoke of this disappointment to his host at Abbotsford. 'Scott hummed for a moment to himself, and looked grave. . . . "It may be pertinacity," said he at length ; "but to my eye, these gray hills and all this wild Border country have beauties peculiar to themselves. I like the very nakedness of the land ; it has something bold, stern, and solitary about it. When I have been for some time in the rich scenery about Edinburgh, which is like ornamented garden land, I begin to wish myself back again among my own honest gray hills ; and if I did not see the heather at least once a year, *I think I should die !*"' The last words were said with an honest warmth, accompanied by a thump on the ground with his staff, by way of emphasis, that showed his heart was in his speech.' That Scott was quite sensible to the sort of melancholy awe inspired

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by some of the more savage parts of the country is shown (if other proof were not abundant in his poems and novels) in a passage in one of his letters. Speaking of the view from the top of Minchmoor, he says : ' I assure you I have felt really oppressed with a sort of fearful loneliness) when looking around the naked towering ridges of desolate barrenness which is all the eye takes in from the top of such a mountain, the patches of cultivation being hidden in the little glens, or only appearing to make one feel how feeble and ineffectual man has been to contend with the genius of the soil. It is in such a scene that the unknown and gifted author of " Albonia " places the superstition which consists in hearing the noise of a " chase, the baying of the hounds, the throttling sobs of the deer, the wild halloos of the huntsmen, and the

Hoof thick beating on the hollow hill."

I have often repeated his verses with some sensations of awe in this place.' As far as his own estate was concerned, he did much by his plantations to cover the nakedness of the land, and his precept and example also helped to make planting fashionable among his neighbors." ¹

¹ " The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott," edited by F. T. Palgrave, pp. 5-6.

INTRODUCTION

II. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sir Walter Scott was a lineal descendant of the Walter Scott known to Border history as Auld Watt of Harden, who is commemorated in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." He was born August 15, 1771, in Edinburgh, the ninth of twelve children, six of whom died in infancy. Before he was two years old he was the victim of an illness which ended in a life-long lameness but which did not otherwise affect his health. As a boy and a young man he was as rugged and vigorous as any of his companions with whom he scoured the hills. In his childhood he lived much of the time with his grandfather at Sandy-Knowe, a spot full of traditions of Border warfare and superstition. It was here that he first heard the legends which so fascinated him and were later to prove a deciding factor in his life work. Like many another boy who became a famous author, he was too imaginative to make a model pupil at school. He enjoyed the companionship of the boys, and because he joined eagerly in their frolics, was always a great favorite, but in his studies he did only indifferently well.

After leaving the high school at Edinburgh, he was sent to a school at Kelso. Of these student days Scott has written: "I, with a head on fire for chivalry, was a Cavalier; my friend was a Roundhead; I was a Tory, and he was a Whig; I hated Presbyterians, and admired Montrose with his victorious Highlanders;

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he liked the Presbyterian Ulysses, the deep and politic Argyle ; so that we never wanted subjects of dispute, but our disputes were always amicable. . . . In all these tenets there was no real conviction on my part, arising out of acquaintance with the views or principles of either party. . . . I took up politics at that period, as King Charles II did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentlemanlike persuasion of the two."

When, at the age of sixteen, Scott was studying law as an apprentice to his father, he had an attack of hemorrhage, and during the illness that followed absolute silence was imposed on him — two old women sitting with him constantly and putting their fingers on their lips whenever he offered to speak. This was a difficult experience for the story-loving youth, but deprived of the privilege of talking he began to study the scenic side of history, — battles and invasions, — which he worked out with shells, seeds, and pebbles. As a further diversion in his illness he had the looking-glasses of his bedroom so arranged that from his bed he could see the troops march out to exercise in the meadows. At this time, as in later years, he was an insatiable reader, and seemed to have the power to remember in accurate detail whatever interested him.

In spite of the fact that Scott had no particular yearnings for the law profession, he pursued his legal studies with considerable regularity. One of his biographers has said that notwithstanding all his love of

INTRODUCTION

excitement, he became "a sound lawyer, and might have been a great lawyer, had not his pride of character, the impatience of his genius, and the stir of his imagination rendered him indisposed to wait and slave in the precise manner which the prepossessions of solicitors appoint."¹ But in leaving the legal profession for that of letters, Scott made no mistake; in the former he would have been only one able lawyer among thousands of equally able men; in literature he had few equals.

Before he was thirty years old he married a Mademoiselle Charpentier, the daughter of a French royalist of Lyons, who had come to England after her father's death. Miss Carpenter, as she was usually called, was lively and beautiful, but had no great depth of character and was not particularly suited to be the wife of a genius like Scott. Scott's married life, however, was by no means an unhappy one. His nature was too sunny and optimistic to let anything make him fretful or morose.

His first great literary success was "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," published in 1802. The ballads of this collection became instantly popular and were learned and recited all over England and Scotland. Certain stanzas from one of these ringing tales made such a strong impression on Thomas Campbell, the poet, that he could not banish them from his mind. "I have repeated these lines so often on the

¹ Richard H. Hutton's "Sir Walter Scott."

INTRODUCTION

North Bridge," he said, "that the whole fraternity of coachmen know me by tongue as I pass. To be sure, to a mind in sober, serious, street-walking humor, it must bear an appearance of lunacy when one stamps with the hurried pace and fervent shake of the head, which strong, pithy poetry excites."¹

"The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was Scott's next great work and brought him both fame and money. This was written at his beautiful home known as Ashestiel, an estate on the southern bank of the Tweed, a few miles from Selkirk. Three years later, his greatest poem, "Marmion," was published. How active a life Scott led, all his life through, cannot better be illustrated than by citing the fact that "Marmion" was chiefly composed in the saddle. It is no wonder that the stir of a charge of cavalry breathes through the lines of the poem! Scott never allowed his literary tasks to confine him to his study. The greater part of his life was lived in the open, among the hills and the humble people whose homes dotted their sides.

The Waverley novels, known the world over, comprise Scott's best fiction work, the name being taken from that of the first of the series, "Waverley." These novels — "Ivanhoe," "Old Mortality," "The Antiquary," "Rob Roy," "The Heart of Midlothian," "The Abbot," etc. — were composed in rapid succession and with apparent ease. The last two volumes

¹ Lockhart's "Life of Scott," Vol. II, p. 79.

INTRODUCTION

of "Waverley" are said to have been written in three weeks. Such speed seems almost incredible for works so packed with description and historical incident, but Scott's mind was a veritable treasure house of memories from which he could draw at a moment's notice. These novels are full of the romantic excitement of picturesque scenes and historical incidents which he loved. He had to write of big things. That he recognized this he showed by his remark concerning Miss Austen — "The big bow-wow strain I can do myself, like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me."

The only episode in Scott's life that can properly be called unfortunate was his partnership with his publishers, the Ballantynes. They were unable to make the publishing business successful and the copyrights were bought by Constable, who failed in 1826, involving Scott to the amount of about \$600,000. From this time until his death the novelist worked steadily to pay off these obligations, bravely shouldering a burden which a less noble nature would have shirked. What made this attempt particularly difficult was that it meant the giving up for a time of his almost palatial home, Abbotsford, upon which he had lavished not only large sums of money but thoughts and dreams and hopes. The real Scott as the simple good man is touchingly proved to us by the attitude toward him of

INTRODUCTION

his servants after this financial loss. Mr. Lockhart¹ writes: "The butler, instead of being the easy chief of a large establishment, was now doing half the work of the house at probably half his former wages. Old Peter, who had been for five and twenty years a dignified coachman, was now ploughman in ordinary, only putting his horses to the carriage upon high and rare occasions; and so on with all the rest that remained of the ancient train. And all, to my view, seemed happier than they had ever done before."

During the last years of his life that Scott devoted to the struggle to pay off his obligations much new work was produced that yielded generous returns, and successful new editions of many of his earlier works were prepared. For these Scott wrote extended introductions, which were in reality intimate accounts of his life, and he also made some slight alterations and revisions in the texts, which helped to authenticate and popularize these new editions. "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was published in this way in 1831, and it is from that edition that the text of the present one is taken. The notes which follow the text are chiefly abridged from Scott's, having been put into the briefest form possible, as their purpose is merely to assist in reading the poem understandingly.

In spite of illness Scott kept to his literary work almost to the day of his death, which came September 21, 1832. He died at Abbotsford, the scene

¹ Lockhart's "Life of Scott," Vol. IX, p. 170.

INTRODUCTION

of his greatest happiness and his great sorrow. What were almost his last words might be his epitaph : " Be a good man, — be virtuous, — be religious, — be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to be here."



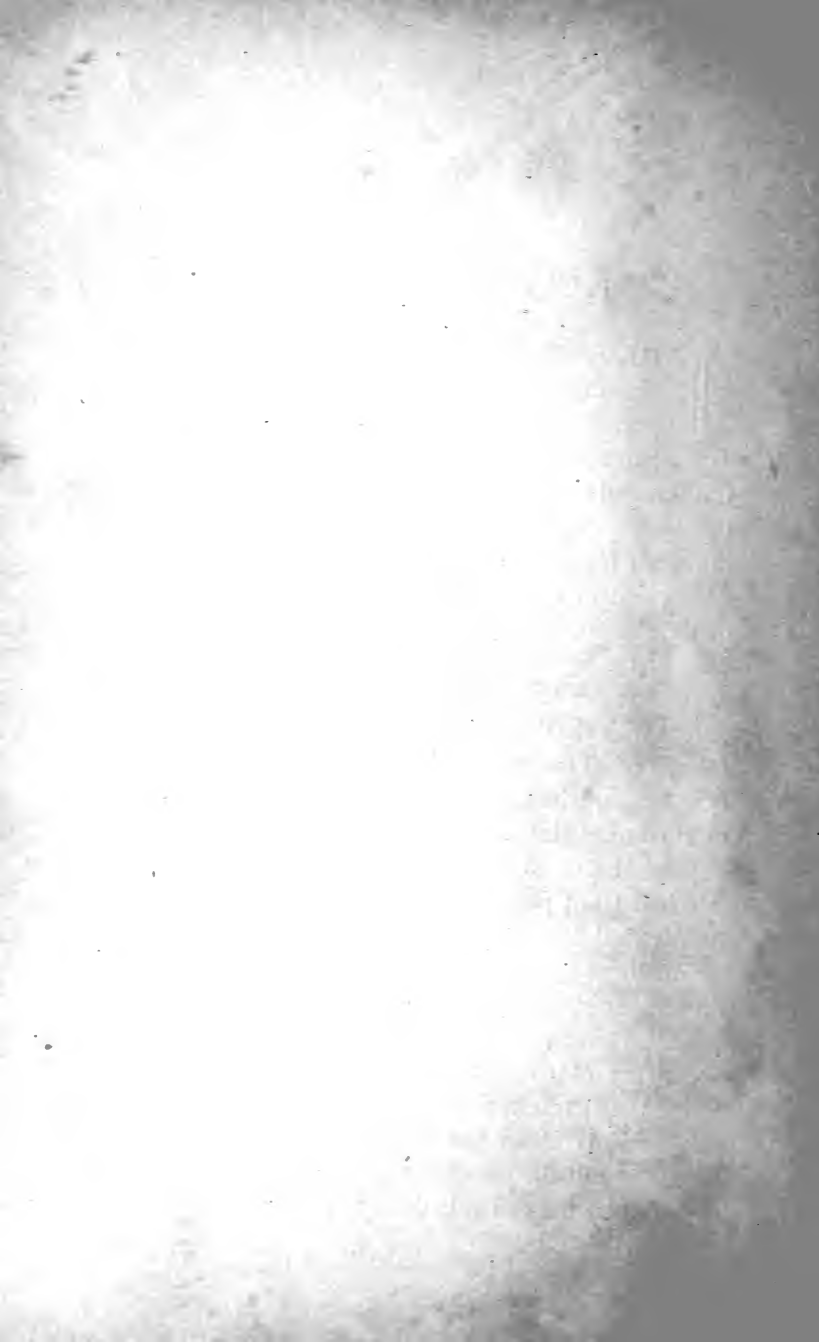
TO
THE RIGHT HONORABLE
CHARLES, EARL OF DALKEITH
THIS POEM
IS INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR



THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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

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



THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old ;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,
Seem'd to have known a better day ;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry ;
For, welladay ! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead ;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn ;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay :
Old times were changed, old manners gone ;
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne ;

THE LAY OF

The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

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

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride :

THE LAST MINSTREL

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

The humble boon was soon obtain'd ;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied :
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please ;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain —
He tried to tune his harp in vain !
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain

THE LAY OF

He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls ;
He had play'd it to King Charles the good,
When he kept court in Holyrood ;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made, -
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled ;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy !
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along :
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot :
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost ;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied ;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'T was thus the *Latest Minstrel* sung.



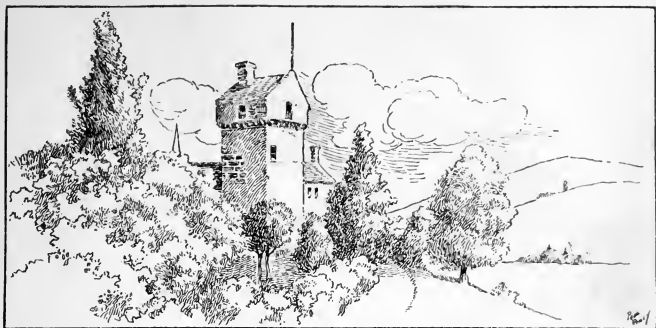
PAUL
REILLY

NEWARK CASTLE

OUTLINE OF CANTO FIRST

This canto at once introduces the reader to Branksome Castle, which is the scene of most of the events of the minstrel's lay. A feast is taking place in the great hall where the attendant knights, squires, yeomen, and others are making merry. Because of the death of Lord Walter, the chief of Branksome, who was slain in combat with the Kerrs, his Lady rules in his stead. The Lady of Branksome, who had learned from her father the mystic art of spirit communication, withdraws from the feast to consult with the spirits of the earth and air as to the fate of her house. She hears the unearthly voices decree that good fortune will not come to the house of Branksome until she consents to the marriage of her fair young daughter, Margaret, to Lord Cranstoun, who is deeply in love with her and whom Margaret loves, but with whom Margaret's family has a deadly feud.

The Lady Branksome, vowing within herself that Margaret shall never be her "foeman's bride," hastens from her chamber to the great hall where the feast has taken place and where her only son, a mere child, is playing with the warriors. She calls the bravest of these — William of Deloraine — aside, and orders him to the saddle to bring from the monk at Melrose Abbey a magic book that is buried in the grave of a wizard named Michael Scott. From this book she expects to learn secrets which will enable her to bring good fortune to her house without the hated marriage. Deloraine is soon in the saddle and rides at break-neck speed over rill and dale, and reaches the Abbey a little after midnight.



CANTO FIRST

I

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

II

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all ;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire :
The 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.

III

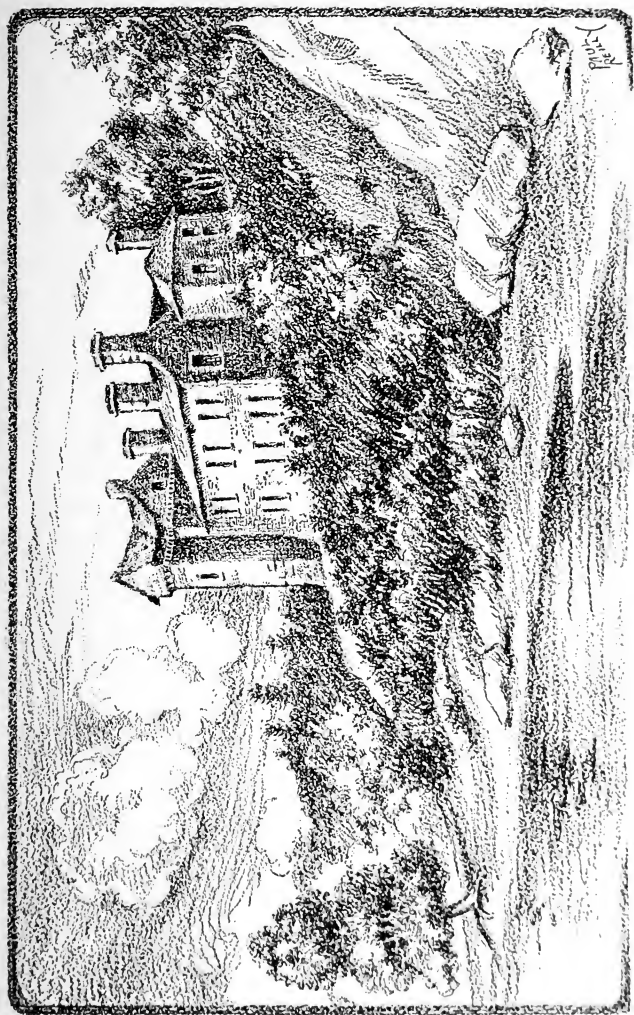
Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall ;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall ;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all :
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV

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

V

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



BRANKSOME TOWER

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

VI

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

VII

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall. —

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

VIII

Can piety the discord heal,
 Or stanch the death-feud's enmity ?
 Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
 Can love of blessed charity ?
 No ! vainly to each holy shrine,
 In mutual pilgrimage they drew ;
 Implored, in vain, the grace divine
 For chiefs, their own red falchions slew :
 While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
 While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
 The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
 The havoc of the feudal war,
 Shall never, never be forgot !

IX

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
 The warlike foresters had bent ;
 And many a flower, and many a tear,
 Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent :
 But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
 The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear !
 Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
 Had lock'd the source of softer woe ;
 And burning pride, and high disdain,
 Forbade the rising tear to flow ;
 Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
 Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee —

“ And if I live to be a man,
My father’s death revenged shall be ! ”
Then fast the mother’s tears did seek
To dew the infant’s kindling cheek.

X

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

XI

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,
Of Bethune’s line of Picardie :
He learn’d the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.

CANTO I] THE LAST MINSTREL

Men said, he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery ;
For when, in studious mood, he paced
St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall !

XII

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

XIII

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl ;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,

And looked forth to view the night ;
But the night was still and clear !

XIV

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

XV

River Spirit

" Sleep'st thou, brother ? " —

Mountain Spirit

— " Brother, nay —

On my hills the moon-beams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris pacing,
To ærial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet !
Up, and list their music sweet ! "

XVI

River Spirit

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

XVII

Mountain Spirit

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

XVIII

The unearthly voices ceast,
 And the heavy sound was still ;

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

XIX

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

XX

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

XXI

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

XXII

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

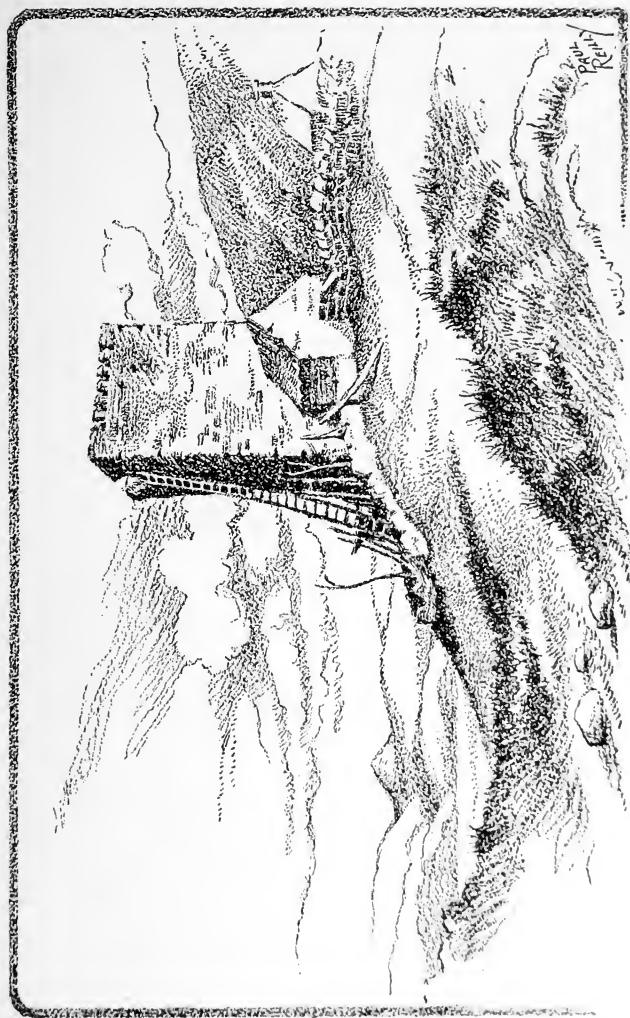
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside ;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the Father well from me ;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb :
For this will be St. Michael's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

XXIII

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

XXIV

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



THE PEEL OF GOLDILAND

XXV

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

XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark ; —
“ Stand, ho ! thou courier of the dark.” —
“ For Branksome, ho ! ” the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.

He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill :
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.

XXVII

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed ;

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
 And the water broke o'er the saddlebow ;
 Above the foaming tide, I ween,
 Scarce half the charger's neck was seen ;

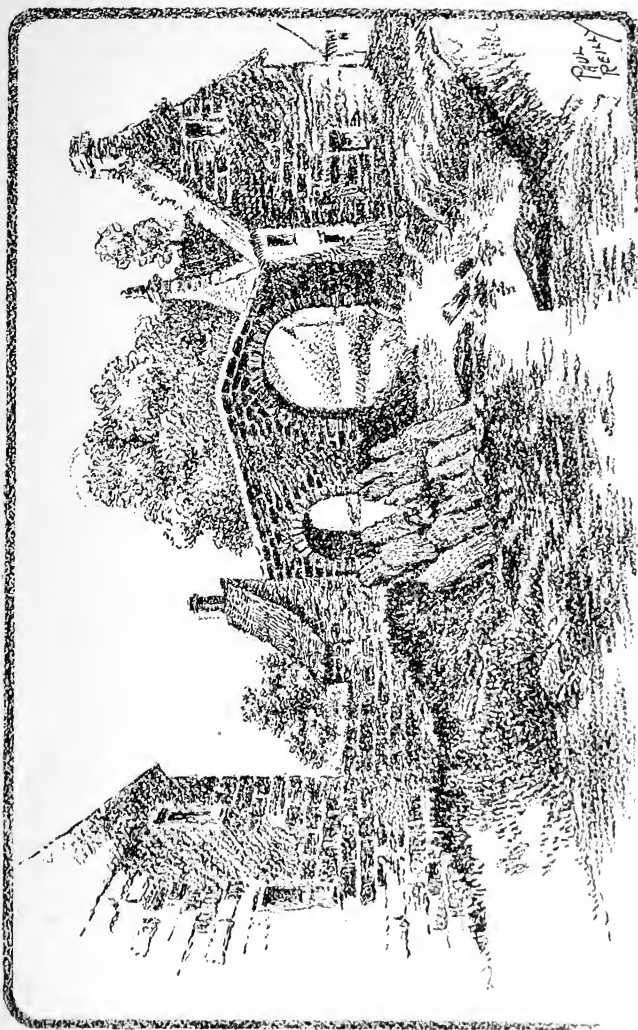
For he was barded from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail ;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggl'd by the dashing spray ;
Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gain'd the landing place.

XXX

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

XXXI

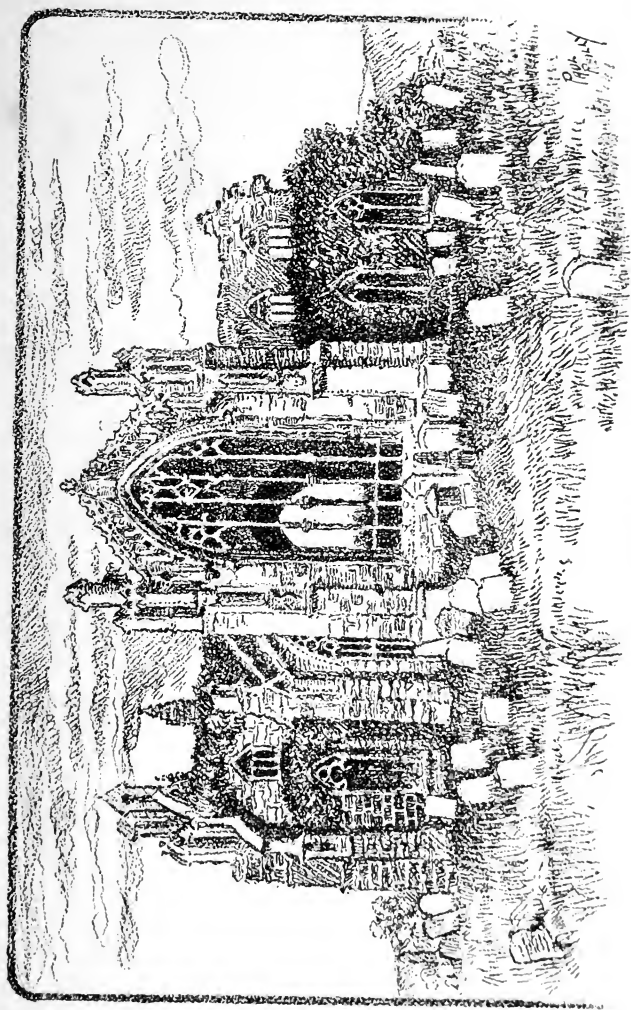
In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past ;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran :
Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.



THE BRIDGE OF HAWICK

When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose mag'ic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 't was silence all ;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

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



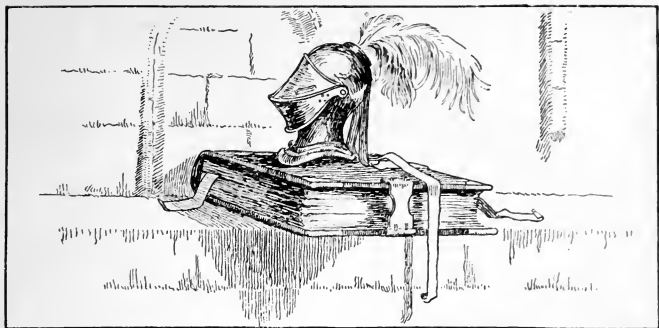
MELROSE ABBEY

Part 4

OUTLINE OF CANTO SECOND

The minstrel describes the Abbey as it would appear to one viewing the ruins by moonlight, but hastens to say that William of Deloraine sees little of the beauty around him. His knock summons the porter, who conducts him at once to the Monk, an ancient priest, who himself, in his youth, had been a warrior and fought in Spain and Italy. Half regretfully and half reprovngly, as he seats himself beside the knight, he tells him of his adventures in foreign lands. It was in a far country that he had met the famed wizard, Michael Scott, who, when dying, summoned him to take his Mighty Book, which contained the secrets of evil spirits as well as of good, and keep it hid from mortal eyes. This book was never to be brought to light except at the need of the chief of Branksome, and was then swiftly to be returned to its hiding place. The wizard and his book had been buried in Melrose Abbey, and only at the stroke of one could the grave be opened.

As the bell tolls one the knight with fear and awe opens the grave of the wizard, from whom a strange light shines, and takes the mystic book. The Monk urges him to hide this in his bosom and make all speed until he reaches Branksome Tower. In great terror the knight mounts and hastens back with no adventure until he reaches the green-wood near the Castle. Here in the early morning Margaret has secretly met her lover, Lord Cranstoun, the Baron's elfish dwarf keeping watch in the distance. It is this queer, waspish attendant dwarf who first hears the approach of the returning Deloraine and gives the alarm to the lovers.



CANTO SECOND

I

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

And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair !

II

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

III

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

CANTO II] THE LAST MINSTREL

IV

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

V

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

VI

“Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;

For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none ;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone." —

VII

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily ;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong, and his courage was
high : —

Now, slow and faint, he led the way,
Where, cloister'd round, the garden lay ;
The pillar'd arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright,
Glisten'd with the dew of night ;
Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth ;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start ;

CANTO II] THE LAST MINSTREL

Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX

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

X

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven,
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale ;
And there the dying lamps did burn,
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne !
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale !
O fading honors of the dead !
O high ambition, lowly laid !

XI

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

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

XII

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

XIII

“ In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott ;
A wizard, of such dreaded fame,



THE GRAVE OF MICHAEL SCOTT

That when, in Salamanca's cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre-Dame !
Some of his skill he taught to me ;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone :
But to speak them were a deadly sin ;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

XIV

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

XV

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

CANTO II] THE LAST MINSTREL

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

XVI

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

XVII

" Lo, Warrior ! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead ;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night :
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be." —
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon :
He pointed to a secret nook ;
An iron bar the Warrior took ;

And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII

With beating heart to the task he went ;
His sinewy frame o'er the gravestone bent ;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof !
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright :
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
 And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
 And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX

Before their eyes the Wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old ;
 A palmer's amice wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
 Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea :

CANTO II] . THE LAST MINSTREL

His left hand held his Book of Might ;
A silver cross was in his right ;
The lamp was placed beside his knee :
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face :
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX

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

XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said : —
" Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue ;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone ! " —

Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound :
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frowned ;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom ;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few ;
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'T is said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast ;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man ;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be ;
I say the tale as 't was said to me.

XXIII

" Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
" And when we are on death-bed laid,

CANTO II] THE LAST MINSTREL

O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done !” —
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped ;
When the convent met at the noontide bell —
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead !
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd.

XXIV

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

XXV

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

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

XXVI

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

XXVII

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

XXVIII

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

XXIX

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
 You listen to my minstrelsy ;
 Your waving locks ye backward throw,
 And sidelong bend your necks of snow :
 Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
 Of two true lovers in a dale ;
 And how the Knight, with tender fire,
 To paint his faithful passion strove ;
 Swore he might at her feet expire,
 But never, never cease to love ;
 And how she blush'd, and how she sigh'd,
 And, half consenting, half denied,

And said that she would die a maid ; —
Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX

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

XXXI

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
 And held his crested helm and spear.
That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
 Through all the Border, far and near.
'T was said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
 He heard a voice cry, " Lost ! lost ! lost ! "
And, like tennis-ball by racket toss'd,
 A leap, of thirty feet and three,
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
 And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.

CANTO II] THE LAST MINSTREL

Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd ;
'T is said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company ;
But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII

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

XXXIII

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elvish Page,
To Mary's chapel of the Lowes :
For there, beside Our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.

But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd a band
Of the best that would ride at her command :

The trysting place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine ;

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

XXXIV

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

CANTO II] THE LAST MINSTREL

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

OUTLINE OF CANTO THIRD

At the warning of the dwarf, Lord Cranstoun hastily mounts and rides away, but almost at once meets William of Deloraine. In spite of the latter's weariness, he spurs on his horse and closes with Lord Cranstoun in a fierce combat. Deloraine is worsted, and Cranstoun rides away, but out of pity for his wounded foe, who is a kinsman of fair Margaret, he leaves the dwarf behind to attend him. The impish dwarf spies the book in the wounded man's corselet, and immediately forgets all else in his attempt to discover what the strange volume may be. Some hidden hand smites the dwarf for his unrighteous curiosity and commands him to let it alone. He then places the wounded Deloraine on his horse, and with the book hidden under his cloak, in a disguised form takes his way to Branksome Hall. As he leaves the Castle he comes upon the youthful heir of the house at play, and desiring to do some mischief, leads the boy away and leaves him in the deep woods, where he is found by a party of English hunters, foes of the Border clans. In a spirit of bravado the boy tells his captors that he is the heir of bold Buccleuch, and they eagerly carry him to their chief, Lord Dacre.

In the meantime the dwarf has assumed the form of the boy and lives at the castle, but is up to all sorts of mischievous tricks with his secret powers. The Lady of Branksome finds the wounded knight at her door, and, greatly wondering, cares for him with all the skill at her command. That evening signal fires are seen from first one hill and then another, telling that their common foe, the English, are making a hostile approach. At once there is confusion and preparation for war.



CANTO THIRD

I

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

II

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.

Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above ;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

III

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.

But the page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came pricking on.
That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
Was dark with sweat, and splash'd 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.

IV

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest ;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That mark'd the foemen's feudal hate ;
For question fierce, and proud reply,
Gave signal soon of dire debate.

Their very coursers seem'd to know
 That each was other's mortal foe,
 And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
 To give each knight his vantage-ground.

. V

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

VI

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent !
 The stately Baron backwards bent ;
 Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
 And his plumes went scattering on the gale ;
 The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
 Into a thousand flinders flew.
 But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
 Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail ;
 Through shield, and jack, and acton, past,
 Deep in his bosom broke at last. —
 Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,

Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course ;
Nor knew — so giddy roll'd his brain —
His foe lay stretch'd upon the plain.

VII

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

VIII

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode ;
The Goblin-Page behind abode ;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The Dwarf espied the Mighty Book !

CANTO III] THE LAST MINSTREL

Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride :
He thought not to search or stanch the wound,
Until the secret he had found.

IX

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

X

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.

From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head ;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
" Man of age, thou smitest sore ! " —
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry ;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak. —
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive ;
It was not given by man alive.

XI

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

CANTO III] THE LAST MINSTREL

He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII

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

XIII

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

XIV

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower ;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone, —
For aye the more he sought his way,
The further still he went astray, —
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV

And hark ! and hark ! the deep-mouth'd bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher :
Bursts on the path a dark bloodhound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,

When, worthy of his noble sire,
 His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire !
 He faced the bloodhound manfully,
 And held his little bat on high ;
 So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
 At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
 But still in act to spring ;
 When dash'd an archer through the glade,
 And when he saw the hound was stay'd,
 He drew his tough bowstring ;
 But a rough voice cried, " Shoot not, hoy !
 Ho ! shoot not, Edward — 'T is a boy ! "

XVI

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

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

XVII

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

XVIII

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

XIX

" Yes ! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch ;

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

XX

" Gramercy, for thy good-will, fair boy !
 My mind was never set so high ;
 But if thou art chief of such a clan,
 And art the son of such a man,
 And ever comest to thy command,
 Our wardens had need to keep good order ;
 My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
 Thou 'lt make them work upon the Border.
 Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
 For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see ;
 I think our work is well begun,
 When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI

Although the child was led away,
 In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,
 For so the Dwarf his part did play ;
 And, in the shape of that young boy,
 He wrought the castle much annoy.

The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew ;
Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,
And wofully scorch'd the hackbuteer.
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guess'd,
That the young Baron was possess'd !

XXII

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

XXIII

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanch'd the blood ;

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

XXIV

So pass'd the day — the evening fell,
 'T was near the time of curfew bell ;
 The air was mild, the wind was calm,
 The stream was smooth, the dew was balm ;
 E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
 Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
 Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd
 The hour of silence and of rest.
 On the high turret sitting lone,
 She waked at times the lute's soft tone ;
 Touch'd a wild note, and all between
 Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
 Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
 Her fair cheek rested on her hand,

Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star? —
O! 't is the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI

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

XXVII

The Seneschal, whose silver hair
Was redden'd by the torches' glare,

CANTO III] THE LAST MINSTREL

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

XXVIII

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

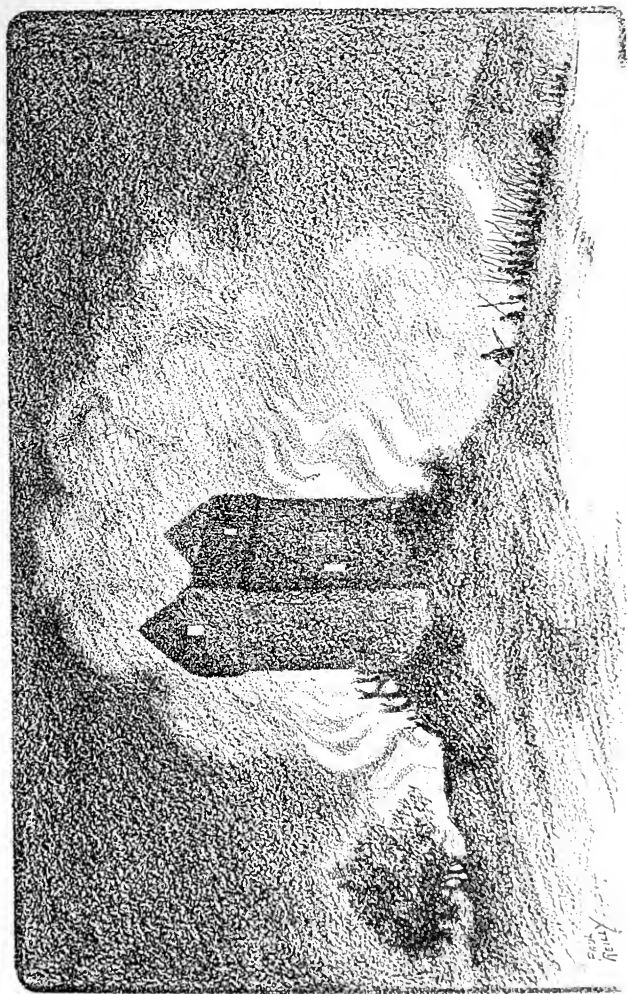
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven :
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven ;
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen ;
Each with warlike tidings fraught ;
Each from each the signal caught ;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,
Haunted by the lonely earn ;
On many a cairn's gray pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid ;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
From Soltra and Dumpender Law ;
And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
That all should bowne them for the Border.

XXX

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel ;
The castle-bell, with backward clang,
Sent forth the larum peal ;



THE BORDERERS' BLAZING SIGNAL OF WAR

Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower ;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watchword from the sleepless ward ;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Bloodhound and ban-dog yell'd within. .

XXXI

The noble Dame, amid the broil,
Shared the gray Seneschal's high toil,
And spoke of danger with a smile ;
Cheer'd the young knights, and counsel sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said, that there were thousands ten ;
And others ween'd that it was nought
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black-mail ;
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So pass'd the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.

Ceased the high sound — the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song ;

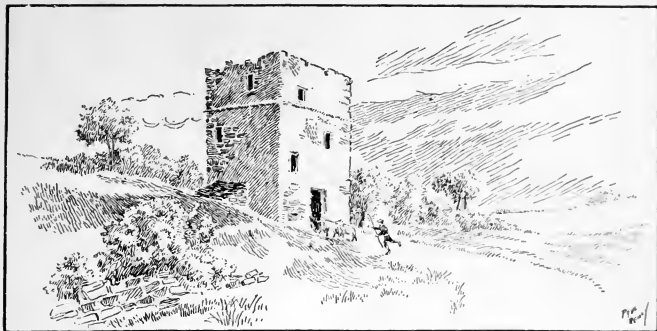
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend — no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer ;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way ?
"Ay, once he had — but he was dead ! " —
Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
And busied himself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

OUTLINE OF CANTO FOURTH

Before resuming his tale, the minstrel contrasts the peaceful scenes of the present with the days when the bugle took the place of the shepherd's reed, and warriors died to protect their hills. It was during those times that Lord Dacre and Lord Howard led their forces against Branksome Tower, holding the heir of Buccleuch as a hostage.

Watt Tinlinn is the first of the clan to reach the Castle with news of the enemy. Band after band of allies and dependents of the house of Branksome arrive to take their stand and defy the English. The mistress sends for her son to see the assembling of men and the preparations for war, but the dwarf, in the disguise of the boy, feigns fear. When the boy's mother hears of this, she is filled with shame and orders Watt Tinlinn to take him from the Castle and leave him where no one can learn of his cowardice. This he attempts to do, but when they are crossing a stream the spell is broken and the dwarf assumes his goblin shape and escapes.

When the enemy arrive before the Castle, through a messenger they require the presence of the mistress on the outer wall. When she appears, she sees her son in Lord Howard's livery and is told that he will be given up to her only in exchange for William of Deloraine, whom the English accuse of many unlawful acts. She must also receive into her Castle two hundred soldiers. She refuses to yield to these demands, having knowledge through her secret art of the near approach of reënforcements. The English are about to storm the Castle when a messenger informs Lord Howard of these reënforcements; he therefore proposes that their differences be settled by a single combat between Deloraine and Richard Musgrave. This is agreed to.



CANTO FOURTH

I

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

II

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime,
Its earliest course was doom'd to know ;

And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.

Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,

Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was I not beside him laid! —
Enough — he died the death of fame ;
Enough — he died with conquering Græme.

III

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

IV

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried —
“ Prepare ye all for blows and blood !

Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
 Comes wading through the flood.
 Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
 At his lone gate, and prove the lock ;
 It was but last St. Barnabright
 They sieged him a whole summer night,
 But fled at morning ; well they knew,
 In vain he never twang'd the yew.
 Right sharp has been the evening shower,
 That drove him from his Liddel tower ;
 And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
 " I think 't will prove a Warden-Raid."

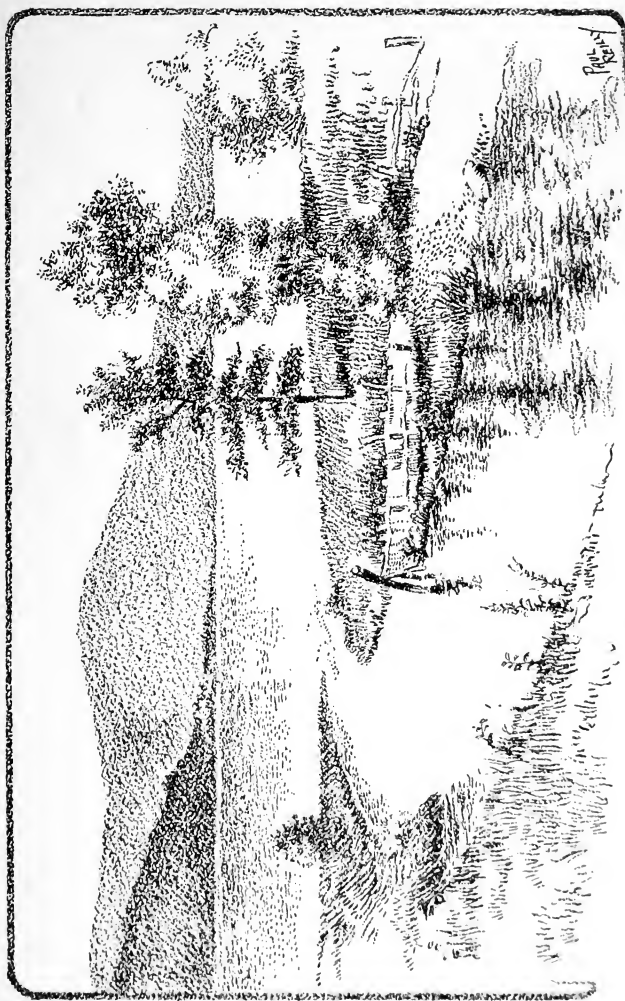
V

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
 Entered the echoing barbian.
 He led a small and shaggy nag,
 That through a bog, from hag to hag,
 Could bound like any Billhope stag.
 It bore his wife and children twain ;
 A half-clothed serf was all their train :
 His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
 Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
 Laughed to her friends among the crowd.
 He was of stature passing tall,
 But sparely form'd, and lean withal ;
 A batter'd morion on his brow ;
 A leather jack, as fence enow,

On his broad shoulders loosely hung ;
A Border axe behind was slung ;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seem'd newly dyed with gore ;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI

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



ST. MARY'S LOCH

VII

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

VIII

From fair St. Mary's silver wave,
From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Array'd beneath a banner bright.
The tressured fleur-de-luce he claims
To wreath his shield, since royal James,
Encamp'd by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave,
For faith 'mid feudal jars ;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars ;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne ;

Hence his high motto shines reveal'd —
 "Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX

An aged Knight, to danger steel'd,
 With many a moss-trooper, came on ;
 And azure in a golden field,
 The stars and crescent graced his shield,
 Without the bend of Murdieston.
 Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower,
 And wide round haunted Castle-Ower ;
 High over Borthwick's mountain flood,
 His wood-embosomed mansion stood ;
 In the dark glen, so deep below,
 The herds of plunder'd England low ;
 His bold retainers' daily food,
 And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
 Marauding chief ! his sole delight
 The moonlight raid, the morning fight ;
 Not even the flower of Yarrow's charms,
 In youth, might tame his rage for arms ;
 And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
 And still his brows the helmet press'd,
 Albeit the blanched locks below
 Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow ;
 Five stately warriors drew the sword
 Before their father's band ;
 A braver knight than Harden's lord
 Ne'er belted on a brand.

X

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshawhill ;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.
Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sires won fair Eskdale. —
Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude ;
High of heart, and haughty of word,
Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
Homage and seignory to claim :
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot he sought,
Saying, " Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
— " Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need ;
Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou." —
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,
But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir ;
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI

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

XII

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

XIII

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name ;

CANTO IV] THE LAST MINSTREL

From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,
Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear ;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.

The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose :
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.

"The boy is ripe to look on war ;
I saw him draw a crossbow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar

The raven's nest upon the cliff ;
The red cross, on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest :
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield." —

XIV

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

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

XV

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

CANTO IV] THE LAST MINSTREL

And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI

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

XVII

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round ;
 Behind, in close array, and fast,
 The Kendal archers, all in green,
 Obedient to the bugle blast,
 Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's bill-men were at hand :

A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white, and crosses red,
Array'd beneath the banner tall,
That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall ;
And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
Play'd, " Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII

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

XIX

But louder still the clamor grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,

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

XX

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

XXI

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

XXII

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

XXIII

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

XXIV

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

It was but last St. Cuthbert's even
He prick'd to Stapelton on Leven,
Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,
And storm and spoil thy garrison :
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV

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

XXVI

" Say to your Lords of high emprise,
Who war on women and on boys,

That either William of Deloraine
 Will cleanse him, by oath, of march-treason stain,
 Or else he will the combat take
 'Gainst Musgrave, for his honor's sake.
 No knight in Cumberland so good,
 But William may count with him kin and blood.
 Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
 When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford ;
 And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
 And bare him ably in the flight,
 Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
 For the young heir of Branksome's line,
 God be his aid, and God be mine ;
 Through me no friend shall meet his doom ;
 Here, while I live, no foe finds room.

Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
 Take our defiance loud and high ;
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,
 Our moat, the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim —
 Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame ;
 His bugle Wat of Harden blew,
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 "St. Mary for the young Buccleuch !"
 The English war-cry answer'd wide,
 And forward bent each southern spear ;

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

XXVIII

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

And hard I've spurr'd all night, to show
The mustering of the coming foe." —

XXIX

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

XXX

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

He gains for us ; but if he 's cross'd,
'Tis but a single warrior lost :
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame."

XXXI

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

XXXII

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand ;
His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
The leaders of the Scottish band ;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight ;
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said :—
" If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain :

If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.

Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXXIII

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd ;
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew,
How tardy was the Regent's aid :
And you may guess the noble Dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be inclosed with speed,
Beneath the castle, on a lawn :
They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn ;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand,
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

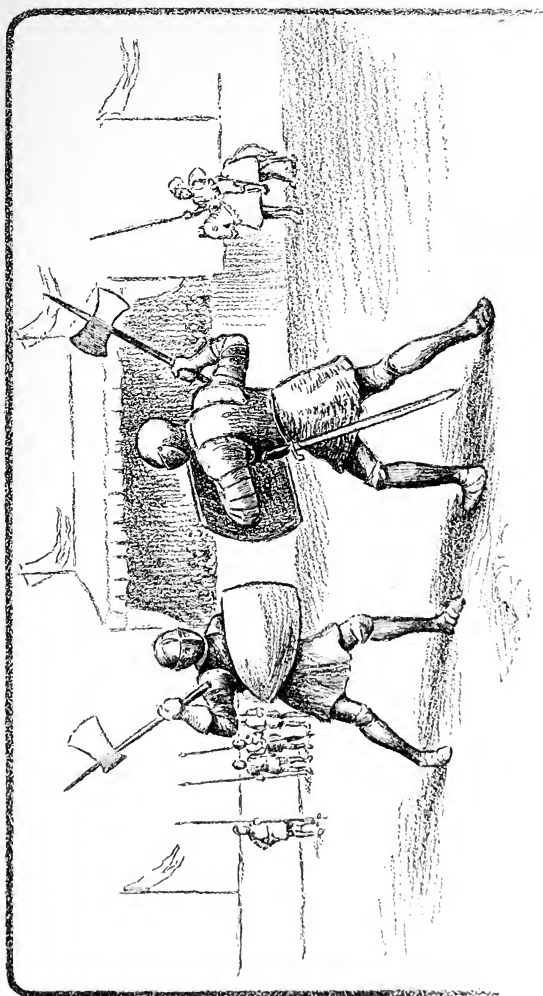
XXXIV

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

XXXV

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
That dragg'd my master to his tomb ;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,

THE JOUST



For
Kelly

And wrung their hands for love of him,

Who died at Jedwood Air ?

He died ! — his scholars, one by one,

To the cold silent grave are gone ;

And I, alas ! survive alone,

To muse o'er rivalries of yore,

And grieve that I shall hear no more

The strains, with envy heard before ;

For, with my minstrel brethren fled,

My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused : the listening dames again

Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.

With many a word of kindly cheer, —

In pity half, and half sincere, —

Marvell'd the Duchess how so well

His legendary song could tell —

Of ancient deeds, so long forgot ;

Of feuds, whose memory was not ;

Of forests, now laid waste and bare ;

Of towers, which harbor now the hare ;

Of manners, long since changed and gone ;

Of chiefs, who under their gray stone

So long had slept, that fickle Fame

Had blotted from her rolls their name,

And twined round some new minion's head

The fading wreath for which they bled ;

In sooth, 't was strange, this old man's verse

Could call them from their marble hearse.

CANTO IV] THE LAST MINSTREL

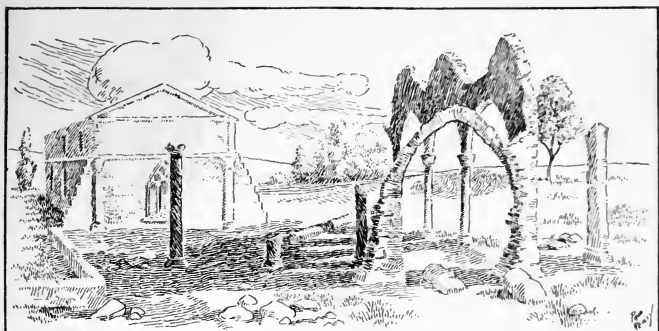
The Harper smiled, well-pleased ; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear :
A simple race ! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile ;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires :
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

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

OUTLINE OF CANTO FIFTH

The minstrel in the opening stanzas bewails the passing of his kind, and then relates how the reënforcements are informed of the truce. All the forces, both friend and foe, accept the hospitality of Branksome Castle, and that night hold a late revel. Margaret, the center of much knightly attention, withdraws quietly to her room before the feast is over. She awakens early from a restless sleep, and to her astonishment sees her lover in the courtyard below. He is disguised, by means of the dwarf's craft, and finds his way to her tower without being recognized.

The next day, while the clansmen are disputing as to who shall fight for the disabled Deloraine, someone, apparently Deloraine himself, appears in full armor, and the combat is begun. The English champion, Musgrave, is slain, and it is at once revealed that the victorious knight is Margaret's lover, Lord Cranstoun, for the real William of Deloraine, ghastly and disheveled from his illness, rushes into the lists and mourns that his worthy foe lies dead. In the meantime, Lord Cranstoun restores to the mistress of Branksome her son, and is at length received by her as her daughter's suitor. She learns of the dwarf's mischief-making, and realizing how much harm had resulted from his reading of the mystic book, she determines to have it returned to its proper place. The English, mourning over the slain Musgrave, take their departure.



CANTO FIFTH

I

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

II

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn ;

But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier :
The phantom Knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead ;
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,
And shrieks along the battle-plain :
The Chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguish'd lie,
His place, his power, his memory die :
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill :
All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,

The advancing march of martial powers.
 Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
 And trampling steeds were faintly heard ;
 Bright spears, above the columns dun,
 Glanced momentary to the sun ;
 And feudal banners fair display'd
 The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV

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

V

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
 On many a courteous message went ;

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

VI

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

CANTO V] THE LAST MINSTREL

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

VII

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

'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,

 In the old Border-day :
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
 The sun's declining ray.

VIII

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

IX

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
 At length the various clamors died :
And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide ;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell ;

And save, where, through the dark profound,
 The clanging axe and hammer's sound
 Rung from the nether lawn ;
 For many a busy hand toil'd there,
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
 The list's dread barriers to prepare
 Against the morrow's dawn.

X

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

XI

She gazed upon the inner court,
 Which in the tower's tall shadow lay ;
 Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
 Had rung the livelong yesterday ;

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

XII

Yet was his hazard small ; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page ;
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamor art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,
For all the vassalage :
But O ! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes !
She started from her seat ;

While with surprise and fear she strove,
 And both could scarcely master love —
 Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII

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

Now leave we Margaret and her Knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV

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

XV

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

XVI

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

XVII

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
 Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
 Whose footcloth swept the ground :
 White was her wimple, and her veil,
 And her loose locks a chaplet pale
 Of whitest roses bound ;
 The lordly Angus, by her side,
 In courtesy to cheer her tried ;
 Without his aid, her hand in vain
 Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.

He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight ;
But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII

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

XIX

English Herald

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

XX

Scottish Herald

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

Lord Dacre

“ Forward, brave champions, to the fight !
 Sound trumpets ! ” —

Lord Home

— “ God defend the right ! ” —

Then, Teviot ! how thine echoes rang,
 When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang

Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close.

XXI

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

XXII

'Tis done, 't is done ! that fatal blow
Has stretched him on the bloody plain ;
He strives to rise — Brave Musgrave, no !
Thence never shalt thou rise again !
He chokes in blood — some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp !

CANTO V] THE LAST MINSTREL

O, bootless aid ! — haste, holy Friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire !
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven !

XXIII

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

XXIV

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands ;

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

XXV

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss'd,
And often press'd him to her breast ;
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throb'd at every blow ;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign'd she greet,

Though low he kneeled at her feet.
 Me lists not tell what words were made,
 What Douglas, Home, and Howard, said —
 — For Howard was a generous foe —
 And how the clan united pray'd
 The Ladye would the feud forego,
 And deign to bless the nuptial hour
 Of Cranstoun's Lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI

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

XXVII

All as they left the listed plain,
 Much of the story she did gain ;

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

XXVIII

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance ;
And taught that, in the listed plain,
Another, in his arms and shield,

Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
 Under the name of Deloraine.
 Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
 And hence his presence scared the clan,
 Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
 And not a man of blood and breath.

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

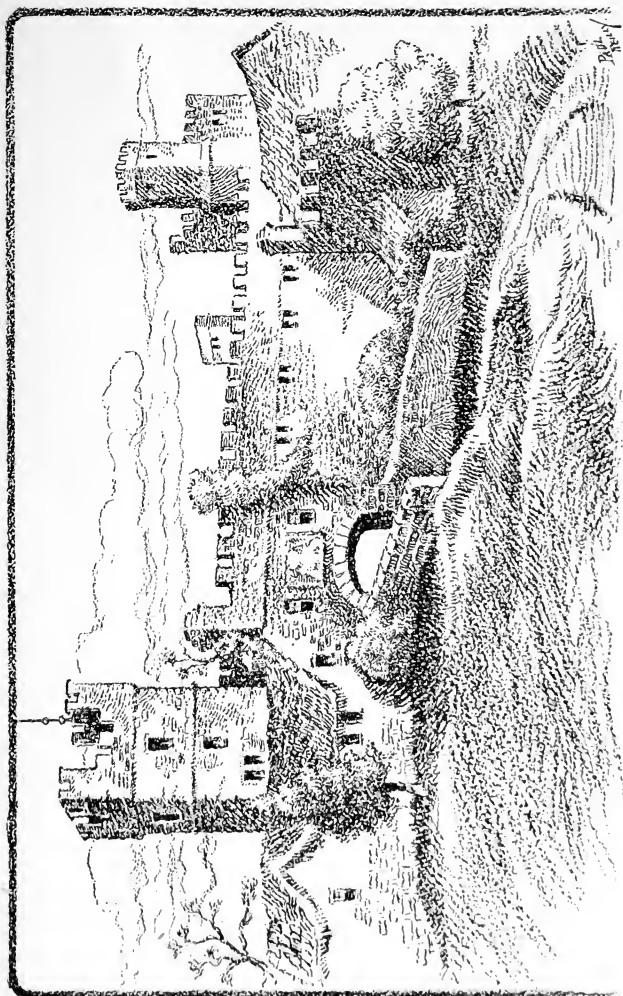
XXIX

" Now, - Richard Musgrave, liest thou here !
 I ween, my deadly enemy ;
 For, if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slew'st a sister's son to me ;

And when I lay in dungeon dark,
Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die :
Yet rest thee God ! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear !
'T was pleasure, as we look'd behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark bloodhound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray !
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again." —

XXX

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
And laid him on his bloody shield ;
On levell'd lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale,
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail ;



NAWORTH CASTLE

Behind, four priests, in sable stole,
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul :
Around, the horsemen slowly rode ;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode ;
And thus the gallant knight they bore,
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore ;
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

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

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

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,

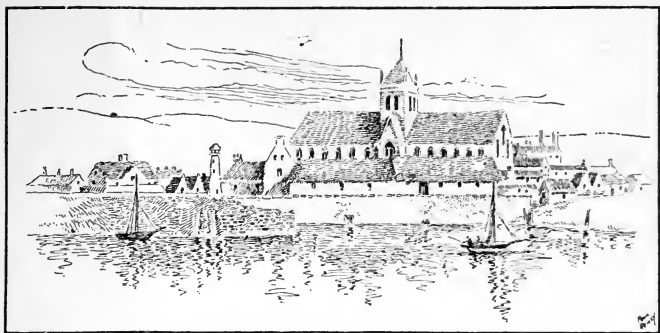
CANTO V] THE LAST MINSTREL

Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy :
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear ;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his minstrel strain

OUTLINE OF CANTO SIXTH

In impassioned verse the minstrel addresses himself to Caledonia, his native land. Then comes an account of the betrothal of Margaret to Lord Cranstoun and the feast that follows. The goblin dwarf is present and again works mischief by stirring up quarrels among the revelers, to quiet which the mistress bids the minstrels "tune their lay." First Albert Græme, then Fitztraver, and last Harold, all aged minstrels, entertain the company with their songs. While Harold sings, darkness gradually fills the hall. Suddenly thunder and lightning startle them, and the impish dwarf is snatched out of their midst and is never seen again. In awe and fear each knight makes vows to his patron saint, and the mistress renounces once for all "dark magic's aid." The wedding takes place, but this the minstrel does not describe. Instead he closes his lay with an account of the pilgrimage of the knights to Melrose's holy shrine, where mass for the dead is sung.

The minstrel's tale is ended, but he is no longer a wanderer. Near Newark Castle he is given a humble abiding place.



CANTO SIXTH

I

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

II

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

III

Not scorn'd like me ! to Branksome Hall
The Minstrels came, at festive call ;
Trooping they came, from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war ;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.

Of late, before each martial clan,
 They blew their death-note in the van,
 But now, for every merry mate,
 Rose the portcullis' iron grate ;
 They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
 They dance, they revel, and they sing,
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV

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

V

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
 Chapel or altar came not nigh ;
 Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
 So much she fear'd each holy place.
 False slanders these : — I trust right well
 She wrought not by forbidden spell ;

For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour :
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
Who tamper with such dangerous art.

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

VI

The spousal rites were ended soon :
'T was now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshall'd the rank of every guest ;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share :
O'er capon, heron-shew, and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave,
And cygnet from St. Mary's wave ;
O'er ptarmigan and venison
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,

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

VII

The Goblin Page, omitting still
 No opportunity of ill,
 Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
 To rouse debate and jealousy ;
 Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
 By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
 And now in humor highly cross'd,
 About some steeds his band had lost,
 High words to words succeeding still,
 Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill ;
 A hot and hardy Rutherford,
 Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-sword.

He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose :
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove and shook his head. —
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drench'd in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog found ;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath ;
But ever from that time, 't was said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes ;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merry-men sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride !" —

At every pledge, from vat and pail,
 Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale ;
 While shout the riders every one ;
 Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan,
 Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
 When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX

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

X

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

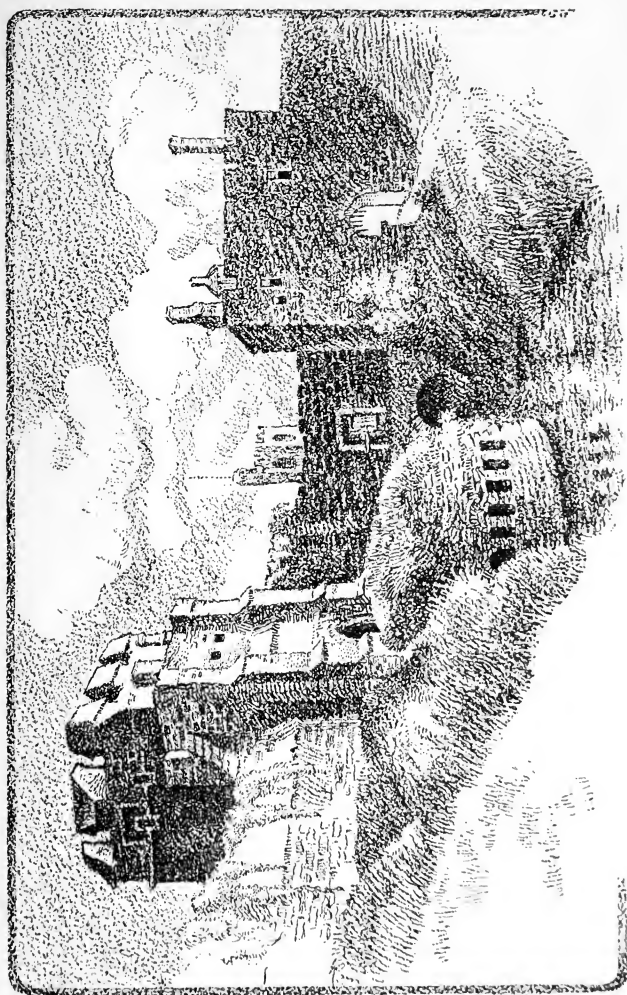
XI

Albert Græme

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

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

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
 Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall ;



CARLISLE CASTLE

Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

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

XII

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

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

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

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

XIII

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

XIV

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

XV

Fitztraver ! O what tongue may say
 The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,

When Surrey, of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew ?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
And faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came ;
Lord William's foremost favorite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI

Fitztraver

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

XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might ;

CANTO VI] THE LAST MINSTREL

On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest, and altar, nothing bright :
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII

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

XIX

Fair all the pageant — but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind !
O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined ;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,
Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find : —
That 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
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant ! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plunder'd shrine,
The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine !

XXI

Both Scots, and Southern chiefs, prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song ;
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith. —
Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair ;
St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades ;
Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay ; —
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall ! —
Thence oft he 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
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII

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

Yet something of the Northern spell
Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

XXIII

Harold

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

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

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

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

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



HAWTHORNDEN

“ ’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.” —

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.

It glared on Roslin’s castled rock,
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,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

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

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

CANTO VI] THE LAST MINSTREL

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

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

XXIV

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

XXV

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

It broke, with thunder long and loud,
Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud, —
From sea to sea the larum rung ;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elvish dwarf was seen no more !

XXVI

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

CANTO VI] THE LAST MINSTREL

The guests in silence pray'd and shook
 And terror dimm'd each lofty look.
 But none of all the astonish'd train
 Was so dismay'd as Deloraine ;
 His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
 '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 spectre-hound in Man.
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold —
 That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea ;
 And knew — but how it matter'd not —
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling heard the wondrous tale ;
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke ;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to St. Bride of Douglas make,
 That he a pilgrimage would take
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
 To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd :

Some to St. Modan made their vows,
Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to our Ladye of the Isle ;
Each did his patron witness make,
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And Monks should sing, and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,
Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid.

XXVIII

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

More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go ;

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

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
 With sable cowl and scapular,
 And snow-white stoles, in order due,
 The holy Fathers, two and two,
 In long procession came ;
 Taper, and host, and book they bare,
 And holy banner, flourish'd fair
 With the Redeemer's name.
 Above the prostrate pilgrim band
 The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
 And bless'd them as they kneel'd ;

With holy cross he sign'd them all,
And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead ;
And bells toll'd out their mighty peal,
For the departed spirit's weal ;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose ;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burden of the song, —
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA ;
While the pealing organ rung ;
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy Fathers sung.

XXXI

Hymn for the Dead

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

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

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

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

Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day ;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer ;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

PAGE 5. *Border chivalry*: the Border was the land between England and Scotland, and was the scene of many bloody contests at the time when these two countries were unfriendly. The Border was also called the Marches from a word meaning "frontier."

palfrey: a saddle horse.

stranger . . . Stuarts' throne: William III (William of Orange).

PAGE 6. *bigots of the iron time*: the Puritans, through whose influence Parliament in 1656 passed an ordinance declaring "that if any . . . persons commonly called fidlers or minstrels, shall . . . be taken playing, fidling, and making music . . . they shall be adjudged and declared to be rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars."

Newark: a castle on the Yarrow River, which is a tributary of the Tweed.

Duchess: Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch, and widow of James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

PAGE 7. *Earl Francis*: Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.

Earl Walter: grandfather of the Duchess.

Buccleuch: the house of Buccleuch was an ancient one. A *cleuch* is a narrow glen, and according to tradition a king of Scotland pursued a buck into such a glen, where it was captured by one of his subjects who, being a man of great strength, carried it on his back. This incident gave to the family their name (see p. 129).

NOTES

PAGE 8. *King Charles the good*: Charles I.

Holyrood: the royal palace of Edinburgh. It was originally an abbey.

CANTO FIRST

PAGE 11. *Branksome tower*: this castle was situated on the Teviot, three miles above Hawick, and was the principal seat of the Buccleuch family.

spell: enchantment.

wight: person.

rushy floor: in the sixteenth century, floors were strewed with rushes instead of being covered with carpets.

Teviot-stone: "A rough boulder on the Rashliegrain height on the watershed between the counties of Roxburgh and Dumfries: it may have marked a parish border or a bridle path. It has long since disappeared." — Flather

PAGE 12. *knights of fame*: the ancient barons of Buccleuch retained in their household at Branksome a number of gentlemen of their own name, who held lands from their chief for the military service of watching and warding his castle.

squires of name: a squire was next in rank to a knight; the yeoman was subordinate in rank to the squire.

to bower from stall: to the house from the stable.

bold Buccleuch: Lord Buccleuch, the chief of Branksome Castle, who had been killed before the opening of this story.

wight: lively (an adjective: see p. 11, where this word is a noun).

Jedwood-axe: a long-handled ax. or halbert, used by horsemen, probably made at Jedwood (see p. 93).

PAGE 14. *dight*: equipped.

St. George's red cross: the English banner bore a red cross in honor of England's patron saint.

Threaten Branksome's lordly towers: being a Border castle, Branksome was often exposed to attacks from the English. Scroop, Howard, and Percy, were at different

NOTES

times wardens of the English borderlands, and Warkworth, Naworth, and Carlisle were, respectively, the castles of these English wardens.

Lord Walter : a Scott of Buccleuch and warden of the west borderlands of Scotland. He was killed in the streets of Edinburgh by the Kerrs (or Carrs), a powerful Border family with whom the Scotts had a deadly feud.

Dunedin : Edinburgh.

slogan : war cry of a Border clan.

PAGE 15. *mutual pilgrimage* : in the hope of ending the feud between the Scotts and the Kerrs, in 1529 a bond was executed between the heads of the clans, binding them to perform reciprocally the four principal pilgrimages of Scotland, for the benefit of those of the opposite party who had fallen in the quarrel.

Cessford : Cessford Castle, near the Cheviot Hills, was the ancient baronial residence of the Carr (Kerr) family.

Ettrick : the seat of the Buccleuch family.

PAGE 16. *Mathouse-burn* : *burn* means "brook."

Lord Cranstoun : the Cranstouns were an ancient Border family of Teviotdale, at this time at feud with the Scotts.

clerk : scholar.

Bethune : the Bethunes were a noble family of French origin.

art that none may name : magic.

Padua : a city of Italy, long supposed by the Scottish peasants to be the principal school of necromancy.

PAGE 17. *St. Andrew's cloister'd hall* : the University of St. Andrews.

no darkening shadow : it was at one time believed that students of necromancy must run through a subterranean hall, where they were chased by the devil who, if he could not overtake them, caught their shadows instead. Those who had thus lost their shadows were supposed to prove the best magicians.

ban-dogs : dogs kept tied, hence probably bloodhounds.

NOTES

PAGE 18. *Fell*: wild, high ground.

Skelfhill-pen: *pen* means "peak" or "mountain." It is the same word as *ben*.

morris: the morris, or morrice, dance was a favorite May-day pastime.

PAGE 19. *Arthur's slow wain*: the Great Dipper. *Arthur* is probably a corrupt form of *Arcturus*, one of the stars in this constellation: *wain* is "wagon."

PAGE 20. *moss-trooper*: this was the usual name given to a Border marauder. These troopers lived in the mosses, or marshes, and rode together in troops. Their thieving inroads were called forays.

Unicorn . . . Crescent . . . Star: the coat of arms of the Kerrs contained three unicorns' heads, while that of the Scotts bore a star between two crescents.

PAGE 21. *William of Deloraine*: a kinsman and vassal of the house of Buccleuch.

stark: strong, rugged.

Solway . . . moss: both the Solway sands and the Tarras moss were sources of danger, the former because of the rapid tide in the Solway Firth and the treacherous quick-sands, the latter because it was a desolate marsh through which a stream ran furiously among hidden rocks.

Percy's best bloodhounds: bloodhounds were often used both by the Scotch and the English to pursue marauders across the Border.

Eske or Liddel: rivers of Scotland near the Border.

matin prime: early morning.

Cumberland: a county of England bordering on Scotland.

PAGE 22. *Melrose*: the finest abbey in Scotland, now one of the most beautiful ruins on the Tweed. It was dedicated to St. Mary, hence the reference in the next line.

St. Michael's night: Michaelmas, September 29.

mighty dead: Michael Scott, a powerful Scottish magician.

NOTES

lorn : lost.

neck-verse : Scott says that the neck-verse was "the beginning of the 51st Psalm, *miserere mei*, etc., anciently read by criminals claiming the benefit of clergy."

Hairibee : the place of execution for the Border marauders at Carlisle, England.

PAGE 24. *barbican* : an outer defensive work, often a long, narrow, covered passageway.

basnet : a basin-shaped helmet; a shortened form of *basinet*.

Peel : a Border tower.

Moat-hill's mound : an artificial mound near Hawick, which was probably used in ancient times as an assembling place for a national council of the adjacent tribes.

Hazeldean : an estate belonging to a family of Scotts.

Roman way : an old Roman road crossing a part of Roxburghshire.

PAGE 25. *brand* : sword.

Minto-crags : A group of crags rising above the vale of the Teviot. *Barnhill* is said to have been an outlaw who inhabited a tower at the base of these crags. A small platform high among the crags is called Barnhill's bed.

Doric reed : a much-used expression for poetry about rural life. The specific reference here is to a pastoral poem written by a member of the Minto family, in which occurs the verse, "Ambition, I said, would soon cure me of love."

Riddel : the family of Riddel, or Ryedale, long held a barony about halfway between Branksome and Melrose.

Aill : a small stream flowing into the Teviot, now usually written *Ale*.

PAGE 26. *barded* : applied to a horse in armor.

march-man : William of Deloraine is, of course, meant. As already explained, the Border was called the Marches, and hence a Borderer a Marchman.

Halidon : the ancient seat of the Kerrs of Cessford. A little to the northward is the battlefield on which the

NOTES

Douglases, assisted by the Kerrs, contended as to which should have possession of the boy King James V. Elliot, a retainer of Buccleuch, killed Cessford, one of the Kerrs.

Home : one of the families of Scotts.

Abbaye : French for *abbey*.

PAGE 28. *curfew* : in Scotland curfew rang at eight o'clock.

midnight lauds : midnight service of the Roman Catholic Church.

CANTO SECOND

PAGE 31. *shafted oriel* : a window divided by shafts of stone.

St. David : David the First of Scotland was sainted for founding Melrose and other monasteries.

PAGE 32. *fence* : defend (see p. 60, where the word is a noun).

rood : rod.

souls' repose : the Buccleuch family conferred many benefits on Melrose Abbey, in order that masses should be sung for their dead.

aventayle : visor of a helmet.

PAGE 33. *drie* : endure.

PAGE 34. *patter* : repeat rapidly.

foray : plundering expedition.

can : know.

fair Castile : an old kingdom in northern and central Spain.

PAGE 35. *jennet* : a small Spanish horse.

fleur-de-lys . . . quatre-feuille : the first is a three-parted ornament, belonging to the arms of France; the second, a four-leaved ornament.

corbells : the projections from which arches spring.

Chief of Otterburne : James, Earl of Douglas, slain at Otterburne.

Knight of Liddesdale : William Douglas, slain while hunting in Ettrick Forest.

east oriel : the eastern window of Melrose Abbey, a beautiful specimen of pure Gothic architecture.

NOTES

PAGE 36. *ozier* : willow.

A Scottish monarch : Alexander II.

paynim : heathen.

Michael Scott : a man of great learning and supposed by his contemporaries to be a powerful magician. He lived at Balwearie in the thirteenth century, but in this poem is placed at a later date.

PAGE 38. *Salamanca* : there were schools for teaching the sciences supposed to involve magic in a cavern at Salamanca in Spain.

Him listed : he wished.

Notre-Dame : a cathedral in Paris.

cleft Eildon hills : Michael Scott once commanded a troublesome spirit to dam the Tweed at Kelso. This was accomplished in one night, and the spirit was next ordered to divide Eildon hill into three, which was also accomplished in one night.

PAGE 40. *palmer's amice* : flowing cloak worn by itinerant monks. A palmer was a pilgrim.

baldric : belt worn over the shoulder.

PAGE 41. *Book of Might* : book of magic.

fellest : most powerful, most mighty.

PAGE 43. *fain* : glad.

Cheviot : hills between England and Scotland.

Carter : a mountain among the Cheviot hills.

PAGE 45. *ween* : think.

PAGE 46. *clde* : old age.

"*Lost ! lost ! lost !*" one authority says that by this cry the dwarf means that he himself is "lost or strayed from his supernatural master, the wizard Michael Scott."

gorse : a small shrub.

PAGE 47. *litherlie* : mischievous.

Home and Hermitage : Home Castle was to the northeast and Hermitage Castle to the southwest, the distance between being the greater part of the length of the Border.

NOTES

Lowes: the Loch of the Lowes is connected with St. Mary's Loch, and it is probable that at an early time they formed one large lake.

PAGE 48. *trysting place*: gathering place.

cushat-dove: wood pigeon.

PAGE 49. *blood of Velez*: Malaga wine. Velez Malaga is a Spanish town.

CANTO THIRD

PAGE 52. *crane*: the Cranstoun's crest was a crane holding a stone in its foot (*crane* + *stoun*).

PAGE 53. *jack*: coat of mail.

acton: a leathern jacket. W

PAGE 54. *inly*: within. F

short shrift: little time for confession.

corslet: breastplate.

PAGE 55. *book-bosom'd priest*: friars were wont to travel from Melrose to Jedburgh to perform various religious services, carrying the mass-book in their bosoms.

Borderer's . . . gore: Christian blood could break any magic spell.

spell: incantation.

glamor: magic illusion.

sheeling: shepherd's hut.

PAGE 56. *so . . . thrive*: so might I prosper; a mild oath.

gramarye: magic.

PAGE 57. *train*: entice.

lurcher: a kind of hunting dog.

dissolved: it was supposed that running water dispelled all illusions and magic.

vilde: vile.

lost: notice that the only words put into the mouth of the dwarf are "Lost! lost! lost!" and "Found! found! found!" (in Canto VI). (See note on p. 46.)

PAGE 58. *wilder'd*: bewildered.

NOTES

PAGE 59. *ban-dog* : probably a bloodhound.

barret-cap : cloth cap.

baldric : belt.

PAGE 60. *kirtle* : tunic.

fence : see note on page 32.

PAGE 61. *Southron* : Southerner, that is, Englishman.

Gramercy : thanks.

wardens : guarders of the Border.

Lord Dacre : Scott says that Lord Dacre was a warden of the West Marches, and a man of a hot and obstinate character.

PAGE 62. *tire* : headdress.

bandelier : doleer, a belt for carrying ammunition.

hackbuteer : a *hackbi* ' is a heavy musket, and a *hackbuteer* is a soldier armed with this musket.

PAGE 63. *salved the splinter* : some persons were supposed to possess a kind of sympathetic powder with which they could cure a wound by merely anointing the weapon which inflicted it.

PAGE 64. *Pen* : see note on page 18.

beacon : signal fire, giving warning of the approach of an enemy. Such fires formed a sort of telegraphic communication between the Border and Edinburgh.

Warder : warden ; here the watchman of the Buccleuch Castle.

cresset : a sort of lantern attached to a pole.

Seneschal : the chief official of the castle.

PAGE 65. *bale* : beacon ; one fire gave warning of the enemy, two that they were coming indeed, and four that they were in great force.

Priesthaughswire : a *swire* is a depression in the crest of a mountain or a hollow between two hills.

Mount for Branksome : the gathering cry of the Scots.

PAGE 66. *need-fire* : beacon fire.

tarn : mountain lake.

earn : eagle.

NOTES

cairn : pile of loose stones, often found on the summit of Scottish hills and supposed mostly to be sepulchral monuments.

Soltra and Dumpender Law : two hills; *law* means mound.

Lothian : the division of Scotland which includes Edinburgh.

bowne : make ready.

PAGE 68. *keep* : dungeon, the strongest part of an old castle.

ban-dog : here evidently not a bloodhound (see note on p. 17).

Leven Clans, or Tynedale men : Borderers on a pillaging expedition.

black-mail : protection money exacted by freebooters.

CANTO FOURTH

PAGE 72. *Dundee* : John Graham, Viscount of Dundee, who was slain in the battle of Killcrankie.

Græme : an abbreviation of Graham.

peel's rude battlement : the rude fortified platform on the top of the tower.

PAGE 73. *Liddel-side* : Watt Tinlinn was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, who held for his service a small tower on the frontier of Liddesdale.

Tynedale snatchers : a class of Border robbers.

St. Barnabright : St. Barnabas' Day, June 11, which, according to the Old Style calendar, was regarded as the longest day of the year.

yew : that is, a bow made of yew.

Warden-Raid : a raid commanded by a warden in person.

barbican : see note on page 24.

hag : broken ground in a bog.

Billhope : a place in Liddesdale, famous among hunters for buck and roes.

serf : bondman.

NOTES

morion : steel cap.

enow : an old form of *enough*.

PAGE 74. *six Scottish ells* : a Scottish ell was about 37 inches.

A spear 18 feet long would be quite formidable.

Belted Will Howard : Lord William Howard, third son of the Duke of Norfolk, and warden of the West Marches.

hackbut-men : musketeers (see note on p. 62).

It had not been burnt, etc. : this line is an interesting commentary on Border life of that day.

Scrogg : a thicket of scrubby growth.

drove my cows : stole his herds.

Fastern's night : the night before the Fast of Lent.

PAGE 76. *ken* : sight, that is, what they could see.

There was saddling, etc. : these lines are not in the first edition, but appear in that of 1831, and also in later editions.

pricking : to *prick* is to ride fast, to spur onward.

St. Mary's silver wave : St. Mary's Lake (see note on p. 47).

Gamescleugh's dusky height : a hill not far from Thirlestane Castle.

Thirlestane : when James had assembled his nobility at Fala, in the south of Scotland, to invade England, and was disappointed at their refusal to follow him, Sir John Scott of Thirlestane alone declared himself ready to follow the king wherever he should lead. In gratitude for this, James granted his family a charter of arms, a border of fleur-de-lis with a bundle of spears for a crest and the motto "Ready, aye ready."

fleur-de-luce : the fleur-de-lis, or iris.

mossy wave : marsh.

PAGE 77. *Murdieston* : Walter Scott of Harden, descendant of a younger branch of the Buccleuch family, before they acquired the estate of Murdieston. He was a renowned Border freebooter.

flower of Yarrow : Mary, wife of Walter Scott of Harden.

Dinlay : a mountain in Liddesdale.

NOTES

PAGE 78. *How thy sires won*, etc.: this stanza and the next are historically accurate.

seignory: the right which a feudal superior has in the property of his tenants.

Galliard: gay, gallant (when used as an adjective); a gallant young knight (when used as a noun).

heriot: a duty or tribute which the tenant or vassal rendered to his lord or his superior upon demand. This at one time was the best beast or chattel which the tenant possessed.

muir: moor, or heath.

PAGE 79. *cast of hawks*: two hawks released from the hand at the same time.

Beshrew thy heart: literally, "curse thy heart," but in reality the meaning is less formidable.

merrymen: retainers; sometimes used of followers of an outlaw chief.

Galliard: see note on page 78. The word seems to be used as a noun here.

PAGE 80. *far Craikcross*: some editions have "fair Craikcross."

Pentoun-linn: a waterfall.

Haugh: a haugh was a piece of low-lying land by a river, sometimes overflowed by the river.

PAGE 81. *cleugh*: cleuch, a ravine; also a precipitous descent (see note on p. 7).

swair: swire, a depression between hills (see note on p. 65).

Bellenden: Bellenden is situated near the head of Borthwick water, almost in the center of the possessions of the Scotts, and hence was frequently used as their place of rendezvous and their gathering word.

PAGE 82. *Rangleburn*: a brook which flows into the Ettrick near the Buccleuch estate.

mickle: much.

Scottish mile: this is 1.127 of the statute mile.

NOTES

running stream : compare with a similar happening on page 57.

cloth-yard shaft : a shaft the length of a yard of cloth.

PAGE 83. *ken* : discern.

Almayn : German.

Light forayers : lightly armed riders.

Kendal archers : Kendal, in Westmoreland, England, was celebrated both for its green cloth and for its archers.

bill-men : the bill was a kind of battle-ax.

PAGE 84. *Irthing* : a river of Cumberland, England.

Acre's conquer'd wall : the family of Dacre derived their name from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre, in Syria, under Richard Cœur de Lion.

mercenaries : foreign troops whose services are bought.

levin : lightning.

morsing-horns : powder flasks.

better knee : right knee.

escalade : scaling of the walls.

PAGE 85. *chivalry* : horsemen equipped for battle.

glaive : broadsword.

To gain his spurs : to win the order of knighthood.

favor : a handkerchief, ribbon, glove, or some such article given by the lady to her sweetheart to wear and to defend.

bartizan : a small overhanging turret.

partisan : a kind of halberd or long-handled battle-ax.

Falcon and culver : ancient pieces of artillery.

seething pitch and molten lead : for pouring on the heads of the assailants.

PAGE 86. *better hand* : right hand (see note on p. 84).

a gauntlet on a spear : a glove of mail, the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers. The gauntlet is displayed here as a charge against the English of having broken faith in thus making a raid in time of peace.

Gilsland : a part of Cumberland.

reads : counsels.

swoith : quickly.

NOTES

PAGE 87. *pursuivant-at-arms* : an attendant on the heralds.

The lion argent : the badge of the Howards — a lion embroidered in white. *Argent* literally is "silver."

irks : distresses.

flemens-firth : a place of refuge for outlaws.

march-treason : the name given to various infringements of Border law ; among others, making hostile incursions across the Border in time of peace.

PAGE 88. *St. Cuthbert's even* : the evening before St. Cuthbert's Day, which comes on March 20.

prick'd : notice how suggestive this word is. It means literally pricking one's horse with one's spurs, and a spurred horse will always speed to its utmost.

harried : plundered.

warrison : note of assault.

emprise : enterprise.

PAGE 89. *by oath* : in doubtful cases the innocence of Border criminals was occasionally referred to their own oath.

Knighthood he took : the dignity of knighthood could be conferred by one who himself possessed it upon any squire who was found to merit the honor of chivalry.

Ancram's ford : the spot where the Scotch defeated the English in 1544.

wight : fleet. The meaning here is that if Lord Dacre had not been in full flight from the enemy he would have witnessed the knighting of William of Deloraine.

lyke-wake dirge : dirge sung while watching a corpse.

Pensils : little streamers, shaped like swallow-tails, attached to the lance of a knight.

PAGE 90. *gray-goose shaft* : the arrows were feathered with goose feathers.

Ruberslaw : a mountain in Scotland, about halfway between Branksome Castle and Melrose Abbey.

weapon-scharw : the military array of a country ; literally, a showing of weapons.

the eagle and the rood : Lord Maxwell's coat of arms was the eagle and the cross.

NOTES

PAGE 91. *harquebuss*: a hackbut, that is, a kind of heavy musket (see note on p. 62).

on row: in a row.

blanche lion: the white lion (as on page 87, the *lion argent*); this was the badge of the Howards.

PAGE 92. *gauntlet*: this was the token of challenge, a common custom of mediæval times.

PAGE 93. *Jedwood*: the same as Jedburgh, Jedworth, or Jeddart. It was sacked and burned at least seven times during the wars of this period.

prescience: knowledge of events yet to take place.

lists: field of combat.

PAGE 94. *brand*: see note on page 25.

when as: the meaning is simply "when"; *as* helps to make the meter right.

the jovial Harper: "rattling, roaring Willie," a noted Border minstrel. He killed Sweet Milk, called the bard of Reull, in a duel, and was executed for the crime at Jedburgh.

Black Lord Archibald: he drew up a set of laws governing Border warfare.

Ousenam's maidens: Scott, in commenting on this reference to the river Ouse, quotes the following from an old ballad:

The lasses of Ousenam water
Are rugging and riving their hair,
And all for the sake of Willie,
His beauty was so fair.

PAGE 96. *Air*: sand bank.

hearse: tomb.

CANTO FIFTH

PAGE 100. *crownlet*: coronet.

PAGE 101. *Vails not*: it avails not.

Bloody Heart: emblem of the house of Douglas, assumed from the time of good Lord James Douglas, to whose keeping Robert Bruce committed his heart to be carried to the Holy Land.

NOTES

Seven Spears of Wedderburne: the seven sons of Sir David Home of Wedderburne.

Clarence's Plantagenet: at the battle of Beauge in France, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother of Henry V, was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton, who distinguished him from the other knights by a coronet set with precious stones which he wore around his helmet.

Nor list I say: nor do I desire to tell.

A Home: the Earls of Home were descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March. Their war cry was "A Home! a Home!" The Hepburns, a powerful family of East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with them.

PAGE 102. *Nor . . . were England's noble Lords forgot*: "Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Borders, and the occasional cruelties which marked the mutual inroads, the inhabitants on either side do not appear to have regarded each other with that violent and personal animosity which might have been expected. On the contrary, like the outposts of hostile armies, they often carried on something resembling friendly intercourse, even in the middle of hostilities." — BERNER, *Froissart*, Vol. II, p. 153

PAGE 103. *foot-ball play*: Scott tells us that "football was anciently a favorite sport all through Scotland, but especially upon the Borders."

whingers: poniards, which were used both as knives and as daggers.

PAGE 104. *wassel*: festivity.

beakers: drinking glasses.

PAGE 105. *pales*: stakes.

By times: betimes, early.

PAGE 106. *Ousenam bowers*: Lord Cranstoun's estate on the banks of the Ouse is meant.

Hermitage: the Castle of Hermitage was the stronghold of the Douglasses.

PAGE 108. *port*: Scott explains that this is "a martial piece of music, adapted to the bagpipes."

NOTES

kin and rent : family and revenue ; it was evidently by these that the combatant was to be chosen to fill William of Deloraine's place.

charm : it will be remembered (see Canto III, stanza XXIII) that the Lady of Branksome had stanch'd the knight's wound "with a charm."

PAGE 109. *Lady's silken rein* : she is, of course, mounted, and the noble Howard walks by her side with his hand on her horse's bridle.

doublet . . . buff : a short leathern jacket ; *buff* refers to the material — a tough skin made, perhaps, from the hide of buffalo or wild ox.

Bilboa blade : a Spanish sword, so called because Bilbao in Spain was famous for its manufacture of fine steel.

footcloth : a richly ornamented cloth reaching to the ground, which was placed on the back of a horse. It was used chiefly on formal occasions.

wimple : a plaited kerchief worn over the head and around the neck and chin.

chaplet : wreath.

PAGE 110. *cause of terror* : Margaret knows that her lover is to fight in William of Deloraine's stead, and she is fearful of the outcome.

barriers : the inclosure where the duel is to take place.

alternate Heralds : the heralds alternately.

PAGE 111. *despiteous scathe* : malicious injury.

PAGE 112. *claymore* : a large, two-handed sword, used by the Highlanders of Scotland.

gorget : the visor protected the face, and the gorget the neck.

PAGE 113. *shriven* : from *shrive*, to "confess."

PAGE 114. *beaver* : the mouthpiece of the helmet.

deign'd she greet : deigned she to greet.

PAGE 115. *Me lists* : I care ; it pleases me.

PAGE 116. *gramarye* : magic.

PAGE 117. *fleeting wraith* : spectral apparition of a living person.

NOTES

PAGE 118. *long of*: on account of.

northern counties: between the Ouse and Berwick.

Snaffle, spur, and spear: the emblems of various Border families. These three words sum up well the life of the old-time marauder.

to follow gear: to search for booty.

bowning: making ready to go.

PAGE 120. *Holme Coltrame's lofty nave*: a church in a village of Cumberland on the Solway Firth.

a poor and thankless soil: the Borderland.

CANTO SIXTH

PAGE 124. *Caledonia*: the Latin name for Scotland, often used in poetry.

Teviot Stone: see note on page 11.

PAGE 125. *portcullis*: a grating, often of iron, hung in or over the gateway of a castle to prevent entrance.

owches: jewels.

miniver: ermine.

PAGE 126. *merlin*: sparrow hawk, often carried by ladies of rank.

heron-shew: young heron.

boar-head: the boar's head and the peacock were dishes of feudal splendor. Of the peacock Scott says, "After being roasted, it was again decorated with its plumage, and a sponge, dipped in lighted spirits of wine, was placed in its bill."

cygnet: swan. St. Mary's Lake, at the head waters of the Yarrow, was noted as a resort for wild swans.

ptarmigan: grouse.

PAGE 127. *shalm*: an instrument resembling the clarinet.

psaltery: a kind of harp.

hooded hawks: the hawks were hooded until they were released. Bells were hung round their necks for the purpose of frightening the game.

sewers: *sew* was a dish of meat, and a *sewer* one who served this and other food.

NOTES

PAGE 128. *bit his glove* : to bite the thumb or the glove was considered a pledge of mortal vengeance.

lyme-dog : a dog led by a band or string.

Cologne blade : such as Conrad would have worn.

buttery : pantry.

Arthur Fire-the-braes : one of the Elliots of Liddesdale.

quit : requite, repay.

carouse : a full glass.

PAGE 129. *Buccleuch* : see note on page 7.

PAGE 130. *By this* : at this.

Land Debateable : Borderland, near the Solway Firth, claimed by both England and Scotland. The depredations of the Græmes extended to both countries, and neither country considered it wise to ask reparation of the other for these forays into its territory.

PAGE 132. *took the cross divine* : became a Crusader.

PAGE 133. *gentle Surrey* : the Earl of Surrey who was beheaded by Henry VIII. Scott says that he was "unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time; and his sonnets display beauties which would do honor to a more polished age."

PAGE 134. *wise Cornelius* : a famous German magician, who is said to have shown to Surrey, by his magic art, a vision of his lady love, Geraldine.

hight : promised.

PAGE 135. *almagest* : a celebrated ancient book containing problems in geometry and astrology, drawn up by Ptolemy.

Agra : a city in British India.

eburnine : ivory.

PAGE 136. *Orcades* : Orkney Islands.

Kirkwall : built by the St. Clairs while earls of Orkney; dismantled about 1615, on account of being garrisoned against the government.

Pentland : Pentland Firth.

Odin : king of the gods of the Norsemen.

NOTES

PAGE 137. *Lochlin* : Scandinavia.

Skill'd . . . raven's food : skilled in killing.

dragons of the wave : according to Scott the Norse bards often called ships the serpents of the ocean.

Scald : Norse bard.

Runic column : a column with inscription in Runic, or Norse characters.

Sea-Snake : the Snake of the Ocean whose folds surround the earth.

dread Maids : the three maidens, who, according to Norse mythology, were sent by Odin, the All-Father, to choose who were to die in battle.

Ransack'd the graves : the Norse warriors were usually buried with their weapons. Many of these weapons were of great value and tempted plunderers, who, as tradition runs, had fierce battles with the ghosts of the dead.

Roslin's bowers : the castle of Roslin, built by William St. Clair, one of whose many titles was Baron of Roslin, was seven miles southeast of Edinburgh.

PAGE 138. *Castle Ravensheuch* : a castle belonging to the St. Clairs, on a steep crag overlooking the Firth of Forth.

inch : isle.

PAGE 140. *the ring they ride* : a favorite sport which consisted in taking a ring off a crossbar with a lance.

Seem'd all on fire : Roslin chapel is said to appear on fire at the death of any of the St. Clairs.

iron panoply : the barons of Roslin, the St. Clairs, were buried in their armor in a vault beneath the chapel floor.

pinnet : pinnacle.

PAGE 141. "*Found! found! found!*" Until now the only speech of the dwarf has been the cry "*Lost! lost! lost!*"

PAGE 142. *levin-brand* : thunderbolt.

Gylbin : the dwarf is meant.

PAGE 143. *spectre-hound* : the Mauthe Doog, a black spaniel, supposed to haunt Peel Castle in the Isle of Man.

NOTES

St. Bride of Douglas: the favorite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus in particular.

PAGE 145. *uneath*: scarcely.

cowl: hood.

scapular: an ecclesiastical garment, a kind of scarf worn over the shoulders.

stole: a long narrow scarf crossed in front.

PAGE 146. *Dies iræ*, etc.: the opening lines of an old Latin hymn, — "Day of wrath, that day shall dissolve the world in ashes."

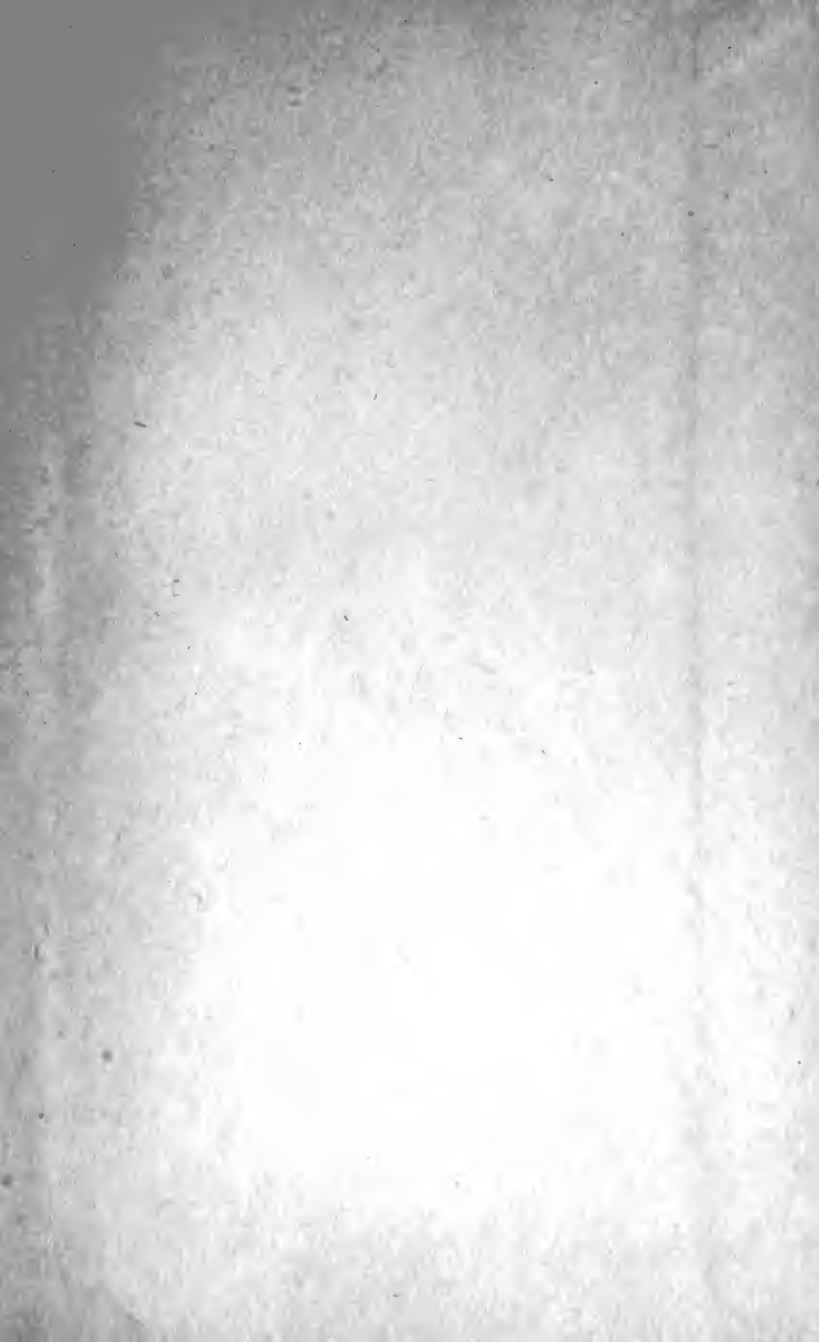
PAGE 147. *Bowhill*: near Newark Castle.

throstles: thrushes.

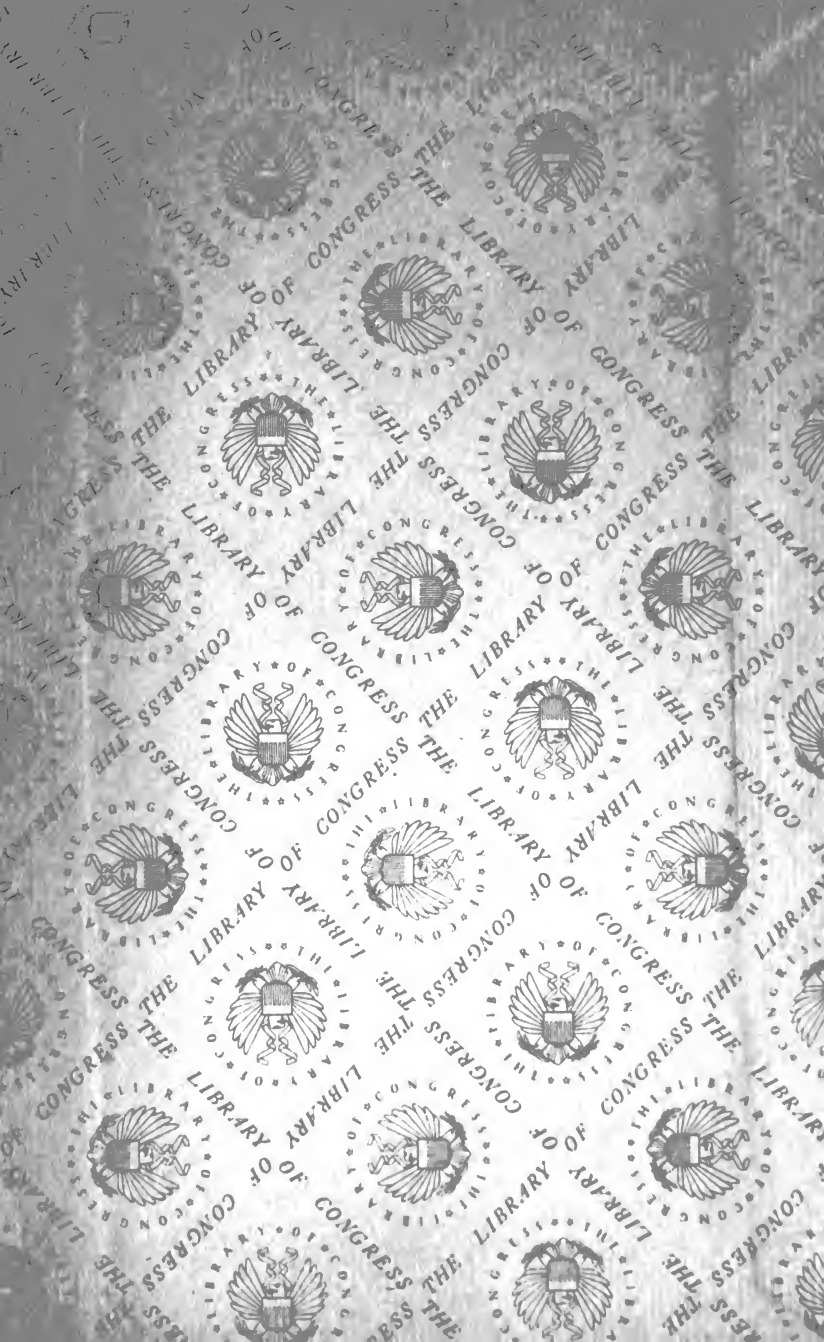
Harehead-shaw: a wood not far from Bowhill; *shaw* means "thicket."

Carterhaugh: a plain near Newark.









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