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Jesus is seated on the right side of the table
The disciples are seated around the table
The kneeling disciple is in prayer
The scene is set in a room with a large arched doorway and columns in the background.

37pm



THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WITH LIFE

Engravings on Steel.

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THE
LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

SIR WALTER SCOTT was born at Edinburgh, on the 15th of August 1771. His father, Walter Scott, a Writer to the Signet (an attorney), was a very worthy man, and had a respectable practice. He was related to many of the Border families of the name of Scott, and remotely descended from the house of Buccleuch. His mother, Anne Rutherford, was the daughter of an eminent physician in Edinburgh.

In his second year, a weakness in one of his legs, which eventually terminated in permanent lameness, caused his removal to the country, where he resided with an aunt until about his eighth year. In 1778 he entered the High School of Edinburgh, where he remained till 1783, making considerable progress in learning, but in the ordinary tasks of a school evincing no superiority over others. Already, however, he displayed extraordinary precocity in those departments in which he was to become so famous. When but four years old, a toy had less attraction for him than a Border ballad, and he had committed several to memory, which he was accustomed to recite with great enthusiasm. Before he was ten, he had made a collection of several volumes of old ballads, and was famous among his schoolmates for his extraordinary gift of storytelling. "In the winter play-hours," he says, "when hard exercise was impossible, my tales used to assemble an admiring

audience round Lucky Brown's fireside, and happy was he that could sit next the inexhaustible narrator."

He entered college in 1783, but as a student was rather idle, though a most industrious reader of miscellaneous literature. "My appetite for books," he says of himself, "was as ample and indiscriminating as it was indefatigable. I waded into the stream like a blind man into a ford, without the power of searching my way, unless by groping for it." An illness between his twelfth and sixteenth years, interrupting his more regular studies, threw him for amusement upon whatever books he could reach; and as he possessed a most capacious and retentive memory, he stored up a mass of curious knowledge which he afterwards turned to great account.

From 1786 to 1790 he acted as clerk in his father's office, and acquired there a freedom in the use of the pen and habits of application which were of essential service to him in his literary career. His appearance at this period is thus described: "He had outgrown the sallowness of early ill health, and had a fresh, brilliant complexion. His eyes were clear, open, and well set, with a changeful radiance, to which teeth of the most perfect regularity and whiteness lent their assistance, while the noble expanse and elevation of the brow gave to the whole aspect a dignity far above the charm of mere features. His figure, excepting the blemish in one limb, must in those days have been eminently handsome; tall, much above the usual standard, it was cast in the very mould of a young Hercules; the head set on with singular grace, the throat and chest after the truest model of the antique, the hands delicately finished; the whole outline that of extraordinary vigour, without as yet a touch of clumsiness." In July 1792, when not quite twenty-one years of age, he was called to the bar. His filial affection was displayed in the purchase with his first fee of a silver taper-stand for his mother. Though his practice was small, it continued to increase from year to year till he abandoned his profession, and became, in 1806, a clerk of Session—an office of trust, with a salary of £800 a-year.

But Scott's mind was chiefly devoted to other objects than the legal profession. Antiquities—an old coin, a rusty broadsword, the

hunting-horn of a Highland chief, old battle-fields, picturesque ballads, the history of an ancient family—possessed an attraction for him which less imaginative minds can scarcely understand. He would walk twenty miles, lame though he was, to see the ruins of an old fastness. No landscape, however lovely, was complete till he had discovered its historical associations; and the barest, bleakest moor glowed with beauty as he listened to the story of the knights who had fought and bled on it. “To me,” he writes, “the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling Castle.” To trace out the lost verses of an old song, to discover the missing lines of a couplet, to pick up the curious phraseology of some venerable relic of a bygone age, were to him labours of love. During seven successive years he made what he called a *raid* into Liddesdale, exploring all the valleys, familiarising himself with the scenery and the manners of the people, and accommodating himself with singular success to every class, making himself equally at home in the minister’s manse and beside the farmer’s kitchen hearth. In these excursions he too frequently yielded to the rude sociality of the times, and indulged in deep potations. It was perhaps at the same period he acquired the use of those expletives which appear both in his letters and conversation when he was excited, and which are as contrary to good taste as right morality.

With his chivalric and knightly tastes, it is not to be wondered at that his politics were thoroughly Tory, and almost Jacobite indeed, he says of himself, when a young man, “I took up my politics as King Charles did his religion, from an idea that the Cavalier creed was the more gentleman-like of the two.” We are not sure but that Scott’s religious profession had a similar origin. His parents were strict Presbyterians; but Presbyterianism in Scottish history appears constantly as the opponent of those kings and nobles with whom all his sympathies were enlisted, and at an early period he joined the Episcopalian Church.

In 1797, Scott became quartermaster of a volunteer cavalry regiment, designed to aid in repelling the French invasion which then threatened the country. His patriotism, intrepidity, ready

wit, and good humour, contributed greatly to sustain the spirits of his companions in the daily drudgery of their drill.

In the summer of the same year he was married to Charlotte M. Carpenter, a young lady of French extraction, with whom he became acquainted at a watering-place. The connexion was a very happy one. They had a pleasant cottage at Lasswade, where they spent their summers, receiving their friends and enjoying themselves amid the delightful scenery of the neighbourhood. One who visited him at this period dwells on "the simple unostentatious elegance of the cottage, and the domestic picture which he there contemplated—a man of native kindness and cultivated talent, passing the intervals of a learned profession amidst scenes highly favourable to his poetic inspirations, not in churlish and rustic solitude, but in the daily exercise of the most precious sympathies as a husband, a father, and a friend." He afterwards removed to Ashiestiel, on the banks of the Tweed, from which place many of his earlier poems are dated.

By the interest of the Duke of Buccleuch, whose friendship as the head of his clan he highly valued, he obtained the appointment of Sheriff of Selkirkshire, an office yielding £300 a-year, so that now, with his wife's portion, which was considerable, he was in easy circumstances. But Scott had already begun to aspire to be the founder of a house which might occupy a station worthy of his ancient name; and favouring circumstances concurred to stimulate his ambition.

While Scott was thus prospering in worldly circumstances, he was gradually entering upon those literary labours which were to become the main business of his life. The wild legendary lore contained in the German tongue having induced him to study that language, he translated Burger's "Lenore," and "The Wild Huntsman," which were published anonymously in a thin volume in the year 1793. Contributions to "Lewis' Tales of Terror" (a work of little merit) were followed by a translation of Goethe's tragedy of "The Iron Hand." "The House of Aspen," written for the stage, but not published till 1829; "Glenfinlas," "The Eve of St John," "The Gray Brother," and "The Fire King," ballads which smack of the old Border spirit, were his next pro

ductions. It was the publication of "The Border Minstrelsy," however, and of "Sir Tristram," a poem by Sir Thomas the Rhymer, to which he added a supplement, that first attracted attention to him as an author. But in 1803 his real vocation began. A legend, designed to appear as a ballad, grew under his hands till it became a poem of considerable size, and after being shewn in detached portions to his friends, was published in 1805, as "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." Its popularity was immediate and extensive. Above 40,000 copies were disposed of before 1830. The impression made by it on literary men, we find noticed in the "Life of Crabbe." He took it up in a bookseller's shop, and read it through at once, saying as he laid it down "Here is a real poet." From this period his literary labours were incessant. A complete edition of Dryden's Works, with a memoir and elaborate notes, was published by him in 1808. In the same year appeared "Marmion," which was received with as much favour as the "Lay." "The Lady of the Lake," the most popular of all his poems, followed in 1810, and "The Vision of Don Roderick," "Rokeby," &c., in rapid succession. Nothing but unremitting industry could have enabled even his genius to execute such tasks, in addition to his professional duties; but his biographer informs us that "he rose by five o'clock, lit his own fire when the season required one, and shaved and dressed with great deliberation—for he was a very martinet as to all but the mere coxcombs of the toilet, not abhorring effeminate dandyism itself so cordially as the slightest approach to personal slovenliness, or even those 'bed-gown and slipper tricks,' as he called them, in which literary men are so apt to indulge. Clad in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner-time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favourite dog lay watching his eye, just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast between nine and ten, he had done enough (in his own language) 'to break the neck of the day's work.' After breakfast, a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he

was, as he used to say, 'his own man.'" These poems yielded large sums of money, and enabled him to take the first step to gratify his ambition of becoming a landed proprietor, by the purchase of a small farm on the banks of the Tweed, to which he gave the now famous name of Abbotsford.

Finding, in 1814, that, owing to the superior popularity of Lord Byron, he was losing ground as a poet in public estimation, he turned his attention to prose fiction, and falling in accidentally with a work which he had begun and thrown aside ten years previously, he finished it, and gave it to the world under the title "Waverley," but without his name. We have seen the success of this novel equalled in these times of cheap literature, but in those days the sale was unparalleled. "Waverley" was followed, in 1815, by "Guy Mannering;" after which, at short intervals, came "The Antiquary," "Tales of My Landlord," first series; "Rob Roy," "Tales of My Landlord," second and third series; "Ivanhoe," "The Monastery," "The Abbot," "Kenilworth," "The Pirate," "The Fortunes of Nigel," "Peveril of the Peak," "Quentin Durward," "St Ronan's Well," "Redgauntlet," and "The Tales of the Crusaders." A foolish whim led him to publish these works anonymously, and forced upon him very discreditable equivocations in denying the authorship.

No man ever occupied a more distinguished position in the world than Sir Walter Scott, from the year 1815 to 1826. In apparently easy circumstances, with a growing estate, the honours of a baronetage, a happy and healthy family, a wide circle of attached friends, and an unbounded reputation,—courted by eminent men from all parts of the world, with agreeable manners, invincible good nature, and hospitable tastes,—he was, perhaps, the most popular and successful literary man that ever lived. Washington Irving gives a lively picture of the Abbotsford family on his visit in 1817:—

"The noise of my chaise," says Irving, "had disturbed the quiet of the establishment. Out sallied the warder of the castle, a black greyhound, and, leaping on one of the blocks of stone, began a furious barking. This alarm brought out the whole garrison of dogs, all open-mouthed and vociferous. In a little

while the lord of the castle himself made his appearance. I knew him at once, by the likenesses that had been published of him. He came limping up the gravel walk, aiding himself by a stout walking-staff, but moving rapidly and with vigour. By his side jogged along a large iron-gray staghound, of most grave demeanour, who took no part in the clamour of the canine rabble, but seemed to consider himself bound, for the dignity of the house, to give me a courteous reception.—Before Scott reached the gate, he called out in a hearty tone, welcoming me to Abbotsford, and asking news of Campbell. Arrived at the door of the chaise, he grasped me warmly by the hand: ‘Come, drive down, drive down to the house,’ said he; ‘ye’re just in time for breakfast, and afterwards ye shall see all the wonders of the Abbey.’ I would have excused myself on the plea of having already made my breakfast. ‘Hut, man,’ cried he, ‘a ride in the morning in the keen air of the Scotch hills is warrant enough for a second breakfast.’ I was accordingly whirled to the portal of the cottage, and in a few moments found myself seated at the breakfast table. There was no one present but the family, which consisted of Mrs Scott; her eldest daughter, Sophia, then a fine girl about seventeen; Miss Ann Scott, two or three years younger; Walter, a well-grown stripling; and Charles, a lively boy, eleven or twelve years of age.—I soon felt myself quite at home, and my heart in a glow with the cordial welcome I experienced. I had thought to make a mere morning visit, but found I was not to be let off so lightly. ‘You must not think our neighbourhood is to be read in a morning like a newspaper,’ said Scott; ‘it takes several days of study for an observant traveller that has a relish for auld-world trumpery. After breakfast you shall make your visit to Melrose Abbey; I shall not be able to accompany you, as I have some household affairs to attend to; but I will put you in charge of my son Charles, who is very learned in all things touching the old ruin and the neighbourhood it stands in; and he and my friend Johnnie Bower will tell you the whole truth about it, with a great deal more that you are not called upon to believe, unless you be a true and nothing-doubting antiquary. When you come back. I’ll take you out on a ramble about the neighbourhood.

To-morrow we will take a look at the Yarrow, and the next day we will drive over to Dryburgh, which is a fine old ruin, well worth your seeing.'--In a word, before Scott had got through with his plan, I found myself committed for a visit of several days, and it seemed as if a little realm of romance was suddenly open before me."

The love which Scott had for horses and dogs was noticed by all his guests. He was a bold rider himself, and would lead his less venturesome associates through perils to which they were little accustomed. Of his dogs, the writer last quoted gives the following account:—

"As we sallied forth, every dog in the establishment turned out to attend us. There was the old staghound, Maida, that I have already mentioned, a noble animal; and Hamlet, the black greyhound, a wild thoughtless youngster, not yet arrived at the years of discretion; and Finette, a beautiful setter, with soft, silken hair, long pendant ears, and a mild eye, the parlour favourite. When in front of the house, we were joined by a superannuated greyhound, who came from the kitchen wagging his tail, and was cheered by Scott as an old friend and comrade. In our walks, he would frequently pause in conversation, to notice his dogs, and speak to them as if rational companions; and, indeed, there appears to be a vast deal of rationality in these faithful attendants on man, derived from their close intimacy with him. Maida deported himself with a gravity becoming his age and size, and seemed to consider himself called upon to preserve a great degree of dignity and decorum in our society. As he jogged along a little distance ahead of us, the young dogs would gambol about him, leap on his neck, worry at his ears, and endeavour to tease him into a gambol. The old dog would keep on for a long time with imperturbable solemnity, now and then seeming to rebuke the wantonness of his young companions. At length he would make a sudden turn, seize one of them, and tumble him in the dust, then, giving a glance at us, as much as to say, 'You see, gentlemen, I can't help giving way to this nonsense,' would resume his gravity, and jog on as before. Scott amused himself with these peculiarities. 'I make no doubt,

said he, 'when Maida is alone with these young dogs, he throws gravity aside, and plays the boy as much as any of them; but he is ashamed to do so in our company, and seems to say—Ha' done with your nonsense, youngsters: what will the laird and that other gentleman think of me if I give way to such foolery? Scott amused himself with the peculiarities of another of his dogs, a little shamefaced terrier, with large glassy eyes, one of the most sensitive little bodies to insult and indignity in the world. 'If ever he whipped him,' he said, 'the little fellow would sneak off and hide himself from the light of day in a lumber garret, from whence there was no drawing him forth but by the sound of the chopping-knife, as if chopping up his victuals, when he would steal forth with humiliated and downcast look, but would skulk away again if any one regarded him.'—His domestic animals were his friends. Everything about him seemed to rejoice in the light of his countenance."

The hospitality so unexpectedly enjoyed by Washington Irving, was extended to all who brought any recommendation with them, either in their own reputations, or from friends, and knew no distinctions of rank. At his table might be seen guests of all ranks,—a countess and a Scotch cousin of the sixth remove, whose claim to kindred was readily acknowledged, though her rank could never have otherwise introduced her into such distinguished society; for though Scott had an almost superstitious reverence for rank and high birth, he was no sycophant, but maintained his own self-respect in his bearing toward his superiors in rank, and treated those beneath him with unaffected kindness. "A point of hospitality," says one of his numerous visitors, "in which Sir Walter Scott never failed, whatever might be the pretensions of the guest, was to do the honours of conversation. When a stranger arrived, he seemed to consider it as much a duty to offer him the resources of his mind as those of his table; taking care, however, by his choice of subjects, to give the visitor an opportunity of making his own stores, if he had them, available." His biographer records an amusing illustration of the freedom in which he indulged with his servants:—

"There arose a little dispute between his man Tom Purdie and

himself, about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedgerow that we passed; and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder—and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. 'Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom,' quoth the Sheriff. Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff 'to speak a word.' They withdrew together into the garden—and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face. As soon as Tom was out of sight, he said, 'Will ye guess what he has been saying, now?—Well, this is a great satisfaction! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice* about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Ferguson's.'"

Indeed, Scott's opinion of the working classes was as highly creditable to his own heart as to those who succeeded in making an impression so favourable. "I have read books enough," he remarked, on one occasion, "and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible."

The geniality which appears in these remarks, was an eminent feature in his character, and, no less than his genius, drew to him numerous and attached friends.

It is surprising how little the prodigious literary labour of Scott interfered with his hospitality to his visitors; but he was

economical of his working hours, and his powers of composition were remarkably active. Some one asked the question, When do you think? "Oh," said he, "I lie *simmering* over things for an hour or so before I get up—and there's the time I am dressing to overhaul my half-sleeping, half-waking *projet de chapitre*—and when I get the paper before me, it commonly runs off pretty easily. Besides, I often take a dose in the plantations; and while Tom marks out a dike or a drain, as I have directed, one's fancy may be running its ain rigs in some other world."

Had Sir Walter Scott possessed a knowledge of religion, it would have been the crowning excellence of his character; but though he had a kind of respect for religion, it was a sentiment rather than a principle. With all his kindness, good nature, generosity, and manliness, he must be charged with having wasted his great powers in the pursuit of objects no higher than family honours, wealth, and the idle breath of fame. The time was coming when some portion of this truth should be made evident to himself.

Amid all his seeming prosperity, he was in reality insolvent. His purchases and buildings at Abbotsford greatly exceeded his means; and the failure, in 1826, of Constable his publisher, and James Ballantyne his printer, with whom he had been a secret partner for many years, involved him in utter ruin. Never man met such a misfortune with more heroic fortitude. Though the debt for which he was liable exceeded £100,000, he determined to discharge it all by the fruit of his pen; and though he did not live to see his purpose fully accomplished, in two years he had realised the astonishing sum of £40,000! For the "Life of Napoleon" he received £12,000, the labour of twelve months. His working hours at this period were from six in the morning to six at night. An immense sum having been realised by the sale of an edition of his novels in forty-eight volumes, the whole debt was paid shortly after his death.

The remaining years of Sir Walter's life were full of sorrow. Lady Scott died in 1827. His family were scattered. He was working no longer with the high expectations, and in the full vigour of former years. The heavy debt lay like a mountain on

his heart, but he struggled on, publishing volume after volume, till both mind and body gave way under the burden. An attack of paralysis in 1830 was the first token of failing health; a more severe shock followed in 1831. He was induced to visit Italy, in hopes of recruiting his health; for this purpose a ship of war was placed at his disposal by the Admiralty. He went to Naples, and thence to Rome, but his mind was too much shattered to derive any benefit from novel scenes. He returned home in July 1832, and after a period of irregular convalescence, died at Abbotsford, in the afternoon of the 21st of September. He was buried beside his wife in the beautiful ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, on the 26th of the same month

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THE
LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL:

A Poem.

IN SIX CANTOS.

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

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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, authorises the change 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 grey,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining jey,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and 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 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 mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

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

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he 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
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 finger 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 sung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

THE
LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

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

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight ?
 Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night ?—
 They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying :
 They watch, to hear the war-horn braying ;
 To see St George's red cross streaming,
 To see the midnight beacon gleaming :
 They watch, against Southern force and guile,
 Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
 Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
 From 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 Lady 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 Lady came,
 Her father was a clerk of fame,
 Of Bethune's line of Picardie :
 He learn'd the art that none may name,
 In Padua, far beyond the sea.
 Men said, he changed his mortal frame,
 By feat of magic mystery ;
 For when in studious 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 Lady 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 means 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 call'd on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

River Spirit.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

Mountain Spirit.

—"Brother, nay—

On my hills the moonbeams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
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 darknèss, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far.

Skimmers through mist each planet star;
 Ill may I read their high decree!
 But no kind influence deign they shower
 On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
 Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII.

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

XIX.

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

XX.

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

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
 As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;
 Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
 Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
 By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
 Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
 In Eske or Liddel, fords were none,
 But he would ride them, one by one;
 Alike to him was time or tide,

December's snow, or July's pride ;
 Alike to him was tide or time,
 Moonless midnight, or matin prime :
 Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
 As ever drove prey from Cumberland ;
 Five times outlawed had he been,
 By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

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

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

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

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
 And soon the steep descent he past,
 Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,
 And soon the Teviot side he won.
 Eastward the wooded path he rode,
 Green hazels o'er his basnet nod ;
 He pass'd the Peel of Goldiland,
 And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand ;
 Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's mound,
 Where Druid shades still fitted round ;
 In Hawick twinkled many a light ;
 Behind him soon they set in night ;
 And soon he spurr'd his coursers 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 gain’d 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-crags the moonbeams glint,
 Where Barnhill hew’d his bed of flint ;
 Who flung his outlaw’d limbs to rest,
 Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
 Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
 For many a league his prey could spy ;
 Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
 The terrors of the robber’s horn ;
 Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
 The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
 When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
 Ambition is no cure for 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 saddle-bow ;
 Above the foaming tide, I ween,
 Scarce half the charger’s neck was seen ;
 For he was barded from counter to tail,
 And the rider was armed complete in mail ;
 Never heavier man and horse
 Stemm’d a midnight torrent’s force.
 The warrior’s very plume, I say,
 Was draggled by the dashing spray ;
 Yet, through good heart, and Our Lady’s grace
 At length he gain’d the landing-place.

XXX.

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

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

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past ;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran,
Like some tall rock with lichens grey,
Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When 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 fall,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all ;
He meety 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.

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 grey.
 When the broken arches are black in night,
 And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
 When the cold light's uncertain shower
 Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
 When buttress and buttress, alternately,
 Seem framed of ebon and ivory;
 When silver edges the imagery,
 And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
 When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
 And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
 Then go—but go alone the while—
 Then view St David's ruin'd pile;
 And, home returning, soothly swear,
 Was never scene so sad and fair!

II.

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

III.

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

IV.

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
 Says, that the fated hour is come,
 And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb."

From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
 With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd ;
 A hundred years had flung their snows
 On his thin locks and floating beard.

V.

And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
 And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide ;
 " And, darest thou, Warrior ! seek to see
 What heaven and hell alike would hide ?
 My breast, in belt of iron pent,
 With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn ;
 For threescore years, in penance spent,
 My knees those flinty stones have worn ;
 Yet all too little to atone
 For knowing what should ne'er be known.
 Would'st thou thy 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,
 Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
 And hurl the unexpected dart.
 He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
 That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX.

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

X.

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

XI.

The moon on the east oriel shone
 Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
 By foliated tracery combined;
 Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand
 'Twixt poplars straight the 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 th' Apostate's pride.
 The moonbeam kiss'd the holy pane,
 And threw on the pavement a 'bloody stain.

XII.

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

XIII.

"In these far climes it was my lot,
 To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;
 A wizard, of such dreaded fame,
 That when, in Salamanca's cave,
 Him listed his magic wand to wave,
 The bells would ring in Notre Dame!

Some of his skill he taught to me;
 And, Warrior, I could say to thee
 The words that cleft Eildon hills in three,
 And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:
 But to speak them were a deadly sin;
 And for having but thought them my heart within,
 A treble penance must be done.

XIV.

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

XV.

“ I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
 That never mortal might therein look;
 And never to tell where it was hid,
 Save at his Chief of Branksome’s need:
 And when that need was past and o’er,
 Again the volume to restore.
 I buried him on St Michael’s night,
 When the bell toll’d one, and the moon was bright,
 And I dug his chamber among the dead
 When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
 That his patron’s cross might over him wave,
 And scare the fiends from the Wizard’s grave.

XVI.

“ It was a night of woe and dread,
 When Michael in the tomb I laid!
 Strange sounds along the chancel pass’d,
 The banners waved without a blast”—
 —Still spoke the Monk, when the bell tolled one!—
 I tell you, that a braver man
 Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
 Against a foe neer 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 grave-stone bent;
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there, to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Show'd the Monk's cowl, and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX.

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

XX.

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

XXI.

And when the Priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:—
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;

For those, thou may'st not look upon,
 Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"
 Then Deloraine, in terror, took
 From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
 With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
 He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd;
 But the glare of the sepulchral light,
 Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII.

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

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

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

XXV.

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

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

XXVI.

Why does fair 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 blood-hound,
 As she rouses him up from his lair;
 And, though she passes the postern alone,
 Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII.

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

XXVIII.

The Knight and Ladye fair are met,
 And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
 A fairer pair were never seen
 To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
 He was stately, and young, and tall;
 Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
 And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
 Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
 When the half sigh her swelling breast
 Against the silken ribbon 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 grey, my limbs are old,
 My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
 I may not, must not, sing of love.

xxxii.

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
 The Baron's Dwarf his courser held,
 And held his crested helm and spear:
 That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
 If the tales were true that of him ran
 Through all the Border, far and near.
 'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
 Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
 He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 And, like 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.
 Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd;
 'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
 To rid him of his company;
 But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
 And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

xxxiii.

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
 This elfish Dwarf with the Baron staid;
 Little he ate, and less he spoke,
 Nor mingled with the menial flock:
 And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
 And often mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,
 But well Lord 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.

xxxiiii.

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

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

The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine ;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow 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 greenwood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly :
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel grove,
Flew like the startled cushat-dove :
The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein ;
Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green

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

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-grey,
Was dark with sweat, and splash'd with clay
His armour red with many a stain:
He seem'd in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the live-long night;
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV.

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He mark'd the crane on the Baron's crest;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That mark'd the foeman'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 sigh'd nor pray'd,
 Nor saint, nor ladye, call'd to aid ;
 But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
 And spurr'd his steed to full career.
 The meeting of these champions proud
 Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI.

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent !
 The stately Baron backwards bent ;
 Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
 And his plumes went scattering on the gale ;
 The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
 Into a thousand flinders flew.
 But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
 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 !
 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 glamour might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling * seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth —
All was delusion, nought was truth.

X.

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

XI.

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

* A shepherd's hut

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

XV.

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

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

XVI.

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

XVII.

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

XVIII.

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

XIX.

Yes ! I am come of high degree,
 For I am the heir of bold Bucleuch

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 well-nigh 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 busy 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.

* *Bandelier*, belt for carrying ammunition† *Hackbuteer*, musketeer

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,
 'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
 The air was mild, the wind was calm,
 The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
 E'en the rude watchman, on the tower,
 Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
 Far more fair Margaret 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?—
 Oh! 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
 Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,
 For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI.

The Warder view'd it blazing strong,
 And blew his war-note loud and long,
 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 reddened by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud :—
“ On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
And three are kindling on Priestthaughswire;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!

Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout—

Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
For when they see the blazing bale,
Elliot and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
And warn the Warder of the strife.
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise’

XXVIII.

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats, with clamour dread,

The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
And out! and out!
In hasty route,

The horsemen gallop'd forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

XXIX.

The ready page, with hurried hand,
Awaked the need-fire's slumbering brand,
And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
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 grey pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;

Tarn, a mountain lake.

† *Earn, a Scottish eagle.*

Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
 From Soltra and Dumpender Law;
 And Lothian heard the Regent's order,
 That all should bowne* them for the Border.

XXX.

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

XXXI.

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

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.

* *Bowne*, make ready.

† Protection money exacted by freebooters

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 stain'd with past and present tears.
 Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
 It still reflects to Memory's eye
 The hour my brave, my only boy,
 Fell by the side of great Dundee.
 Why, when the volleying musket play'd
 Against the bloody Highland blade,
 Why was not I beside him laid?—
 Enough—he died the death of fame;
 Enough—he died with conquering 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 'twill prove a Warden-Raid."

v.

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
 Enter'd the echoing barbican.
 He led a small and shaggy nag,
 That through a bog, from hag to hag,
 Could bound like any Billhope stag.
 It bore his wife and children twain;
 A half-clothed serf was all their train;
 His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
 Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
 Laugh'd to her friends among the crowd.
 He was of stature passing tall,
 But sparely form'd, and lean withal;
 A batter'd morion on his brow;
 A leather jac, 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.
 Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
 Served to guide me on my flight;
 But I was chased the livelong night.
 Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme,
 Fast upon my traces came,
 Until I turn'd at Priestthaugh Scrogg,
 And shot their horses in the bog,
 Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
 I had him long at high despite :
 He drove my cows last Fastern's night."

vii.

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
 Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
 As far as they could judge by ken,
 Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand

Three thousand armed Englishmen—
 Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
 From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
 Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
 There was saddling and mounting in haste
 There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
 He that was last at the trysting-place
 Was but lightly held of his gaye ladye.

VIII.

From fair St Mary's silver wave,
 From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height,
 His ready lances Thirlestane brave
 Array'd beneath a banner bright.
 The treasured fleur-de-luce he claims,
 To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
 Encamp'd by Falla's mossy wave,
 The proud distinction grateful gave,
 For faith 'mid feudal jars;
 What time, save Thirlestane alone,
 Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
 Would march to Southern wars;
 And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
 Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
 Hence his high motto shines reveal'd—
 "Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX.

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

x

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
 And warriors more than I may name;
 From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
 From Woodhouseslie 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 cross-bow stiff,
 And his true arrow struck afar
 The raven's nest upon the cliff;
 The red cross, on a Southern breast,
 Is broader than the raven's nest:
 Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
 And o'er him hold his father's shield."

xi.

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!"

xii.

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

XIII.

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.

XIV.

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

XV.

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 leven-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;

* Powder-bags.

All, as they march'd, in rugged tongue,
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

XVI.

But louder still the clamour 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 favour 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!"

XVII.

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

XVIII.

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread:
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him, with 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,

XIX.

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,

* Ancient pieces of artillery.

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."—

XXI.

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—
 Oh, 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:—

XXI.

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

* An asylum for outlaws.

XXII.

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
 And stretch'd his little arms on high;
 Implored for aid each well-known face,
 And strove to seek the Dame's embrace.
 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:—

XXIII.

“ 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 honour'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.”

XXIV.

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim—
 Then lighten'd Thirlstane's eye of flame;
 His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
 Pensils and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 “ St Mary for the young Buccleuch !”
 The English war-cry answer'd wide,
 And forward bent each southern spear;
 Each Kendal archer made a stride,
 And drew the bowstring to his ear;
 Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
 But, ere a grey-goose shaft had flown,
 A horseman gallopp'd from the rear.

XXV.

“ Ah! noble Lords!” he breathless said,
 “ What treason has your march betray'd?
 What make you here, from aid so far,
 Before you walls, around you war?”

Your foemen triumph in the thought,
 That in the toils the lion's caught.
 Already on dark Ruberslaw
 The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw ;
 The lances, waving in his train,
 Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain ;
 And on the Liddel's northern strand,
 To bar retreat to Cumberland,
 Lord Maxwell ranks his merry men good,
 Beneath the eagle and the rood ;
 And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
 Have to proud Angus come ;
 And all the Merse and Lauderdale
 Have risen with haughty Home.
 An exile from Northumberland,
 In Liddesdale I've wander'd long ;
 But still my heart was with merry England,
 And cannot brook my country's wrong ;
 And hard I've spurrd all night to show
 The mustering of coming foe."

XXVI.

" 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 !"—

XXVII.

" 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."

XXVIII.

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
 His brother Warden's sage rebuke ;
 And yet his forward step he staid,
 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.

XXIX.

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 unarm'd,
 In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
 Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

XXX.

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 enclosed 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.

XXXI.

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.

XXXII.

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

HE paused: the listening dames again
 Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
 With many a word of kindly cheer,—
 In pity half, and half sincere,—
 Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
 His legendary song could tell—
 Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
 Of feuds, whose memory was not;
 Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
 Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
 Of manners, long since changed and gone;
 Of chiefs, who under their grey 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, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
 Could call them from their marble hearse.

The Harper smiled, well pleased; for ne'er
 Was flattery lost on Poet's ear:

A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;
E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

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

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

V.

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went;
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid;
And told them,—how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Lady 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 armour free,
More famed for stately courtesy:
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI.

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
 How these two hostile armies met?
 Deeming it were no easy task
 To keep the truce which here was set;
 Where martial spirits, all on fire,
 Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
 By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
 By habit, and by nation, foes,
 They met on Teviot's strand;
 They met and sate them mingled down,
 Without a threat, without a frown,
 As brothers meet in foreign land:
 The hands, the spear that lately 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.

* A sort of knife or poniard.

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

X.

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye ;
 Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
 Full many a stifled sigh ;
 For many a noble warrior strove
 To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
 And many a bold ally.—
 With throbbing head and anxious heart,
 All in her lonely bower apart,
 In broken sleep she lay :
 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 live-long 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 slumber break,
 His blood the price must pay !
 Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
 Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
 Shall buy his life a day.

XII.

Yet was his hazard small; for well
 You may bethink you of the spell
 Of that sly urchin page;
 This to his lord he did impart,
 And made him seem, by glamour art,
 A knight from Hermitage.
 Unchallenged thus, the Warder's post,
 The court, unchallenged, thus he 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 had
 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 favour'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 armour 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 march-men felt,
 Hung in a broad and studded belt;
 Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
 Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII.

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
 Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
 Whose foot-cloth swept the ground:
 White was her wimple, and her veil,
 And her loose locks a chaplet pale
 Of whitest roses bound;
 The lordly Angus, by her side,
 In courtesy to cheer her tried;
 Without his aid, her hand in vain
 Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
 He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight
 Of warriors met for mortal fight;
 But cause of terror, all unguess'd,
 Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
 When, in their chairs of crimson 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 Herald spoke:—

XXI.

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.

XIX.

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

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

XXII.

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
 Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
 He strives to rise—Brave Musgrave, no!
 Thence never shalt thou rise again!
 He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
 Undo the visor's barred band,
 Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
 And give him room for life to gasp!
 O, bootless aid!—haste, holy Friar,
 Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
 Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
 And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII.

In haste the holy Friar sped;—
 His naked foot was dyed with red,
 As through the lists he ran:
 Unmindful of the shouts on high,
 That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
 He 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 wi'd and haggard look'd around.

As dizzy, and in pain ;
 And all, upon the armed ground,
 Knew William of Deloraine !
 Each ladye sprung from seat with speed ;
 Vaulted each marshal from his steed ;
 " And who art thou," they cried,
 " Who hast this battle fought and won ?"
 His plumed helm was soon undone—
 " Cranstoun of Teviot-side !
 For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
 And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV.

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

XXVI.

She look'd to river, look'd to hill,
 Thought on the Spirit's prophecy, *page 10.*
 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 armour 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 the 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 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
 When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;
 Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,
 Though half disguised with a frown;
 And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
 His foeman's epitaph he made:—

XXIX.

“Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!
 I ween, my deadly enemy;
 For, if I slew thy brother dear,
 Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
 And when I lay in dungeon dark,
 Of Naworth Castle, long months three,
 Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,
 Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.

* The spectral apparition of a living person.

And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
 And thou wert now alive, as I,
 No mortal man should us divide,
 Till one, or both of us, did die:
 Yet rest thee God! for well I know
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
 In all the northern counties here,
 Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
 Thou wert the best to follow gear!
 'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
 To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
 And with the bugle rouse the fray!
 I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
 Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

XXX.

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
 Were bowing back to Cumberland.
 They 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;
 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,

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.

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, concentr'd all in self,
 Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
 And, doubly dying, shall go down
 To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
 Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

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 splendour 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:
'Twas 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 clamour 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 Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
 Their tasks the busy sewers ply,
 And all is mirth and revelry.

VII.

The Goblin-Page, omitting still
 No opportunity of ill,
 Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
 To rouse debate and jealousy;
 Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
 By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
 And now in humour 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 call'd 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, 'twas said,
 That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII.

The Dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
 Might his foul treachery espy,
 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 Ronald Foster loudly cried,
 "A deep carouse to you 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 clamour 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 farther fray
 Should mar the concord of the day,
 Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
 And first stept forth old Albert Grame.
 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
 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?
 He 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 favourite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI.

Fitztraver.

'Twas All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
When wise Cornelius promised, by his art,
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;
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 favour'd strain was Surrey's raptur'd 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 forebode that wreck is nigh
 “ Last night the gifted Seer did view
 A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
 Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch;
 Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?”—
 “ 'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
 To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
 But that my ladye-mother there
 Sits lonely in her castle-hall.
 “ 'Tis not because the ring they ride,
 And Lindesay at the ring rides well
 But that my sire the wine will chide,
 If 'tis not fill'd by Rosabelle.”—

* Inch, i.e., isle.

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
 A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
 'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
 And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
 It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
 'Twas seen from Dryden's groves of oak,
 And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.

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

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

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

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

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

XXIV.

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
 Scarce 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 neighbour'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 elfish 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 seem'd 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 smouldering 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.
 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,
 'Twas 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, 18
 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, 'twere 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 uneth,
 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 burthen of the song,—
 DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SÆOLUM 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.

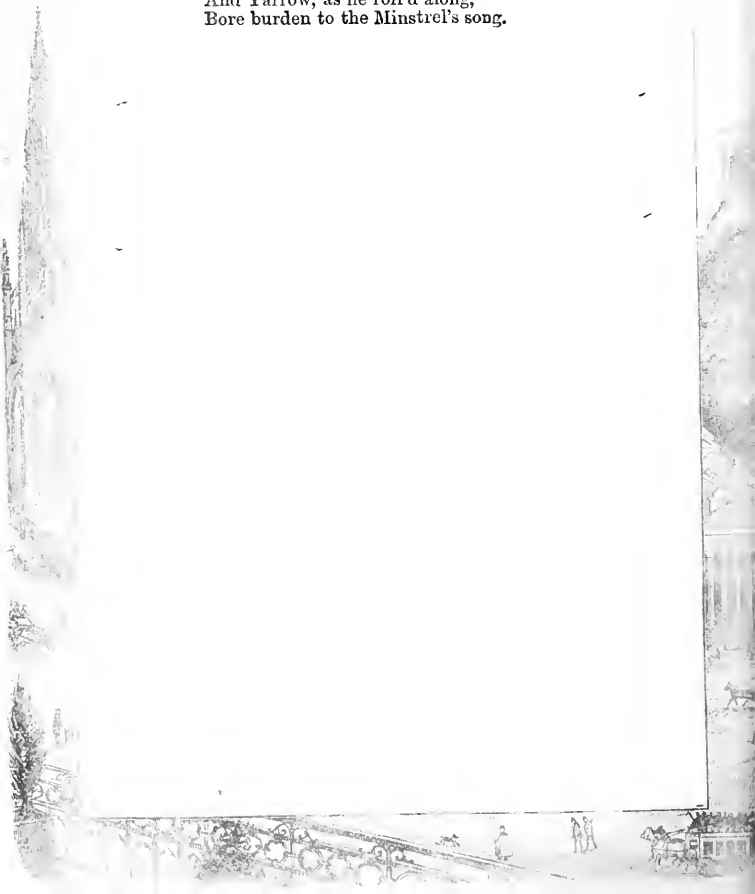
That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass away!
 What power shall be the sinner's stay?
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?

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 throistles sung in Hairhead-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.



MARMION:

A Tale of Flodden Field.

IN SIX CANTOS.

Alas! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell!
That Scottish Bard should wake the string,
The triumph of our foes to tell!

LEYDEN

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
HENRY LORD MONTAGU,
ETC. ETC. ETC.
THIS
ROMANCE IS INSCRIBED,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is hardly to be expected, that an Author whom the Public have honoured with some degree of applause, should not be again a trespasser on their kindness. Yet the Author of *MARMION* must be supposed to feel some anxiety concerning its success, since he is sensible that he hazards, by this second intrusion, any reputation which his first Poem may have procured him. The present story turns upon the private adventures of a fictitious character; but is called a Tale of Flodden Field, because the hero's fate is connected with that memorable defeat, and the causes which led to it. The design of the Author was, if possible, to apprise his readers, at the outset, of the date of his Story, and to prepare them for the manners of the Age in which it is laid. Any Historical Narrative, far more an attempt at Epic composition, exceeded his plan of a Romantic Tale; yet he may be permitted to hope, from the popularity of *THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL*, that an attempt to paint the manners of the feudal times, upon a broader scale, and in the course of a more interesting story, will not be unacceptable to the Public.

The Poem opens about the commencement of August, and concludes with the defeat of Flodden, 9th September 1513.

Ashestiel, 1808.

M A R M I O N .

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.

TO WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, ESQ.

Ashiestiel, Ettrick Forest.

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear :
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trill'd the streamlet through :
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen,
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with doubled speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed ;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam ;
Away hath pass'd the heather-bell
That bloom'd so rich on Needpath Fell ;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To shelter'd dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines :
In meek dependency they eye
The wither'd sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill,
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill :
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold ;
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But, shivering, follow at his heel ;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
 As best befits the mountain child,
 Feel the sad influence of the hour,
 And wail the daisy's vanish'd flower;
 Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
 And anxious ask,—Will spring return,
 And birds and lambs again be gay,
 And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
 Again shall paint your summer bower;
 Again the hawthorn shall supply
 The garlands you delight to tie;
 The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
 The wild birds carol to the round,
 And while you frolic light as they,
 Too short shall seem the summer day

To mute and to material things
 New life revolving summer brings;
 The genial call dead Nature hears,
 And in her glory reappears.
 But oh! my country's wintry state
 What second spring shall renovate?
 What powerful call shall bid arise
 The buried warlike and the wise;
 The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
 The hand that grasp'd the victor steel?
 The vernal sun new life bestows
 Even on the meanest flower that blows;
 But vainly, vainly may he shine,
 Where glory weeps o'er NELSON'S shrine;
 And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,
 That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallow'd tomb!

Deep grav'd in every British heart,
 O never let those names depart!
 Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave,
 Who victor died on Gadite wave;
 To him, as to the burning levin,
 Short, bright, resistless course was given.
 Where'er his country's foes were found,
 Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
 Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
 Roll'd, blazed, destroy'd,—and was no more

Nor mourn ye less his perish'd worth,
 Who bade the conqueror go forth,
 And launch'd that thunderbolt of war
 On Egypt, Hafnia,* Trafalgar;
 Who, born to guide such high emprise.
 For Britain's weal was early wise;
 Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,
 For Britain's sins, an early grave!

* Copenhagen

His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,
 A bauble held the pride of power,
 Spurn'd at the sordid lust of pelf,
 And served his Albion for herself;
 Who, when the frantic crowd amain
 Strain'd at subjection's bursting rein,
 O'er their wild mood full conquest gain'd,
 The pride, he would not crush, restrain'd,
 Show'd their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
 And brought the freeman's arm, to aid the freeman's law.

Hadst thou but lived, though stripp'd of power,
 A watchman on the lonely tower,
 Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
 When fraud or danger were at hand;
 By thee, as by the beacon light,
 Our pilots had kept course aright;
 As some proud column, though alone,
 Thy strength had propp'd the tottering throne:
 Now is the stately column broke,
 The beacon-light is quench'd in smoke,
 The trumpet's silver sound is still,
 The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,
 When Death, just hovering, claim'd his prey,
 With Palinure's unalter'd mood,
 Firm at his dangerous post he stood;
 Each call for needful rest repell'd,
 With dying hand the rudder held,
 Till in his fall, with fateful sway,
 The steerage of the realm gave way!
 Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,
 One unpolluted church remains,
 Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
 The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,
 But still, upon the hallow'd day,
 Convoke the swains to praise and pray;
 While faith and civil peace are dear,
 Grace this cold marble with a tear,—
 He, who preserved them, PITT, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,
 Because his rival slumbers nigh;
 Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,
 Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.
 For talents mourn, untimely lost,
 When best employ'd, and wanted most;
 Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
 And wit that loved to play, not wound;
 And all the reasoning powers divine,
 To penetrate, resolve, combine:
 And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,—
 They sleep with him who sleeps below:
 And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
 From error him who owns this grave,

Be every harsher thought suppress'd,
 And sacred be the last long rest.
Here, where the end of earthly things
 Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;
 Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
 Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
 The distant notes of holy song,
 As if some angel spoke agen,
 "All peace on earth, good-will to men;"
 If ever from an English heart,
 Oh, *here* let prejudice depart,
 And, partial feeling cast aside,
 Record, that Fox a Briton died!
 When Europe crouch'd to France's yoke,
 And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
 And the firm Russian's purpose brave,
 Was barter'd by a timorous slave,
 Even then dishonour's peace he spurn'd,
 The sullied olive-branch return'd,
 Stood for his country's glory fast,
 And nail'd her colours to the mast!
 Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
 A portion in this honour'd grave,
 And ne'er held marble in its trust
 Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endow'd,
 How high they soar'd above the crowd!
 Theirs was no common party race,
 Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
 Like fabled Gods, their mighty war
 Shook realms and nations in its jar;
 Beneath each banner proud to stand,
 Look'd up the noblest of the land,
 Till through the British world were known
 The names of PITT and Fox alone.
 Spells of such force no wizard grave
 E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
 Though his could drain the ocean dry,
 And force the planets from the sky.
 These spells are spent, and, spent with these
 The wine of life is on the lees.
 Genius, and taste, and talent gone,
 For ever tomb'd beneath the stone,
 Where—taming thought to human pride!—
 The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
 Drop upon Fox's grave the tear,
 'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;
 O'er PITT's the mournful requiem sound,
 And Fox's shall the notes rebound.
 The solemn echo seems to cry,—
 "Here let their discord with them die,
 Speak not for those a separate doom,

Whom Fate made brothers in the tomb;
But search the land of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries
Of dying Nature bid you rise;
Not even your Britain's groans can pierce
The leaden silence of your hearse;
Then, O how impotent and vain
This grateful tributary strain!
Though not unmark'd from Northern clime,
Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:
His Gothic harp has o'er you rung;
The Bard you deign'd to praise, your deathless names
has sung.

Stay yet, illusion, stay a while,
My wilder'd fancy still beguile!
From this high theme how can I part,
Ere half unloaded is my heart!
For all the tears e'er sorrow drew,
And all the raptures fancy knew,
And all the keener rush of blood,
That throbs through bard in bard-like mood,
Were here a tribute mean and low,
Though all their mingled streams could flow—
Woe, wonder, and sensation high,
In one spring-tide of ecstasy!—
It will not be—it may not last—
The vision of enchantment's past:
Like frostwork in the morning ray,
The fancied fabric melts away;
Each Gothic arch, memorial-stone,
And long, dim, lofty aisle, are gone;
And, lingering last, deception dear,
The choir's high sounds die on my ear.
Now slow return the lonely down,
The silent pastures bleak and brown,
The farm begirt with copsewood wild,
The gambols of each frolic child,
Mixing their shrill cries with the tone
Of Tweed's dark waters rushing on.

Prompt on unequal tasks to run,
Thus Nature disciplines her son:
Meeter, she says, for me to stray,
And waste the solitary day,
In plucking from yon fen the reed,
And watch it floating down the Tweed;
Or idly list the shrilling lay,
With which the milkmaid cheers her way
Marking its cadence rise and fall,
As from the field, beneath her pail,
She trips it down the uneven dale:
Meeter for me, by yonder cairn,
The ancient shepherd's tale to learn;

Though oft he stop in rustic fear,
Lest his old legends tire the ear
Of one, who, in his simple mind,
May boast of book-learn'd taste refined.

But thou, my friend, canst fitly tell,
(For few have read romance so well),
How still the legendary lay
O'er poet's bosom holds its sway;
How on the ancient minstrel strain
Time lays his palsied hand in vain;
And how our hearts at doughty deeds,
By warriors wrought in steely weeds,
Still throb for fear and pity's sake;
As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corpse
Or when, Dame Ganore's grace to move,
(Alas, that lawless was their love!)
He sought proud Tarquin in his den,
And freed full sixty knights; or when,
A sinful man, and unconfess'd,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.

The mightiest chiefs of British song
Scorn'd not such legends to prolong;
They gleam through Spenser's elfin dream,
And mix in Milton's heavenly theme;
And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again,
But that a ribald King and Court
Bade him toil on, to make them sport;
Demanded for their niggard pay,
Fit for their souls, a looser lay,
Licentious satire, song, and play;
The world defrauded of the high design,
Profaned the God-given strength, and marr'd the loft
line.

Warm'd by such names, well may we then,
Though dwindled sons of little men,
Essay to break a feeble lance
In the fair fields of old romance,
Or seek the moated castle's cell,
Where long through talisman and spell,
While tyrants ruled, and damsels wept,
Thy Genius, Chivalry, hath slept:
There sound the harpings of the North:
Till he awake and sally forth,
On venturous quest to prick again,
In all his arms, with all his train,

Shield, lance, and brand, and plume, and scarf,
 Fay, giant, dragon, squire, and dwarf,
 And wizard with his wand of might,
 And errant maid on palfrey white.
 Around the Genius weave their spells,
 Pure Love, who scarce his passion tells ;
 Mystery, half veil'd and half reveal'd ;
 And Honour, with his spotless shield ;
 Attention, with fix'd eye ; and Fear,
 That loves the tale she shrinks to hear ;
 And gentle Courtesy ; and Faith,
 Unchanged by sufferings, time, or death ;
 And Valour, lion-mettled lord,
 Leaning upon his own good sword.

Well has thy fair achievement shown,
 A worthy meed may thus be won ;
 Ytene's oaks—beneath whose shade
 Their theme the merry minstrels made,
 Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold,
 And that Red King, who, while of old,
 Through Boldrewood the chase he led,
 By his loved huntsman's arrow bled—
 Ytene's oaks have heard again
 Renew'd such legendary strain ;
 For thou hast sung, how He of Gaul,
 That Amadis so famed in hall,
 For Oriana, foil'd in fight
 The Necromancer's felon might ;
 And well in modern verse hast wove
 Partenopex's mystic love :
 Hear, then, attentive to my lay,
 A knightly tale of Albion's elder day.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CASTLE.

I.

DAY set on Norham's castled steep,
 And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep.
 And Cheviot's mountains lone :
 The battled towers, the donjon keep,
 The loophole grates, where captives weep,
 The flanking walls that round it sweep,
 In yellow lustre shone.
 The warriors on the turrets high,
 Moving athwart the evening sky

Seem'd forms of giant height :
 Their armour, as it caught the rays,
 Flash'd back again the western blaze,
 In lines of dazzling light.

II.

Saint George's banner, broad and gay,
 Now faded, as the fading ray
 Less bright, and less, was flung ;
 The evening gale had scarce the power
 To wave it on the Donjon Tower,
 So heavily it hung.
 The scouts had parted on their search,
 The Castle gates were barr'd ;
 Above the gloomy portal arch,
 Timing his footsteps to a march,
 The Warder kept his guard ;
 Low humming, as he paced along,
 Some ancient Border gathering song.

III.

A distant trampling sound he hears ;
 He looks abroad, and soon appears,
 O'er Horncliff-hill a plump of spears,
 Beneath a pennon gay ;
 A horseman, darting from the crowd,
 Like lightning from a summer cloud,
 Spurs on his mettled courser proud,
 Before the dark array.
 Beneath the sable palisade,
 That closed the Castle barricade,
 His bugle-horn he blew ;
 The Warder hasted from the wall,
 And warn'd the Captain in the hall,
 For well the blast he knew ;
 And joyfully that knight did call,
 To sewer, squire, and seneschal.

IV.

" Now broach ye a pipe of Malvoisie,
 Bring pasties of the doe,
 And quickly make the entrance free,
 And bid my heralds ready be,
 And every minstrel sound his glee,
 And all our trumpets blow ;
 And, from the platform, spare ye not
 To fire a noble salvo-shot ;
 Lord MARMION waits below !"
 Then to the Castle's lower ward
 Sped forty yeomen tall,
 The iron-studded gates unbarr'd
 Raised the porteullis' ponderous guard.
 The lofty palisade unsparr'd,
 And let the drawbridge fall.

V.

Along the bridge Lord Marmion rode
 Proudly his red-roan charger tro le.

His helm hung at the saddle-bow ;
 Well by his visage you might know
 He was a stalworth knight, and keen,
 And had in many a battle been.
 The scar on his brown cheek reveal'd
 A token true of Bosworth field ;
 His eyebrow dark, and eye of fire,
 Show'd spirit proud, and prompt to ire ;
 Yet lines of thought upon his cheek
 Did deep design and counsel speak.
 His forehead, by his casque worn bare,
 His thick mustache, and curly hair,
 Coal black, and grizzled here and there,
 But more through toil than age ;
 His square-turn'd joints, and strength of limb
 Show'd him no carpet-knight so trim,
 But in close fight a champion grim,
 In camps a leader sage.

VI.

Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
 In mail and plate of Milan steel ;
 But his strong helm, of mighty cost,
 Was all with burnish'd gold emboss'd ;
 Amid the plumage of the crest,
 A falcon hover'd on her nest,
 With wings outspread, and forward breast ;
 E'en such a falcon, on his shield,
 Soar'd sable in an azure field :
 The golden legend bore aright,
 Who checks at me, to death is dight.
 Blue was the charger's broider'd rein ;
 Blue ribbons deck'd his arching mane ;
 The knightly housings ample fold
 Was velvet blue, and trapp'd with gold.

VII.

Behind him rode two gallant squires,
 Of noble name, and knightly sires ;
 They burn'd the gilded spurs to claim ;
 For well could each a war-horse tame,
 Could draw the bow, the sword could sway
 And lightly bear the ring away ;
 Nor less with courteous precepts stored,
 Could dance in hall, and carve at board,
 And frame love-ditties passing rare,
 And sing them to a lady fair.

VIII.

Four men-at-arms came at their backs,
 With halbert, bill, and battle-axe :
 They bore Lord Marmion's lance so strong
 And led his sumpter-mules along,
 And ambling palfrey, when at need
 Him listed ease his battle-steed.

The last and trustiest of the four,
 On high his forky pennon bore;
 Like swallow's tail, in shape and hue,
 Flutter'd the streamer glossy blue,
 Where, blazon'd sable, as before,
 The towering falcon seem'd to soar.
 Last, twenty yeomen, two and two,
 In hosen black, and jerkins blue,
 With falcons broider'd on each breast,
 Attended on their lord's behest:
 Each, chosen for an archer good,
 Knew hunting-craft by lake or wood;
 Each one a six-foot bow could bend,
 And far a cloth-yard shaft could send;
 Each held a boar-spear tough and strong,
 And at their belts their quivers rung.
 Their dusty palfreys, and array,
 Show'd they had march'd a weary way.

IX.

'Tis meet that I should tell you now,
 How fairly arm'd, and order'd how,
 The soldiers of the guard,
 With musket, pike, and morion,
 To welcome noble Marmion,
 Stood in the Castle-yard;
 Minstrels and trumpeters were there,
 The gunner held his linstock yare,
 For welcome-shot prepared:
 Enter'd the train, and such a clang,
 As then through all his turrets rang,
 Old Norham never heard.

X.

The guards their morrice-pikes advanced,
 The trumpets flourish'd brave,
 The cannon from the ramparts glanced,
 And thundering welcome gave.
 A blithe salute, in martial sort,
 The minstrels well might sound,
 For, as Lord Marmion cross'd the court,
 He scatter'd angels round.
 "Welcome to Norham, Marmion!
 Stout heart, and open hand!
 Well dost thou brook thy gallant roan,
 Thou flower of English land!"

XI.

Two pursuivants, whom tabarts deck,
 With silver scutcheon round their neck,
 Stood on the steps of stone,
 By which you reach the donjon gate,
 And there, with herald pomp and state,
 They hail'd Lord Marmion:
 They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
 Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
 Of Tamworth tower and town;

And he, their courtesy to requite,
 Gave them a chain of twelve marks' weight,
 All as he lighted down.
 "Now, largesse, largesse, Lord Marmion,
 Knight of the crest of gold!
 A blazon'd shield, in battle won,
 Ne'er guarded heart so bold."

XII.

They marshall'd him to the Castle-hall,
 Where the guests stood all aside,
 And loudly flourish'd the trumpet-call,
 And the heralds loudly cried,—
 "Room, lordlings, room for Lord Marmion,
 With the crest and helm of gold!
 Full well we know the trophies won
 In the lists at Cottiswold:
 There, vainly Ralph de Wilton strove
 'Gainst Marmion's force to stand;
 To him he lost his lady-love,
 And to the King his land.
 Ourselves beheld the listed field,
 A sight both sad and fair;
 We saw Lord Marmion pierce his shield,
 And saw his saddle bare;
 We saw the victor win the crest
 He wears with worthy pride;
 And on the gibbet-tree, reversed,
 His foeman's scutcheon tied.
 Place, nobles, for the Falcon-Knight!
 Room, room, ye gentles gay,
 For him who conquer'd in the right,
 Marmion of Fontenaye!"

XIII.

Then stepp'd to meet that noble Lord,
 Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
 Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
 And Captain of the Hold.
 He led Lord Marmion to the deas,
 Raised o'er the pavement high,
 And placed him in the upper place—
 They feasted full and high:
 The whiles a Northern harper rude
 Chanted a rhyme of deadly feud,
 "How the fierce Thirwalls, and Riddleys all,
 Stout Willimondswick,
 And Hardriding Dick,
 And Hughie of Hawdon, and Will o' the Wall
 Have set on Sir Albany Featherstonhaugh,
 And taken his life at the Deadman's-shaw."
 Scantly Lord Marmion's ear could brook
 The harper's barbarous lay;
 Yet much he praised the pains he took,
 And well those pains did pay:

For lady's suit and minstrel's strain,
By knight should ne'er be heard in vain.

XIV.

"Now, good Lord Marmion," Heron says,
"Of your fair courtesy,
I pray you bide some little space.
In this poor tower with me.
Here may you keep your arms from rust,
May breathe your war-horse well;
Seldom hath past a week but giust
Or feat of arms befell:
The Scots can rein a mettled steed,
And love to couch a spear;—
St George! a stirring life they lead,
That have such neighbours near.
Then stay with us a little space,
Our Northern wars to learn;
I pray you for your lady's grace!"—
Lord Marmion's brow grew stern.

XV.

The Captain mark'd his alter'd look,
And gave a squire the sign;
A mighty wassail-bowl he took,
And crown'd it high in wine.
"Now pledge me here, Lord Marmion:
But first I pray thee fair,
Where hast thou left that page of thine
That used to serve thy cup of wine,
Whose beauty was so rare?
When last in Raby towers we met,
The boy I closely eyed,
And often mark'd his cheeks were wet,
With tears he fain would hide:
His was no rugged horse-boy's hand,
To burnish shield or sharpen brand,
Or saddle battle-steed;
But meeter seem'd for lady fair,
To fan her cheek, or curl her hair,
Or through embroidery, rich and rare,
The slender silk to lead:
His skin was fair, his ringlets gold.
His bosom—when he sigh'd,
The russet doublet's rugged fold
Could scarce repel its pride!
Say, hast thou given that lovely youth
To serve in lady's bower?
Or was the gentle page, in sooth,
A gentle paramour?"

XVI.

Lord Marmion ill could brook such jest
He roll'd his kindling eye,
With pain his rising wrath suppress'd
Yet made a calm reply:

“ That boy thou thought'st so goodly fair,
 He might not brook the northern air.
 More of his fate if thou wouldst learn,
 I left him sick in Lindisfarn :
 Enough of him.—But, Heron, say,
 Why does thy lovely lady gay
 Disdain to grace the hall to-day?
 Or has that dame, so fair and sage,
 Gone on some pious pilgrimage? ”—
 He spoke in covert scorn, for fame
 Whisper'd light tales of Heron's dame.

XVII.

Unmark'd, at least unreck'd, the taunt,
 Careless the Knight replied,
 “ No bird, whose feathers gaily flaunt,
 Delights in cage to bide :
 Norham is grim and grated close,
 Hemm'd in by battlement and fosse,
 And many a darksome tower ;
 And better loves my lady bright
 To sit in liberty and light,
 In fair Queen Margaret's bower.
 We hold our greyhound in our hand,
 Our falcon on our glove ;
 But where shall we find leash or band,
 For dame that loves to rove?
 Let the wild falcon soar her swing,
 She'll stoop when she has tired her wing.”—

XVIII.

“ Nay, if with royal James's bride
 The lovely Lady Heron bide,
 Behold me here a messenger,
 Your tender greetings prompt to bear ;
 For, to the Scottish court address'd,
 I journey at our King's behest,
 And pray you, of your grace, provide
 For me, and mine, a trusty guide.
 I have not ridden in Scotland since
 James back'd the cause of that mock prince,
 Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
 Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
 Then did I march with Surrey's power,
 What time we razed old Ayton Tower.”—

XIX.

“ For such-like need, my lord, I trow,
 Norham can find you guides enow ;
 For here be some have prick'd as far,
 On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar ;
 Have drunk the monks of St Bothan's ale,
 And driven the beeves of Lauderdale ;
 Harried the wives of Greenlaw's goods,
 And given them light to set their hoods.”— F

XX.

"Now, in good sooth," Lord Marmion cried,
 "Were I in warlike wise to ride,
 A better guard I would not lack,
 Than your stout forayers at my back ;
 But, as in form of peace I go,
 A friendly messenger, to know
 Why through all Scotland, near and far,
 Their King is mustering troops for war,
 The sight of plundering Border spears,
 Might justify suspicious fears,
 And deadly feud, or thirst of spoil,
 Break out in some unseemly broil :
 A herald were my fitting guide ;
 Or Friar, sworn in peace to bide ;
 Or pardoner, or travelling priest,
 Or strolling pilgrim, at the least."

XXI.

The Captain mused a little space,
 And pass'd his hand across his face. —
 "Fain would I find the guide you want,
 But ill may spare a pursuivant,
 The only men that safe can ride
 Mine errands on the Scottish side:
 And though a bishop built this fort,
 Few holy brethren here resort ;
 Even our good chaplain, as I ween,
 Since our last siege we have not seen :
 The mass he might not sing or say,
 Upon one stinted meal a-day ;
 So, safe he sat in Durham aisle,
 And pray'd for our success the while.
 Our Norham vicar, woe betide,
 Is all too well in case to ride.
 The priest of Shoreswood—he could rein
 The wildest war-horse in your train ;
 But then, no spearman in the hall
 Will sooner swear, or stab, or brawl.
 Friar John of Tillmouth were the man :
 A blithesome brother at the can,
 A welcome guest in hall and bower,
 He knows each castle, town, and tower,
 In which the wine and ale is good,
 'Twixt Newcastle and Holy-Rood.
 But that good man, as ill befalls,
 Hath seldom left our castle walls,
 Since, on the vigil of St Bede,
 In evil hour, he cross'd the Tweed,
 To teach Dame Alison her ored.
 Old Bughtrig found him with his wife
 And John, an enemy to strife,
 Sans frock and hood, fled for his life.
 The jealous churl hath deeply swore,
 That, if again he venture o'er,

He shall shrieve penitent no more.
 Little he loves such risks, I know ;
 Yet, in your guard, perchance will go."

XXII.

Young Selby, at the fair hall-board,
 Carved to his uncle and that lord,
 And reverently took up the word.—
 " Kind uncle, woe were we each one,
 If harm should hap to brother John.
 He is a man of mirthful speech,
 Can many a game and gambol teach :
 Full well at tables can he play,
 And sweep at bowls the stake away.
 None can a lustier carol bawl,
 The needfullest among us all,
 When time hangs heavy in the hall,
 And snow comes thick at Christmas tide,
 And we can neither hunt, nor ride
 A foray on the Scottish side.
 The vow'd revenge of Bughtrig rude,
 May end in worse than loss of blood.
 Let Friar John, in safety, still
 In chimney-corner snore his fill,
 Roast hissing crabs, or flagons swill :
 Last night, to Norham there came one,
 Will better guide Lord Marmion."—
 " Nephew," quoth Heron, " by my fay,
 Well hast thou spoke ; say forth thy say."

XXIII.

" Here is a holy Palmer come,
 From Salem first, and last from Rome ;
 One, that hath kiss'd the blessed tomb,
 And visited each holy shrine,
 In Araby and Palestine ;
 On hills of Armenie hath been,
 Where Noah's ark may yet be seen ;
 By that Red Sea, too, hath he trod,
 Which parted at the prophet's rod ;
 In Sinai's wilderness he saw
 The Mount, where Israel heard the law,
 'Mid thunder-dint, and flashing levin,
 And shadows, mists, and darkness, given.
 He shows St James's cockle-shell ;
 Of fair Montserrat, too, can tell ;
 And of that Grot where Olives nod,
 Where, darling of each heart and eye,
 From all the youth of Sicily,
 Saint Rosalie retired to God.

XXIV.

" To stout Saint George of Norwich merry,
 Saint Thomas, too, of Canterbury,
 Cuthbert of Durham and Saint Bede,
 For his sins' pardon hath he pray'd.

He knows the passes of the North,
 And seeks for shrines beyond the Forth;
 Little he eats, and long will wake,
 And drinks but of the stream or lake.
 This were a guide o'er moor and dale;
 But, when our John hath quaff'd his ale,
 As little as the wind that blows,
 And warms itself against his nose,
 Kens he, or cares, which way he goes." -

XXV.

"Gramercy!" quoth Lord Marmion,
 "Full loth were I, that Friar John,
 That venerable man, for me
 Were placed in fear or jeopardy.
 If this same Palmer will me lead
 From hence to Holy-Rood,
 Like his good saint, I'll pay his meed,
 Instead of cockle-shell, or bead,
 With angels fair and good.
 I love such holy rambles; still
 They know to charm a weary hill,
 With song, romance, or lay:
 Some jovial tale, or glee, or jest,
 Some lying legend, at the least,
 They bring to cheer the way." -

XXVI.

"Ah! noble sir," young Selby said,
 And finger on his lip he laid,
 "This man knows much—perchance e'en more
 Than he could learn by holy lore.
 Still to himself he's muttering,
 And shrinks as at some unseen thing.
 Last night we listen'd at his cell;
 Strange sounds we heard, and, sooth to tell,
 He murmur'd on till morn, howe'er
 No living mortal could be near.
 Sometimes I thought I heard it plain,
 As other voices spoke again.
 I cannot tell—I like it not—
 Friar John hath told us it is wrote,
 No conscience clear, and void of wrong,
 Can rest awake, and pray so long.
 Himself still sleeps before his beads
 Have mark'd ten aves, and two creeds." -

XXVII.

"Let pass," quoth Marmion; "by my fay,
 This man shall guide me on my way,
 Although the great arch-fiend and he
 Had sworn themselves of company.
 So please you, gentle youth, to call
 This Palmer to the Castle-hall."
 The summon'd Palmer came in place;
 His sable cowl o'erhung his face;

In his black mantle was he clad,
 With Peter's keys, in cloth of red,
 On his broad shoulders wrought;
 The scallop-shell his cap did deck;
 The crucifix around his neck
 Was from Loretto brought;
 His sandals were with travel tore,
 Staff, budget, bottle, scrip, he wore;
 The faded palm-branch in his hand
 Show'd pilgrim from the Holy Land.

XXVIII.

When as the Palmer came in hall,
 Nor lord, nor knight, was there more tall,
 Or had a statelier step withal,
 Or look'd more high and keen;
 For no saluting did he wait,
 But strode across the hall of state,
 And fronted Marmion where he sate,
 As he his peer had been.
 But his gaunt frame was worn with toil;
 His cheek was sunk, alas the while!
 And when he struggled at a smile,
 His eye look'd haggard wild:
 Poor wretch! the mother that him bare,
 If she had been in presence there,
 In his wan face, and sun-burn'd hair,
 She had not known her child.
 Danger, long travel, want, or woe,
 Soon change the form that best we know—
 For deadly fear can time outgo,
 And blanch at once the hair;
 Hard toil can roughen form and face,
 And want can quench the eye's bright grace,
 Nor does old age a wrinkle trace
 More deeply than despair.
 Happy whom none of these befall,
 But this poor Palmer knew them all.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion then his boon did ask;
 The Palmer took on him the task,
 So he would march with morning tide,
 To Scottish court to be his guide.
 "But I have solemn vows to pay,
 And may not linger by the way,
 To fair St Andrews bound,
 Within the ocean-cave to pray,
 Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
 From midnight to the dawn of day,
 Sung to the billows' sound;
 Thence to Saint Fillan's blessed well,
 Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
 And the crazed brain restore:

Saint Mary grant, that cave or spring
 Could back to peace my bosom bring,
 Or bid it throb no more!"

XXX.

And now the midnight draught of sleep,
 Where wine and spices richly steep,
 In massive bowl of silver deep,
 The page presents on knee.
 Lord Marmion drank a fair good rest,
 The Captain pledged his noble guest,
 The cup went through among the rest,
 Who drain'd it merrily;
 Alone the Palmer pass'd it by,
 Though Selby press'd him courteously.
 This was a sign the feast was o'er;
 It hush'd the merry wassel roar,
 The minstrels ceased to sound.
 Soon in the Castle nought was heard
 But the slow footstep of the guard,
 Pacing his sober round.

XXXI.

With early dawn Lord Marmion rose:
 And first the chapel doors unclose;
 Then, after morning rites were done,
 (A hasty mass from Friar John,)
 And knight and squire had broke their fast,
 On rich substantial repast,
 Lord Marmion's bugles blew to horse:
 Then came the stirrup-cup in course:
 Between the Baron and his host,
 No point of courtesy was lost;
 High thanks were by Lord Marmion paid.
 Solemn excuse the Captain made,
 Till, filing from the gate, had pass'd
 That noble train, their Lord the last.
 Then loudly rung the trumpet call;
 Thunder'd the cannon from the wall,
 And shook the Scottish shore;
 Around the castle eddied slow,
 Volumes of smoke as white as snow,
 And hid its turrets hoar;
 Till they roll'd forth upon the air,
 And met the river breezes there,
 Which gave again the prospect fair.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SECOND.

TO THE REV. JOHN MARRIOTT, A. M.

Ashestiel, Eitrick Forest

THE scenes are desert now, and bare,
 Where flourish'd once a forest fair,
 When these waste glens with copse were lined,
 And peopled with the hart and hind.
 Yon Thorn—perchance whose prickly spears
 Have fenced him for three hundred years,
 While fell around his green compeers—
 Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell
 The changes of his parent dell,
 Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
 Waved in each breeze a sapling bough!
 Would he could tell how deep the shade
 A thousand mingled branches made;
 How broad the shadows of the oak,
 How clung the rowan* to the rock,
 And through the foliage show'd his head,
 With narrow leaves and berries red;
 What pines on every mountain sprung,
 O'er every dell what birches hung,
 In every breeze what aspens shook,
 What alders shaded every brook!

“Here, in my shade,” methinks he'd say,
 “The mighty stag at noon-tide lay:
 The wolf I've seen, a fiercer game,
 (The neighbouring dingle bears his name,)
 With lurching step around me prowl,
 And stop, against the moon to howl;
 The mountain-boar, on battle set,
 His tusks upon my stem would whet;
 While doe, and roe, and red-deer good,
 Have bounded by, through gay green-wood.
 Then oft, from Newark's riven tower,
 Sallied a Scottish monarch's power:
 A thousand vassals muster'd round,
 With horse, and hawk, and horn, and hound;
 And I might see the youth intent,
 Guard every pass with crossbow bent;
 And through the brake the rangers stalk.
 And fal'ners hold the ready hawk;
 And foresters in green-wood trim,
 Lead in the leash the gazehounds grim,
 Attentive as the bratchet's bay,
 From the dark covert drove the prey,
 To slip them as he broke away.
 The startled quarry bounds amain,
 As fast the gallant greyhounds strain;

* Mountain ash

Whistles the arrow from the bow,
 Answers the harquebuss below;
 While all the rocking hills reply,
 To hoof-clang, hound, and hunter's cry.
 And bugles ringing lightsomely."

Of such proud huntings, many tales
 Yet linger in our lonely dales,
 Up pathless Ettrick and on Yarrow,
 Where erst the outlaw drew his arrow.
 But not more blithe that silvan court,
 Than we have been at humbler sport;
 Though small our pomp, and mean our game,
 Our mirth, dear Marriott, was the same.
 Remember'st thou my greyhounds true?
 O'erholt or hill there never flew,
 From slip or leash there never sprang,
 More fleet of foot, or sure of fang.
 Nor dull, between each merry chase,
 Pass'd by the intermitted space;
 For we had fair resource in store,
 In Classic and in Gothic lore:
 We mark'd each memorable scene,
 And held poetic talk between;
 Nor hill, nor brook, we paced along,
 But had its legend or its song.
 All silent now—for now are still
 Thy bowers, untenanted Bowhill!
 No longer, from thy mountains dun,
 The yeoman hears the well-known gun,
 And while his honest heart glows warm,
 At thought of his paternal farm,
 Round to his mates a brimmer fills,
 And drinks, "The Chieftain of the Hills!"
 No fairy forms, in Yarrow's bowers,
 Trip o'er the walks, or tend the flowers,
 Fair as the elves whom Janet saw
 By moonlight dance on Carterhaugh;
 No youthful Baron's left to grace
 The Forest-Sheriff's lonely chase,
 And ape, in manly step and tone,
 The majesty of Oberon:
 And she is gone, whose lovely face
 Is but her least and lowest grace;
 Though if to Sylphid Queen 'twere given,
 To show our earth the charms of Heaven,
 She could not glide along the air,
 With form more light, or face more fair.
 No more the widow's deafen'd ear
 Grows quick that lady's step to hear:
 At noontide she expects her not,
 Nor busies her to trim the cot;
 Pensive she turns her humming wheel.
 Or pensive cooks her orphans' meal:

Yet blesses, ere she deals their bread,
The gentle hand by which they're fed.

From Yair,—which hills so closely bind,
Scarce can the Tweed his passage find,
Though much he fret, and chafe, and toil,
Till all his eddying currents boil,—
Her long-descended lord is gone,
And left us by the stream alone.
And much I miss those sportive boys,
Companions of my mountain joys,
Just at the age 'twixt boy and youth,
When thought is speech, and speech is truth.
Close to my side, with what delight
They press'd to hear of Wallace wight,
When, pointing to his airy mound,
I call'd his ramparts holy ground!
Kindled their brows to hear me speak;
And I have smiled, to feel my cheek,
Despite the difference of our years,
Return again the glow of theirs.
Ah, happy boys! such feelings pure,
They will not, cannot, long endure;
Condemn'd to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And Passion ply the sail and oar.
Yet cherish the remembrance still,
Of the lone mountain, and the rill;
For trust, dear boys, the time will come,
When fiercer transport shall be dumb,
And you will think right frequently,
But, well I hope, without a sigh,
On the free hours that we have spent
Together, on the brown hill's bent.

When, musing on companions gone,
We doubly feel ourselves alone,
Something, my friend, we yet may gain;
There is a pleasure in this pain:
It soothes the love of lonely rest,
Deep in each gentler heart impress'd.
'Tis silent amid worldly toils,
And stifled soon by mental broils;
But, in a bosom thus prepared,
Its still small voice is often heard,
Whispering a mingled sentiment,
'Twixt resignation and content.
Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake;
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen, nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink;

And just a trace of silver sand
 Marks where the water meets the land.
 Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
 Each hill's huge outline you may view;
 Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
 Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake, is there,
 Save where, of land, yon slender line
 Bears thwart the lake the scatter'd pine.
 Yet even this nakedness has power,
 And aids the feeling of the hour:
 Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
 Where living thing conceal'd might lie;
 Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
 Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell;
 There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
 You see that all is loneliness:
 And silence aids—though the steep hills
 Send to the lake a thousand rills;
 In summer tide, so soft they weep,
 The sound but lulls the ear asleep;
 Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
 So stilly is the solitude.

Nought living meets the eye or ear,
 But well I ween the dead are near;
 For though, in feudal strife, a foe
 Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low,
 Yet still, beneath the hallow'd soil,
 The peasant rests him from his toil,
 And, dying, bids his bones be laid,
 Where erst his simple fathers pray'd.

If age had tamed the passions' strife,
 And fate had cut my ties to life,
 Here, have I thought, 'twere sweet to dwell
 And rear again the chaplain's cell,
 Like that same peaceful hermitage,
 Where Milton long'd to spend his age.
 'Twere sweet to mark the setting day
 On Bourhope's lonely top decay;
 And, as it faint and feeble died
 On the broad lake, and mountain's side,
 To say, "Thus pleasures fade away;
 Youth, talents, beauty, thus decay,
 And leave us dark, forlorn, and grey;"
 Then gaze on Dryhope's ruin'd tower,
 And think on Yarrow's faded Flower:
 And when that mountain-sound I heard,
 Which bids us be for storm prepared,
 The distant rustling of his wings,
 As up his force the Tempest brings,
 'Twere sweet, ere yet his terrors rave,
 To sit upon the Wizard's grave—
 That Wizard-Priest's, whose bones are thrust
 From company of holy dust:

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

But chief, 'twere sweet to think such life,
 (Though but escape from fortune's strife,)
 Something most matchless good and wise
 A great and grateful sacrifice;
 And deem each hour to musing given,
 A step upon the road to heaven.

Yet him, whose heart is ill at ease,
 Such peaceful solitudes displease:
 He loves to drown his bosom's jar
 Amid the elemental war:
 And my black Palmer's choice had been
 Some ruder and more savage scene,
 Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene
 There eagles scream from isle to shore;
 Down all the rocks the torrents roar;
 O'er the black waves incessant driven,
 Dark mists infect the summer heaven;
 Through the rude barriers of the lake,
 Away its hurrying waters break,
 Faster and whiter dash and curl,
 Till down yon dark abyss they hurl.
 Rises the fog-smoke white as snow,
 Thunders the viewless stream below,
 Diving, as if condemn'd to lave
 Some demon's subterranean cave,
 Who, prison'd by enchanter's spell,
 Shakes the dark rock with groan and yell.
 And well that Palmer's form and mien
 Had suited with the stormy scene,
 Just on the edge, straining his ken
 To view the bottom of the den,

Where, deep deep down, and far within,
 Toils with the rocks the roaring linn;
 Then, issuing forth one foamy wave,
 And wheeling round the Giant's Grave,
 White as the snowy charger's tail
 Drives down the pass of Moffatdale.

Marriott, thy harp, on Isis strung,
 To many a Border theme has rung:
 Then list to me, and thou shalt know,
 Of this mysterious Man of Woe.

CANTO SECOND.

THE CONVENT.

L

THE breeze, which swept away the smoke,
 Round Norham Castle roll'd,
 When all the loud artillery spoke,
 With lightning-flash, and thunder-stroke.
 As Marmion left the Hold.
 It curl'd not Tweed alone, that breeze,
 For, far upon Northumbrian seas,
 It freshly blew, and strong,
 Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile.
 Bound to St Cuthbert's Holy Isle,
 It bore a bark along.
 Upon the gale she stoop'd her side,
 And bounded o'er the swelling tide,
 As she were dancing home;
 The merry seamen laugh'd, to see
 Their gallant ship so lustily
 Furrow the green sea-foam.
 Much joy'd they in their honour'd freight;
 For, on the deck, in chair of state,
 The Abbess of Saint Hilda placed,
 With five fair nuns, the galley graced.

II

Tw'as sweet to see these holy maids,
 Like birds escaped to greenwood shades,
 Their first flight from the cage,
 How timid, and how curious too,
 For all to them was strange and new,
 And all the common sights they view,
 Their wonderment engage.
 One eyed the shrouds and swelling sail,
 With many a benedicite;
 One at the rippling surge grew pale,
 And would for terror pray;
 Then shriek'd, because the sea-dog nigh,
 His round black head, and sparkling eye,
 Hear'd o'er the foaming spray;

And one would still adjust her veil,
 Disorder'd by the summer gale,
 Perchance lest some more worldly eye
 Her dedicated charms might spy;
 Perchance, because such action graced
 Her fair-turn'd arm and slender waist.
 Light was each simple bosom there,
 Save two, who ill might pleasure share,—
 The Abbess, and the Novice Clare.

III.

The Abbess was of noble blood,
 But early took the veil and hood,
 Ere upon life she cast a look,
 Or knew the world that she forsook.
 Fair too she was, and kind had been
 As she was fair, but ne'er had seen
 For her a timid lover sigh,
 Nor knew the influence of her eye.
 Love, to her ear, was but a name,
 Combined with vanity and shame;
 Her hopes, her fears, her joys, were all
 Bounded within the cloister wall:
 The deadliest sin her mind could reach,
 Was of monastic rule the breach:
 And her ambition's highest aim
 To emulate Saint Hilda's fame.
 For this she gave her ample dower,
 To raise the Convent's eastern tower;
 For this, with carving rare and quaint,
 She deck'd the chapel of the Saint,
 And gave the relic-shrine of cost,
 With ivory and gems emboss'd.
 The poor her Convent's bounty blest,
 The pilgrim in its halls found rest.

IV.

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
 Reform'd on Benedictine school;
 Her cheek was pale, her form was spare:
 Vigils, and penitence austere,
 Had early quench'd the light of youth,
 But gentle was the dame, in sooth;
 Though, vain of her religious sway,
 She loved to see her maids obey.
 Yet nothing stern was she in cell,
 And the nuns loved their Abbess well.
 Sad was this voyage to the dame;
 Summon'd to Lindisfarne, she came,
 There, with Saint Cuthbert's Abbot old,
 And Tynemouth's Prioress, to hold
 A chapter of Saint Benedict,
 For inquisition stern and strict,
 On two apostates from the faith,
 And, if need were to doom to death.

V.

Nought say I here of Sister Clare,
 Save this, that she was young and fair;
 As yet a novice unprofess'd,
 Lovely and gentle, but distress'd.
 She was betrothed to one now dead,
 Or worse, who had dishonour'd fled.
 Her kinsmen bade her give her hand
 To one who loved her for her land:
 Herself, almost heart-broken now,
 Was bent to take the vestal vow,
 And shroud, within Saint Hilda's gloom,
 Her blasted hopes and wither'd bloom.

VI.

She sate upon the galley's prow,
 And seem'd to mark the waves below;
 Nay, seem'd, so fix'd her look and eye,
 To count them as they glided by.
 She saw them not—'twas seeming all—
 Far other scene her thoughts recall,—
 A sun-scorch'd desert, waste and bare,
 Nor waves, nor breezes, murmur'd there;
 There saw she—where some careless hand
 O'er a dead corpse had heap'd the sand,
 To hide it till the jackals come,
 To tear it from the scanty tomb.—
 See what a woful look was given,
 As she raised up her eyes to heaven!

VII.

Lovely, and gentle, and distress'd—
 These charms might tame the fiercest breast:
 Harpers have sung, and poets told,
 That he, in fury uncontroll'd,
 The shaggy monarch of the wood,
 Before a virgin, fair and good,
 Hath pacified his savage mood.
 But passions in the human frame
 Oft put the lion's rage to shame:
 And jealousy, by dark intrigue,
 With sordid avarice in league,
 Had practised with their bowl and knife
 Against the mourner's harmless life.
 This crime was charged 'gainst those who lay
 Prison'd in Cuthbert's islet grey.

VIII.

And now the vessel skirts the strand
 Of mountainous Northumberland;
 Towns, towers, and halls, successive rise,
 And catch the nuns' delighted eyes.
 Monk-Wearmouth soon behind them lay,
 And Tynemouth's priory and bay;
 They mark'd, amid her trees, the hall
 Of lofty Seaton-Delaval:

They saw the Blythe and Wansbeck floods
 Rush to the sea through sounding woods ;
 They pass'd the tower of Widderington,
 Mother of many a valiant son ;
 At Coquet-isle their beads they tell
 To the good Saint who own'd the cell ;
 Then did the Alne attention claim,
 And Warkworth, proud of Percy's name ;
 And next, they cross'd themselves, to hear
 The whitening breakers sound so near,
 Where, boiling through the rocks, they roar
 On Dunstanborough's cavern'd shore ;
 Thy tower, proud Bamborough, mark'd they there
 King Ida's castle, huge and square,
 From its tall rock look grimly down,
 And on the swelling ocean frown ;
 Then from the coast they bore away,
 And reach'd the Holy Island's bay.

IX.

The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
 And girdled in the Saint's domain :
 For, with the flow and ebb, its style
 Varies from continent to isle ;
 Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
 The pilgrims to the shrine find way ;
 Twice every day, the waves efface
 Of staves and sandal'd feet the trace.
 As to the port the galley flew,
 Higher and higher rose to view
 The Castle with its battled walls,
 The ancient Monastery's halls,
 A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
 Placed on the margin of the Isle.

X.

In Saxon strength that Abbey frown'd,
 With massive arches broad and round,
 That rose alternate, row and row,
 On ponderous columns, short and low,
 Built ere the art was known,
 By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
 The arcades of an alley'd walk
 To emulate in stone.
 On the deep walls the heathen Dane
 Had pour'd his impious rage in vain ;
 And needful was such strength to these,
 Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
 Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
 Open to rovers fierce as they,
 Which could twelve hundred years withstand
 Winds, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
 Not but that portions of the pile,
 Rebuilt in a later style,
 Show'd where the spoiler's hand had been ;
 Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen

Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
 And moulder'd in his niche the Saint,
 And rounded, with consuming power,
 The pointed angles of each tower ;
 Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
 Like veteran, worn, but unsubdued.

XI.

Soon as they near'd his turrets strong,
 The maidens raised Saint Hilda's song,
 And with the sea-wave and the wind,
 Their voices, sweetly shrill, combined,
 And made harmonious close ;
 Then, answering from the sandy shore,
 Half-drown'd amid the breakers' roar,
 According chorus rose :
 Down to the haven of the Isle,
 The monks and nuns in order file,
 From Cuthbert's cloisters grim ;
 Banner, and cross, and relics there,
 To meet Saint Hilda's maids, they bare ;
 And, as they caught the sounds on air,
 They echo'd back the hymn.
 The islanders, in joyous mood,
 Rush'd emulously through the flood,
 To hale the bark to land ;
 Conspicuous by her veil and hood,
 Signing the cross, the Abbess stood,
 And bless'd them with her hand.

XII.

Suppose we now the welcome said,
 Suppose the Convent banquet made.
 All through the holy dome,
 Through cloister, aisle, and gallery,
 Wherever vestal maid might pry,
 Nor risk to meet unhallow'd eye,
 The stranger sisters roam :
 Till fell the evening damp with dew,
 And the sharp sea-breeze coldly blew,
 For there, even summer night is chill.
 Then, having stray'd and gazed their fill
 They closed around the fire ;
 And all, in turn, essay'd to paint
 The rival merits of their Saint,
 A theme that ne'er can tire
 A holy maid ; for, be it known,
 That their Saint's honour is their own.

XIII.

Then Whitby's nuns exulting told,
 How to their house three Barons bold
 Must menial service do ;
 While horns blow out a note of shame,
 And monks cry, " Fye upon your name !
 In wrath, for loss of silvan game,
 Saint Hilda's priest ye slew."—

"This, on Ascension-day, each year,
 While labouring on our harbour-pier,
 Must Herbert, Bruce, and Percy hear."—
 They told, how in their Convent-cell
 A Saxon princess once did dwell,
 The lovely Edelfied.
 And how, of thousand snakes, each one
 Was changed into a coil of stone,
 When holy Hilda pray'd ;
 Themselves, within their holy bound,
 Their stony folds had often found.
 They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
 As over Whithy's towers they sail,
 And, sinking down, with flutterings faint,
 They do their homage to the Saint.

XIV.

Nor did Saint Cuthbert's daughters fail
 To vie with these in holy tale ;
 His body's resting-place of old,
 How oft their patron changed, they told ;
 How, when the rude Dane burn'd their pile,
 The monks fled forth from Holy Isle ;
 O'er northern mountain, marsh, and moor,
 From sea to sea, from shore to shore,
 Seven years Saint Cuthbert's corpse they bore
 They rested them in fair Melrose ;
 But though, alive, he loved it well,
 Not there his relics might repose ;
 For, wondrous tale to tell !
 In his stone-coffin forth he rides,
 A ponderous bark for river tides,
 Yet light as gossamer it glides,
 Downward to Tilmouth cell.
 Nor long was his abiding there,
 For southward did the Saint repair ;
 Chester-le-Street, and Rippon, saw
 His holy corpse, ere Wardilaw
 Hail'd him with joy and fear ;
 And, after many wanderings past,
 He chose his lordly seat at last,
 Where his cathedral, huge and vast,
 Looks down upon the Wear :
 There deep in Durham's Gothic shade,
 His relics are in secret laid ;
 But none may know the place,
 Save of his holiest servants three,
 Deep sworn to solemn secrecy,
 Who share that wondrous grace.

XV.

Who may his miracles declare !
 Even Scotland's dauntless King, and heir
 (Although with them they led
 Galwegians, wild as ocean's gale,

And Lodon's knights, all sheathed in mail,
And the bold men of Teviotdale,)

Before his standard fled.

'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again,
When, with his Norman bowyer band,
He came to waste Northumberland.

XVI.

But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn
If, on a rock, by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name :
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,

And hear his anvil sound ;

A deaden'd clang,—a huge dim form,
Seen but, and heard, when gathering storm

And night was closing round.

But this, as tale of idle fame,
The nuns of Lindisfarne disclaim.

XVII.

While round the fire such legends go,
Far different was the scene of woe,
Where, in a secret aisle beneath,
Council was held of life and death.

It was more dark and lone that vault,

Than the worst dungeon cell :

Old Colwulf built it, for his fault,

In penitence to dwell,

When he, for cowl and beads, laid down
The Saxon battle-axe and crown.

This den which, chilling every sense

Of feeling, hearing, sight,

Was call'd the Vault of Penitence,

Excluding air and light,

Was, by the prelate Sexhelm, made

A place of burial for such dead,

As, having died in mortal sin,

Might not be laid the church within.

'Twas now a place of punishment ;

Whence if so loud a shriek were sent,

As reach'd the upper air,

The hearers bless'd themselves, and said

The spirits of the sinful dead

Bemoan'd their torments there.

XVIII.

But though, in the monastic pile,
Did of this penitential aisle

Some vague tradition go,

Few only, save the Abbot, knew

Where the place lay ; and still more few

Were those, who had from him the clew

To that dread vault to go.

Victim and executioner
 Were blindfold when transported there.
 In low dark rounds the arches hung,
 From the rude rock the side-walls sprung;
 The grave-stones, rudely sculptured o'er,
 Half sunk in earth, by time half wore,
 Were all the pavement of the floor;
 The mildew-drops fell one by one,
 With tinkling splash, upon the stone.
 A cresset,* in an iron chain,
 Which served to light this drear domain,
 With damp and darkness seem'd to strive,
 As if it scarce might keep alive;
 And yet it dimly served to show
 The awful conclave met below.

XIX.

There, met to doom in secrecy,
 Were placed the heads of convents three
 All servants of Saint Benedict,
 The statutes of whose order strict
 On iron table lay;
 In long black dress, on seats of stone,
 Behind were these three judges shown
 By the pale cresset's ray:
 The Abbess of Saint Hilda's, there,
 Sat for a space with visage bare,
 Until, to hide her bosom's swell,
 And tear-drops that for pity fell.
 She closely drew her veil:
 Yon shrouded figure, as I guess,
 By her proud mien and flowing dress,
 Is Tynemouth's haughty Prioress,
 And she with awe looks pale:
 And he, that Ancient Man, whose sight
 Has long been quench'd by age's night.
 Upon whose wrinkled brow alone,
 Nor ruth, nor mercy's trace, is shown,
 Whose look is hard and stern,—
 Saint Cuthbert's Abbot is his style
 For sanctity call'd, through the Isle,
 The Saint of Lindisfarne.

XX.

Before them stood a guilty pair;
 But, though an equal fate they share,
 Yet one alone deserves our care.
 Her sex a page's dress belied;
 The cloak and doublet, loosely tied,
 Obscured her charms, but could not hide
 Her cap down o'er her face she drew;
 And, on her doublet breast,
 She tried to hide the badge of blue
 Lord Marmion's falcon crest.

* Antique chandelier.

But, at the Prioress' command,
 A monk undid the silken band,
 That tied her tresses fair,
 And raised the bonnet from her head,
 And down her slender form they spread,
 In ringlets rich and rare.
 Constance de Beverley they know,
 Sister profess'd of Pontevraud,
 Whom the Church number'd with the dead,
 For broken vows, and convent fled.

XXI.

When thus her face was given to view,
 (Although so pallid was her hue,
 It did a ghastly contrast bear
 To those bright ringlets glistening fair,)
 Her look composed, and steady eye,
 Bespoke a matchless constancy;
 And there she stood so calm and pale,
 That, but her breathing did not fail,
 And motion slight of eye and head,
 And of her bosom, warranted
 That neither sense nor pulse she lacks,
 You might have thought a form of wax,
 Wrought to the very life, was there;
 So still she was, so pale, so fair.

XXII.

Her comrade was a sordid soul,
 Such as does murder for a meed;
 Who, but of fear, knows no control,
 Because his conscience, sear'd and foul,
 Feels not the import of his deed;
 One, whose brute-feeling ne'er aspires
 Beyond his own more brute desires.
 Such tools the tempter ever needs,
 To do the savagest of deeds;
 For them no vision'd terrors daunt,
 Their nights no fancied spectres haunt,
 One fear with them, of all most base,—
 The fear of death,—alone finds place.
 This wretch was clad in frock and cowl,
 And shamed not loud to moan and howl,
 His body on the floor to dash,
 And crouch, like hound beneath the lash;
 While his mute partner, standing near,
 Waited her doom without a tear.

XXIII.

Yet well the luckless wretch might shriek,
 Well might her paleness terror speak!
 For there were seen in that dark wall,
 Two niches, narrow, deep, and tall;—
 Who enters at such grisly door,
 Shall ne'er, I ween, find exit more.
 In each a slender meal was laid,
 Of roots, of water, and of bread:

By each, in Benedictine dress,
 Two haggard monks stood motionless ;
 Who, holding high a blazing torch,
 Show'd the grim entrance of the porch :
 Reflecting back the smoky beam,
 The dark-red walls and arches gleam.
 Hewn stones and cement were display'd,
 And building tools in order laid.

XXIV.

These executioners were chose,
 As men who were with mankind foes,
 And with despite and envy fired,
 Into the cloister had retired ;
 Or who, in desperate doubt of grace,
 Strove, by deep penance, to efface
 Of some foul crime the stain ;
 For, as the vassals of her will,
 Such men the Church selected still,
 As either joy'd in doing ill,
 Or thought more grace to gain,
 If, in her cause, they wrestled down
 Feelings their nature strove to own.
 By strange device were they brought there.
 They knew not how, nor knew not where.

XXV.

And now that blind old Abbot rose,
 To speak the Chapter's doom,
 On those the wall was to enclose,
 Alive, within the tomb ;
 But stopp'd, because that woful Maid,
 Gathering her powers, to speak essay'd.
 Twice she essay'd, and twice in vain ;
 Her accents might no utterance gain
 Nought but imperfect murmurs slip
 From her convulsed and quivering lip ;
 "Twixt each attempt all was so still,
 You seem'd to hear a distant rill—
 'Twas ocean's swells and falls ;
 For though this vault of sin and fear
 Was to the sounding surge so near,
 A tempest there you scarce could hear,
 So massive were the walls.

XXVI.

At length, an effort sent apart
 The blood that curdled to her heart.
 And light came to her eye,
 And colour dawn'd upon her cheek,
 A hectic and a flutter'd streak,
 Like that left on the Cheviot peak
 By Autumn's stormy sky ;
 And when her silence broke at length,
 Still as she spoke she gather'd strength,

And arm'd herself to bear.
 It was a fearful sight to see
 Such high resolve and constancy,
 In form so soft and fair.

XXVII.

“ I speak not to implore your grace,
 Well know I, for one minute's space
 Successless might I sue :
 Nor do I speak your prayers to gain,
 For if a death of lingering pain,
 To cleanse my sins, be penance vain,
 Vain are your masses too. —
 I listen'd to a traitor's tale,
 I left the convent and the veil ;
 For three long years I bow'd my pride,
 A horse-boy in his train to ride ;
 And well my folly's meed he gave,
 Who forfeited, to be his slave,
 All here, and all beyond the grave. —
 He saw young Clara's face more fair,
 He knew her of broad lands the heir,
 Forgot his vows, his faith forswore,
 And Constance was beloved no more. —
 'Tis an old tale, and often told ;
 But did my fate and wish agree,
 Ne'er had been read, in story old,
 Of maiden true betray'd for gold,
 That loved, or was avenged, like me.

XXVIII.

“ The King approved his favourite's aim ;
 In vain a rival barr'd his claim,
 Whose fate with Clare's was plight,
 For he attaints that rival's fame
 With treason's charge—and on they came,
 In mortal lists to fight.
 Their oaths are said,
 Their prayers are pray'd,
 Their lances in the rest are laid,
 They meet in mortal shock ;
 And, hark ! the throng, with thundering cry,
 Shout ‘ Marmion ! Marmion ! to the sky,
 De Wilton to the block ! ’
 Say ye, who preach Heaven shall decide
 When in the lists two champions ride,
 Say, was Heaven's justice here ?
 When, loyal in his love and faith,
 Wilton found overthrow or death,
 Beneath a traitor's spear ?
 How false the charge, how true he fell,
 This guilty packet best can tell.” —
 Then drew a packet from her breast,
 Paused, gather'd voice, and spoke the rest. —

XXIX.

"Still was false Marmion's bridal staid ;
 To Whitby's Convent fled the maid,
 The hated match to shun.
 'Ho ! shifts she thus ?' King Henry cried ;
 'Sir Marmion, she shall be thy bride,
 If she were sworn a nun.'
 One way remain'd—the King's command
 Sent Marmion to the Scottish land :
 I linger'd here, and rescue plann'd
 For Clara and for me :
 This caitiff Monk, for gold, did swear,
 He would to Whitby's shrine repair,
 And, by his drugs, my rival fair,
 A saint in heaven should be.
 But ill the dastard kept his oath,
 Whose cowardice has undone us both.

XXX.

"And now my tongue the secret tells,
 Not that remorse my bosom swells,
 But to assure my soul that none
 Shall ever wed with Marmion.
 Had fortune my last hope betray'd,
 This packet, to the King convey'd,
 Had given him to the headsman's stroke,
 Although my heart that instant broke.—
 Now, men of death, work forth your will,
 For I can suffer, and be still ;
 And come he slow, or come he fast,
 It is but Death who comes at last.

XXXI.

"Yet dread me, from my living tomb,
 Ye vassal slaves of bloody Rome !
 If Marmion's late remorse should wake,
 Full soon such vengeance will he take,
 That you shall wish the fiery Dane
 Had rather been your guest again.
 Behind, a darker hour ascends !
 The altars quake, the crosier bends,
 The ire of a despotic King
 Rides forth upon destruction's wing ;
 Then shall these vaults, so strong and deep,
 Burst open to the sea-winds' sweep ;
 Some traveller then shall find my bones
 Whitening amid disjointed stones,
 And, ignorant of priests' cruelty,
 Marvel such relics here should be."

XXXII.

Fix'd was her look, and stern her air :
 Back from her shoulders stream'd her hair ;
 The locks, that wont her brow to shade,
 Stared up erectly from her head ;
 Her figure seem'd to rise more high ;

Her voice, despair's wild energy
 Had given a tone of prophecy.
 Appall'd the astonish'd conclave sate;
 With stupid eyes, the men of fate
 Gazed on the light inspired form,
 And listen'd for the avenging storm;
 The judges felt the victim's dread;
 No hand was moved, no word was said,
 Till thus the Abbot's doom was given,
 Raising his sightless balls to heaven:—
 "Sister, let thy sorrows cease;
 Sinful brother, part in peace!"
 From that dire dungeon, place of doom,
 Of execution too, and tomb,
 Paced forth the judges three;
 Sorrow it were, and shame, to tell
 The butcher-work that there befell,
 When they had glided from the cell
 Of sin and misery.

XXXIII.

An hundred winding steps convey
 That conclave to the upper day;
 But, ere they breathed the fresher air,
 They heard the shriekings of despair,
 And many a stifled groan:
 With speed their upward way they take,
 (Such speed as age and fear can make,)
 And cross'd themselves for terror's sake,
 As hurrying, tottering on:
 Even in the vesper's heavenly tone,
 They seem'd to hear a dying groan,
 And bade the passing knell to toll
 For welfare of a parting soul.
 Slow o'er the midnight wave it swung,
 Northumbrian rocks in answer rung,
 To Warkworth cell the echoes roll'd,
 His beads the wakeful hermit told,
 The Bamborough peasant raised his head.
 But slept ere half a prayer he said;
 So far was heard the mighty knell,
 The stag sprung up on Cheviot Fell,
 Spread his broad nostril to the wind,
 Listed before, aside, behind,
 Then couch'd him down beside the hind,
 And quaked among the mountain fern,
 To hear that sound so dull and stern.

INTRODUCTION TO CANTO THIRD.

TO WILLIAM ERSKINE, ESQ.

Ashetiel, Ettrick Forest.

LIKE April morning clouds, that pass,
 With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
 And imitate, on field and furrow,
 Life's chequer'd scene of joy and sorrow ;
 Like streamlet of the mountain north,
 Now in a torrent racing forth,
 Now winding slow its silver train,
 And almost slumbering on the plain ;
 Like breezes of the Autumn day,
 Whose voice inconstant dies away,
 And ever swells again as fast,
 When the ear deems its murmur past ;
 Thus various, my romantic theme
 Flits, winds, or sinks, a morning dream.
 Yet pleased, our eye pursues the trace
 Of Light and Shade's inconstant race ;
 Pleased, views the rivulet afar,
 Weaving its maze irregular ;
 And pleased, we listen as the breeze
 Heaves its wild sigh through Autumn trees ;
 Then, wild as cloud, or stream, or gale,
 Flow on, flow unconfined, my Tale !

Need I to thee, dear Erskine, tell
 I love the licence all too well,
 In sounds now lowly, and now strong,
 To raise the desultory song ?—
 Oft, when 'mid such capricious chime,
 Some transient fit of lofty rhyme
 To thy kind judgment seem'd excuse
 For many an error of the muse,
 Oft hast thou said, " If, still mis-spent,
 Thine hours to poetry are lent,
 Go, and to tame thy wandering course,
 Quaff from the fountain at the source ;
 Approach those masters, o'er whose tomb
 Immortal laurels ever bloom :
 Instructive of the feebler bard,
 Still from the grave their voice is heard ;
 From them, and from the paths they show'd,
 Choose honour'd guide and practised road ;
 Nor ramble on through brake and maze,
 With harpers rude, of barbarous days.

" Or deem'st thou not our later time
 Yields topic meet for classic rhyme ?
 Hast thou no elegiac verse
 For Brunswick's venerable hearse ?

What ! not a line, a tear, a sigh,
 When valour bleeds for liberty ?—
 Oh, hero of that glorious time,
 When, with unrivall'd light sublime,
 Though martial Austria, and though all
 The might of Russia, and the Gaul,
 Though banded Europe stood her foes—
 The star of Brandenburg arose !
 Thou couldst not live to see her beam
 For ever quench'd in Jena's stream.
 Lamented Chief !—it was not given
 To thee to change the doom of Heaven,
 And crush that dragon in its birth,
 Predestined scourge of guilty earth.
 Lamented Chief !—not thine the power
 To save in that presumptuous hour,
 When Prussia hurried to the field,
 And snatch'd the spear, but left the shield !
 Valour and skill 'twas thine to try,
 And, tried in vain, 'twas thine to die.
 Ill had it seem'd thy silver hair
 The last, the bitterest pang to share,
 For princedoms reft, and scutcheons riven,
 And birthrights to usurpers given ;
 Thy land's, thy children's wrongs to feel,
 And witness woes thou couldst not heal !
 On thee relenting Heaven bestows
 For honour'd life an honour'd close ;
 And when revolves, in time's sure change,
 The hour of Germany's revenge,
 When, breathing fury for her sake,
 Some new Armenius shall awake,
 Her champion, ere he strike, shall come
 To whet his sword on BRUNSWICK'S tomb.

“ Or of the Red-Cross hero teach,
 Dauntless in dungeon as on breach :
 Alike to him the sea, the shore,
 The brand, the bridle, or the oar :
 Alike to him the war that calls
 Its votaries to the shatter'd walls,
 Which the grim Turk, besmear'd with blood
 Against the Invincible made good ;
 Or that, whose thundering voice could wake
 The silence of the polar lake,
 When stubborn Russ, and metall'd Swede,
 On the warp'd wave their death-game play'd
 Or that, where Vengeance and Affright
 Howl'd round the father of the fight,
 Who snatch'd, on Alexandria's sand,
 The conqueror's wreath with dying hand.

“ Or, if to touch such chord be thine,
 Restore the ancient tragic line.

And emulate the notes that rung
 From the wild harp, which silent hung
 By silver Avon's holy shore,
 Till twice an hundred years roll'd o'er ;
 When she, the bold enchantress, came,
 With fearless hand and heart on flame !
 From the pale willow snatch'd the treasure,
 And swept it with a kindred measure,
 Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove
 With Montfort's hate and Basil's love,
 Awakening at the inspired strain,
 Deem'd their own Shakspeare lived again.

Thy friendship thus thy judgment wronging,
 With praises not to me belonging,
 In task more meet for mightiest powers,
 Wouldst thou engage my thriftless hours.
 But say, my Erskine, hast thou weigh'd
 That secret power by all obey'd,
 Which warps not less the passive mind,
 Its source conceal'd, or undefined ;
 Whether an impulse, that has birth
 Soon as the infant wakes on earth,
 One with our feelings and our powers,
 And rather part of us than ours !
 Or whether fitlier term'd the sway
 Of habit form'd in early day ?
 Howe'er derived, its force confest
 Rules with despotic sway the breast,
 And drags us on by viewless chain,
 While taste and reason plead in vain.
 Look east, and ask the Belgian why,
 Beneath Batavia's sultry sky,
 He seeks not eager to inhale
 The freshness of the mountain gale,
 Content to rear his whiten'd wall
 Beside the dank and dull canal ?
 He'll say, from youth he loved to see
 The white sail gliding by the tree.
 Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
 Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
 Whose tatter'd plaid and rugged cheek
 His northern clime and kindred speak ;
 Through England's laughing meads he goes
 And England's wealth around him flows ;
 Ask, if it would content him well,
 At ease in those gay plains to dwell,
 Where hedge-rows spread a verdant screen,
 And spires and forests intervene,
 And the neat cottage peeps between ?
 No! not for these would he exchange
 His dark Lochaber's boundless range
 Not for fair Devon's meads forsake
 Bennevis grey, and Garry's lake.

Thus while I ape the measure wild
Of tales that charm'd me yet a child,
Rude though they be, still with the chime
Return the thoughts of early time;
And feelings, roused in life's first day,
Glow in the line, and prompt the lay.
Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,
Which charm'd my fancy's wakening hour.
Though no broad river swept along,
To claim, perchance, heroic song;
Though sigh'd no groves in summer gale,
To prompt of love a softer tale;
Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed
Claim'd homage from a shepherd's reed;
Yet was poetic impulse given,
By the green hill and clear blue heaven.
It was a barren scene, and wild,
Where naked cliffs were rudely piled;
But ever and anon between
Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;
And well the lonely infant knew
Recesses where the wall-flower grew,
And honeysuckle loved to crawl
Up the low crag and ruin'd wall.
I deem'd such nooks the sweetest shade
The sun in all its round survey'd;
And still I thought that shatter'd tower
The mightiest work of human power;
And marvell'd as the aged hind
With some strange tale bewitch'd my mind,
Of forayers, who, with headlong force,
Down from that strength had spurr'd their horse,
Their southern rapine to renew,
Far in the distant Cheviots blue,
And, home returning, fill'd the hall
With revel, wassel-rout, and brawl.
Methought that still, with trump and clang,
The gateway's broken arches rang;
Methought grim features seam'd with scars,
Glared through the window's rusty bars,
And ever, by the winter hearth,
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth,
Of lovers' slights, of ladies' charms,
Of witches' spells, of warriors' arms;
Of patriot battles, won of old
By Wallace wight and Bruce the bold;
Of later fields of feud and fight,
When, pouring from their Highland height,
The Scottish clans, in headlong sway,
Had swept the scarlet ranks away.
While stretch'd at length upon the floor.
Again I fought each combat o'er,
Pebbles and shells, in order laid,
The mimic ranks of war display'd:

And onward still the Scottish Lion bore,
And still the scatter'd Southron fled before.

Still, with vain fondness, could I trace,
Anew, each kind familiar face,
That brighten'd at our evening fire!
From the thatch'd mansion's grey-hair'd Sire,
Wise without learning, plain and good,
And sprung of Scotland's gentler blood;
Whose eye, in age, quick, clear, and keen,
Show'd what in youth its glance had been,
Whose doom discording neighbours sought,
Content with equity unbought;
To him the venerable Priest,
Our frequent and familiar guest,
Whose life and manners well could paint
Alike the student and the saint;
Alas! whose speech too oft I broke
With gambol rude and timeless joke:
For I was wayward, bold, and wild,
A self-will'd imp, a grandame's child;
But half a plague, and half a jest,
Was still endured, beloved, caress'd.

For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
Nay, Erskine, nay—On the wild hill
Let the wild heath-bell flourish still;
Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,
But freely let the woodbine twine,
And leave untrimm'd the eglantine:
Nay, my friend, nay—Since oft thy praise
Hath given fresh vigour to my lays;
Since oft thy judgment could refine
My flatten'd thought, or cumbrous line;
Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,
And in the minstrel spare the friend.
Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,
Flow forth, flow unrestrain'd, my Tale!

CANTO THIRD.

THE HOSTEL, OR INN.

1.

THE livelong day Lord Marmion rode:
The mountain path the Palmer show'd,
By glen and streamlet winded still,
Where stunted birches hid the rill.
They might not choose the lowland road.
For the Merse forayers were abroad,
Who, fired with hate and thirst of prey,
Had scarcely fail'd to bar their way.

Oft on the trampling band, from crown
 Of some tall cliff, the deer look'd down;
 On wing of jet, from his repose
 In the deep heath, the black-cock rose:
 Sprung from the gorse the timid roe,
 Nor waited for the bending bow;
 And when the stony path began,
 By which the naked peak they wan,
 Up flew the snowy ptarmigan.
 The noon had long been pass'd before
 They gain'd the height of Lammermoor;
 Thence winding down the northern way,
 Before them, at the close of day,
 Old Gifford's towers and hamlet lay.

II.

No summons calls them to the tower,
 To spend the hospitable hour.
 To Scotland's camp the Lord was gone;
 His cautious dame, in bower alone,
 Dreaded her castle to unclose,
 So late, to unknown friends or foes.
 On through the hamlet as they paced,
 Before a porch, whose front was graced
 With bush and flagon trimly placed,
 Lord Marmion drew his rein:
 The village inn seem'd large, though rude;
 Its cheerful fire and hearty food
 Might well relieve his train.

Down from their seats the horsemen sprung
 With jingling spurs the court-yard rung;
 They bind their horses to the stall,
 For forage, food, and firing call,
 And various clamour fills the hall:
 Weighing the labour with the cost,
 Toils everywhere the bustling host.

III.

Soon by the chimney's merry blaze,
 Through the rude hostel might you gaze:
 Might see, where, in dark nook aloof,
 The rafters of the sooty roof
 Bore wealth of winter cheer;
 Of sea-fowl dried, and solands store.
 And gammons of the tusky boar,
 And savoury haunch of deer.
 The chimney arch projected wide;
 Above, around it, and beside,
 Were tools for housewives' hand;
 Nor wanted, in that martial day,
 The implements of Scottish fray,
 The buckler, lance, and brand.
 Beneath its shade, the place of state.
 On oaken settle Marmion sat,
 And view'd around the blazing hearth
 His followers mix in noisy mirth;

Whom with brown ale, in jolly tide,
From ancient vessels ranged aside,
Full actively their host supplied.

IV.

Theirs was the glee of martial breast,
And laughter theirs at little jest;
And oft Lord Marmion deign'd to aid,
And mingle in the mirth they made;
For though, with men of high degree,
The proudest of the proud was he,
Yet, train'd in camps, he knew the art
To win the soldier's hardy heart.
They love a captain to obey,
Boisterous as March, yet fresh as May.
With open hand, and brow as free,
Lover of wine and minstrelsy;
Ever the first to scale a tower,
As venturous in a lady's bower:—
Such buxom chief shall lead his host
From Indian fires to Zembla's frost.

V.

Resting upon his pilgrim staff,
Right opposite the Palmer stood;
His thin dark visage seen but half,
Half hidden by his hood.
Still fix'd on Marmion was his look,
Which he, who ill such gaze could brook,
Strove by a frown to quell;
But not for that, though more than once
Full met their stern encountering glance,
The Palmer's visage fell.

VI.

By fits less frequent from the crowd
Was heard the burst of laughter loud;
For still, as squire and archer stared
On that dark face and matted beard,
Their glee and game declined.
All gazed at length in silence drear,
Unbroke, save when in comrade's ear
Some yeoman, wondering in his fear,
Thus whisper'd forth his mind:—
“Saint Mary! saw'st thou e'er such sight?
How pale his check, his eye how bright,
Whene'er the firebrand's fickle light
Glances beneath his cowl!
Full on our Lord he sets his eye;
For his best palfrey, would not I
Endure that sullen scowl.”

VII.

But Marmion, as to chase the awe
Which thus had quell'd their hearts, who saw
The ever-varying fire-light show
That figure stern and face of woe.

Now call'd upon a squire:—
 "Fitz-Eustace, know'st thou not some lay,
 To speed the lingering night away?
 We slumber by the fire."—

VIII.

"So please you," thus the youth rejoin'd,
 "Our choicest minstrel's left behind.
 Ill may we hope to please your ear,
 Accustom'd Constant's strains to hear.
 The harp full deftly can he strike,
 And wake the lover's lute alike;
 To dear Saint Valentine, no thrush
 Sings livelier from a spring-tide bush,
 No nightingale her love-lorn tune
 More sweetly warbles to the moon.
 Woe to the cause, whate'er it be,
 Detains from us his melody,
 Lavish'd on rocks, and billows stern,
 Or duller monks of Lindisfarne.
 Now must I venture, as I may,
 To sing his favourite roundelay."

IX.

A mellow voice Fitz-Eustace had,
 The air he chose was wild and sad;
 Such have I heard, in Scottish land,
 Rise from the busy harvest band,
 When falls before the mountaineer,
 On Lowland plains, the ripen'd ear.
 Now one shrill voice the notes prolong,
 Now a wild chorus swells the song:
 Oft have I listen'd, and stood still,
 As it came soften'd up the hill,
 And deem'd it the lament of men
 Who languish'd for their native glen;
 And thought how sad would be such sound
 On Susquehana's swampy ground,
 Kentucky's wood-encumber'd brake,
 Or wild Ontario's boundless lake,
 Where heart-sick exiles, in the strain,
 Recall'd fair Scotland's hills again!

X.

Song.

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

Chorus

Eleu loro, &c. Soft shall be his pillow.

There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There, thy rest shalt thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake,
Never, O never!

Chorus.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!
Where shall the traitor rest,
He, the deceiver,
Who could win maiden's breast,
Ruin, and leave her?
In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle
With groans of the dying.

Chorus.

Eleu loro, &c. There shall he be lying.
Her wing shall the eagle flap
O'er the false-hearted;
His warm blood the wolf shall lap,
Ere life be parted.
Shame and dishonour sit
By his grave ever;
Blessing shall hallow it,—
Never, O never!

Chorus.

Eleu loro, &c. Never, O never!

XII.

It ceased, the melancholy sound;
And silence sunk on all around.
The air was sad; but sadder still
It fell on Marmion's ear,
And plain'd as if disgrace and ill,
And shameful death, were near.
He drew his mantle past his face,
Between it and the band,
And rested with his head a space,
Reclining on his hand.
His thoughts I scan not; but I ween,
That, could their import have been seen,
The meanest groom in all the hall,
That e'er tied courser to a stall,
Would scarce have wish'd to be their prey,
For Lutterward and Fontenaye.

XIII.

High minds, of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs, Remorse!
Fear, for their scourge, mean villains have.
Thou art the torturer of the brave!

Yet fatal strength they boast to steel
 Their minds to bear the wounds they feel,
 Even while they writhe beneath the smart
 Of civil conflict in the heart.
 For soon Lord Marmion raised his head,
 And, smiling, to Fitz-Eustace said,—
 “ Is it not strange, that, as ye sung,
 Seem'd in mine ear a death-peal rung,
 Such as in nunneries they toll
 For some departing sister's soul?
 Say, what may this portend?”—
 Then first the Palmer silence broke,
 (The livelong day he had not spoke,)
 “ The death of a dear friend.”

XIV.

Marmion, whose steady heart and eye
 Ne'er changed in worst extremity;
 Marmion, whose soul could scantily brook,
 Even from his King, a haughty look;
 Whose accent of command controll'd,
 In camps, the boldest of the bold;—
 Thought, look, and utterance fail'd him now—
 Fall'n was his glance, and flush'd his brow:
 For either in the tone,
 Or something in the Palmer's look,
 So full upon his conscience strook,
 That answer he found none.
 Thus oft it haps, that when within
 They shrink at sense of secret sin,
 A feather daunts the brave;
 A fool's wild speech confounds the wise,
 And proudest princes veil their eyes
 Before their meanest slave.

XV.

Well might he falter!—By his aid
 Was Constance Beverley betray'd.
 Not that he augur'd of the doom,
 Which on the living closed the tomb:
 But, tired to hear the desperate maid
 Threaten by turns, beseech, upbraid;
 And wroth, because in wild despair
 She practised on the life of Clare;
 Its fugitive the Church he gave,
 Though not a victim, but a slave;
 And deem'd restraint in convent strange
 Would hide her wrongs, and her revenge
 Himself, proud Henry's favourite peer,
 Held Romish thunders idle fear;
 Secure his pardon he might hold,
 For some slight mulct of penance-gold.
 Thus judging, he gave secret way,
 When the stern priests surprised their pray

His train but deem'd the favourite page
 Was left behind, to spare his age ;
 Or other if they deem'd, none dared
 To mutter what he thought and heard :
 Woe to the vassal, who durst pry
 Into Lord Marmion's privacy !

XVI.

His conscience slept—he deem'd her well,
 And safe secured in distant cell ;
 But, waken'd by her favourite lay,
 And that strange Palmer's boding say,
 That fell so ominous and drear,
 Full on the object of his fear,
 To aid remorse's venom'd throes,
 Dark tales of convent-vengeance rose ;
 And Constance, late betray'd and scorn'd,
 All lovely on his soul return'd ;
 Lovely as when, at treacherous call,
 She left her convent's peaceful wall,
 Crimson'd with shame, with terror mute,
 Dreading alike escape, pursuit,
 Till love, victorious o'er alarms,
 Hid fears and blushes in his arms.

XVII.

"Alas !" he thought, "how changed that mien !
 How changed these timid looks have been,
 Since years of guilt, and of disguise,
 Have steel'd her brow, and arm'd her eyes !
 No more of virgin terror speaks
 The blood that mantles in her cheeks :
 Pierce, and unfeminine, are there,
 Frenzy for joy, for grief despair ;
 And I the cause—for whom were given
 Her peace on earth, her hopes in heaven !—
 Would," thought he, as the picture grows,
 "I on its stalk had left the rose !
 Oh, why should man's success remove
 The very charms that wake his love !—
 Her convent's peaceful solitude
 Is now a prison harsh and rude ;
 And, pent within the narrow cell,
 How will her spirit chafe and swell !
 How brook the stern monastic laws !
 The penance how—and I the cause !—
 Vigil and scourge—perchance even worse !"—
 And twice he rose to cry, "To horse !"—
 And twice his Sovereign's mandate came,
 Like damp upon a kindling flame ;
 And twice he thought, "Gave I not charge
 She should be safe, though not at large ?
 They durst not, for their island, shred
 One golden ringlet from her head."

XVIII.

While thus in Marmion's bosom strove
 Repentance and reviving love,
 Like whirlwinds, whose contending sway
 I've seen Loch Vennachar obey,
 Their Host the Palmer's speech had heard.
 And, talkative, took up the word :
 " Ay, reverend Pilgrim, you, who stray
 From Scotland's simple land away,
 To visit realms afar,
 Full often learn the art to know
 Of future weal, or future woe,
 By word, or sign, or star ;
 Yet might a knight his fortune hear,
 If, knight-like, he despises fear,
 Not far from hence ;—if fathers old
 Aright our hamlet legend told."—
 These broken words the menials move,
 (For marvels still the vulgar love,)
 And, Marmion giving licence cold,
 His tale the Host thus gladly told :—

XIX.

The Host's Tale.

" A Clerk could tell what years have flown
 Since Alexander fill'd our throne,
 (Third monarch of that warlike name,)
 And eke the time when here he came
 To seek Sir Hugo, then our lord :
 A braver never drew a sword ;
 A wiser never, at the hour
 Of midnight, spoke the word of power :
 The same, whom ancient records call
 The founder of the Goblin-Hall.
 I would, Sir Knight, your longer stay
 Gave you that cavern to survey.
 Of lofty roof, and ample size,
 Beneath the castle deep it lies :
 To hew the living rock profound,
 The floor to pave, the arch to round,
 There never toil'd a mortal arm—
 It all was wrought by word and charm :
 And I have heard my grandsire say,
 That the wild clamour and affray
 Of those dread artisans of hell,
 Who labour'd under Hugo's spell,
 Sounded as loud as ocean's war
 Among the caverns of Dunbar.

XX.

" The King Lord Gifford's castle sought,
 Deep labouring with uncertain thought ;
 Even then he muster'd all his host,
 To meet upon the western coast :

For Norse and Danish galleys plied
 Their oars within the frith of Clyde
 There floated Haco's banner trim,
 Above Norweyan warriors grim,
 Savage of heart, and large of limb ;
 Threatening both continent and isle,
 Bute, Arran, Cunninghame, and Kyle.
 Lord Gifford, deep beneath the ground,
 Heard Alexander's bugle sound,
 And tarried not his garb to change,
 But, in his wizard habit strange,
 Came forth,—a quaint and fearful sight ;
 His mantle lined with fox-skins white ;
 His high and wrinkled forehead bore
 A pointed cap, such as of yore
 Clerks say that Pharaoh's Magi wore :
 His shoes were mark'd with cross and spell,
 Upon his breast a pentacle ;
 His zone, of virgin parchment thin,
 Or, as some tell, of dead man's skin,
 Bore many a planetary sign,
 Combust, and retrograde, and trine ;
 And in his hand he held prepared,
 A naked sword without a guard.

XXI.

“ Dire dealings with the fiendish race
 Had mark'd strange lines upon his face :
 Vigil and fast had worn him grim ;
 His eyesight dazzled seem'd and dim,
 As one unused to upper day ;
 Even his own menials with dismay
 Beheld, Sir Knight, the grisly Sire,
 In his unwonted wild attire ;
 Unwonted, for traditions run,
 He seldom thus beheld the sun.—
 ‘ I know,’ he said—(his voice was hoarse,
 And broken seem'd its hollow force)—
 ‘ I know the cause, although untold,
 Why the King seeks his vassal's hold :
 Vainly from me my liege would know
 His kingdom's future weal or woe ;
 But yet, if strong his arm and heart,
 His courage may do more than art.

XXII.

“ ‘ Of middle air the demons proud,
 Who ride upon the racking cloud,
 Can read, in fix'd or wandering star,
 The issue of events afar ;
 But still their sullen aid withhold,
 Save when by mightier force controll'd.
 Such late I summon'd to my hall ;
 And though so potent was the call,

That scarce the deepest nook of hell
 I deem'd a refuge from the spell,
 Yet, obstinate in silence still,
 The haughty demon mocks my skill.
 But thou,—who little know'st thy might,
 As born upon that blessed night
 When yawning graves, and dying groan,
 Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrow'n,—
 With untaught valour shalt compel
 Response denied to magic spell.'—
 'Gramercy,' quoth our Monarch free,
 'Place him but front to front with me,
 And, by this good and honour'd brand,
 The gift of Cœur-de-Lion's hand,
 Soothly I swear, that, tide what tide,
 The demon shall a buffet bide.'—
 His bearing bold the wizard view'd,
 And thus, well pleased, his speech renew'd :—
 'There spoke the blood of Malcolm !—mark :
 Forth pacing hence, at midnight dark,
 The rampart seek, whose circling crown
 Crests the ascent of yonder down :
 A southern entrance shalt thou find ;
 There halt, and there thy bugle wind,
 And trust thine elfin foe to see,
 In guise of thy worst enemy :
 Couch then thy lance, and spur thy steed—
 Upon him ! and Saint George to speed !
 If he go down, thou soon shalt know
 Whate'er these airy sprites can show :—
 If thy heart fail thee in the strife,
 I am no warrant for thy life.'

XXIII.

“ Soon as the midnight bell did ring,
 Alone, and arm'd, forth rode the King
 To that old camp's deserted round :
 Sir Knight, you well might mark the mound,
 Left-hand the town,—the Pictish race,
 The trench, long since, in blood did trace ;
 The moor around is brown and bare,
 The space within is green and fair.
 The spot our village children know,
 For there the earliest wild-flowers grow ;
 But woe betide the wandering wight,
 That treads its circle in the night !
 The breadth across, a bowshot clear,
 Gives ample space for full career :
 Opposed to the four points of heaven,
 By four deep gaps are entrance given.
 The southernmost our Monarch past,
 Halted, and blew a gallant blast ;
 And on the north within the ring,
 Apear'd the form of England's King,

Who then, a thousand leagues afar,
 In Palestine waged holy war:
 Yet arms like England's did he wield,
 Alike the leopards in the shield,
 Alike his Syrian courser's frame,
 The rider's length of limb the same:
 Long afterwards did Scotland know,
 Fell Edward was her deadliest foe.

XXIV.

"The vision made our Monarch start,
 But soon he mann'd his noble heart,
 And in the first career they ran,
 The Elfin Knight fell, horse and man;
 Yet did a splinter of his lance
 Through Alexander's visor glance,
 And razed the skin—a puny wound.
 The King, light leaping to the ground,
 With naked blade his phantom foe
 Compell'd the future war to show.
 Of Largs he saw the glorious plain,
 Where still gigantic bones remain,
 Memorial of the Danish war;
 Himself he saw, amid the field,
 On high his brandish'd war-axe wield,
 And strike proud Haco from his car,
 While all around the shadowy Kings
 Denmark's grim ravens cower'd their wings
 'Tis said, that, in that awful night,
 Remoter visions met his sight,
 Foreshowing future conquests far,
 When our sons' sons wage northern war;
 A royal city, tower and spire,
 Redden'd the midnight sky with fire,
 And shouting crews her navy bore,
 Triumphant to the victor shore.
 Such signs may learned clerks explain—
 They pass the wit of simple swain.

XXV.

"The joyful King turn'd home again,
 Headed his host, and quell'd the Dane;
 But yearly, when return'd the night
 Of his strange combat with the sprite,
 His wound must bleed and smart;
 Lord Gifford then would gibing say,
 'Bold as ye were, my liege, ye pay
 The penance of your start.'
 Long since beneath Dunfermline's nave,
 King Alexander fills his grave,
 Our Lady give him rest!
 Yet still the knightly spear and shield
 The Elfin Warrior doth wield,
 Upon the brown hill's breast;
 And many a knight hath prov'd his chance
 In the charm'd ring to break a lance

But all have foully sped ;
 Save two, as legends tell, and they
 Were Wallace wight, and Gilbert Hay.—
 Gentles, my tale is said.”

XXVI.

The quaighs* were deep, the liquor strong,
 And on the tale the yeoman-throng
 Had made a comment sage and long,
 But Marmion gave a sign :
 And, with their lord, the squires retire ;
 The rest around the hostel fire,
 Their drowsy limbs recline :
 For pillow, underneath each head,
 The quiver and the targe were laid.
 Deep slumbering on the hostel floor.
 Oppress'd with toil and ale, they snore :
 The dying flame, in fitful change,
 Threw on the group its shadows strange

XXVII.

Apart, and nestling in the hay
 Of a waste loft, Fitz-Eustace lay ;
 Scarce, by the pale moonlight, were seen
 The foldings of his mantle green :
 Lightly he dreamt, as youth will dream,
 Of sport by thicket, or by stream ;
 Of hawk or hound, of ring or glove,
 Or, lighter yet, of lady's love.
 A cautious tread his slumber broke,
 And, close beside him, when he woke,
 In moonbeam half, and half in gloom,
 Stood a tall form, with nodding plume :
 But, ere his dagger Eustace drew,
 His master Marmion's voice he knew.—

XXVIII.

“ Fitz-Eustace ! rise,—I cannot rest ;—
 Yon churl's wild legend haunts my breast,
 And graver thoughts have chafed my mood
 The air must cool my feverish blood ;
 And fain would I ride forth, to see
 The scene of elfin chivalry.
 Arise, and saddle me my steed ;
 And, gentle Eustace, take good heed
 Thou dost not rouse these drowsy slaves :
 I would not that the prating knaves
 Had cause for saying, o'er their ale,
 That I could credit such a tale.”—
 Then softly down the steps they slid ;
 Eustace the stable door undid,
 And, darkling, Marmion's steed array'd,
 While, whispering, thus the Baron said :—

* A wooden cup composed of staves hooped together.

XXIX.

" Didst never, good my youth, hear tell,
 That on the hour when I was born,
 Saint George, who graced my sire's chapelle,
 Down from his steed of marble fell,
 A weary wight forlorn ?
 The flattering chaplains all agree,
 The champion left his steed to me.
 I would, the omen's truth to show,
 That I could meet this Elfin Foe !
 Blithe would I battle, for the right
 To ask one question at the sprite :—
 Vain thought ! for elves, if elves there be,
 An empty race, by fount or sea,
 To dashing waters dance and sing,
 Or round the green oak wheel their ring."

Thus speaking, he his steed bestrode,
 And from the hostel slowly rode.

XXX.

Fitz-Eustace follow'd him abroad,
 And mark'd him pace the village road,
 And listen'd to his horse's tramp,
 Till, by the lessening sound,
 He judged that of the Pictish camp
 Lord Marmion sought the round.
 Wonder it seem'd, in the squire's eyes,
 That one, so wary held, and wise,—
 Of whom 'twas said, he scarce received
 For gospel, what the Church believed,—
 Should, stirr'd by idle tale,
 Ride forth in silence of the night,
 As hoping half to meet a sprite,
 Array'd in plate and mail.
 For little did Fitz-Eustace know,
 That passions, in contending flow,
 Unfix the strongest mind ;
 Wearied from doubt to doubt to flee,
 We welcome fond credulity,
 Guide confident, though blind.

XXXI.

Little for this Fitz-Eustace cared,
 But, patient, waited till he heard,
 At distance, prick'd to utmost speed,
 The foot-tramp of a flying steed,
 Come townward rushing on ;
 First, dead, as if on turf it trode,
 Then, clattering on the village road,
 In other pace than forth he yode,*
 Return'd Lord Marmion.
 Down hastily he sprung from selle,
 And, in his haste, well-nigh he fell ;

* Yode, used by old poets for went.

To the squire's hand the rein he threw,
 And spoke no word as he withdrew :
 But yet the moonlight did betray,
 The falcon-crest was soil'd with clay :
 And plainly might Fitz-Eustace see,
 By stains upon the charger's knee,
 And his left side, that on the moor
 He had not kept his footing sure.
 Long musing on these wondrous signs,
 At length to rest the squire reclines,
 Broken and short ; for still, between,
 Would dreams of terror intervene :
 Eustace did ne'er so blithely mark
 The first notes of the morning lark.

 INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FOURTH.

TO JAMES SKENE, ESQ.

Ashetel, Etrusk Forest.

AN ancient Minstrel sagely said,
 " Where is the life which late we led ?"
 That motley clown in Arden wood,
 Whom humorous Jacques with envy view'd,
 Not even that clown could amplify,
 On this trite text, so long as I.
 Eleven years we now may tell,
 Since we have known each other well ;
 Since, riding side by side, our hand
 First drew the voluntary brand ;
 And sure, through many a varied scene,
 Unkindness never came between.
 Away these winged years have flown,
 To join the mass of ages gone ;
 And though deep mark'd, like all below,
 With chequer'd shades of joy and woe ;
 Though thou o'er realms and seas hast ranged,
 Mark'd cities lost, and empires changed,
 While here, at home, my narrower ken
 Somewhat of manners saw, and men ;
 Though varying wishes, hopes, and fears,
 Fever'd the progress of these years,
 Yet now, days, weeks, and months, but seem
 The recollection of a dream,
 So still we glide down to the sea
 Of fathomless eternity.

Even now it scarcely seems a day,
 Since first I tun'd this idle lay ;
 A task so often thrown aside,
 When leisure graver cares denied,

That now, November's dreary gale,
 Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
 That same November gale once more
 Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
 Their vex'd boughs streaming to the sky,
 Once more our naked birches sigh,
 And Blackhouse heights, and Ettrick Pen,
 Have donn'd their wintry shrouds again :
 And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
 Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
 Earlier than wout along the sky,
 Mix'd with the rack, the snow mists fly ;
 The shepherd, who in summer sun,
 Had something of our envy won,
 As thou with pencil, I with pen,
 The features traced of hill and glen ;—
 He who, outstretch'd the livelong day,
 At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
 View'd the light clouds with vacant look,
 Or slumber'd o'er his tatter'd book,
 Or idly busied him to guide
 His angle o'er the lessen'd tide ;—
 At midnight now, the snowy plain
 Finds sterner labour for the swain.

When red hath set the beamless sun,
 Through heavy vapours dark and dun ;
 When the tired ploughman, dry and warm,
 Hears, half asleep, the rising storm
 Hurling the hail, and sleeted rain,
 Against the casement's tinkling pane ;
 The sounds that drive wild deer, and fox,
 To shelter in the brake and rocks,
 Are warnings which the shepherd ask
 To dismal and to dangerous task.
 Oft he looks forth, and hopes, in vain,
 The blast may sink in mellowing rain ;
 Till, dark above, and white below,
 Decided drives the flaky snow,
 And forth the hardy swain must go.
 Long, with dejected look and whine,
 To leave the hearth his dogs repine ;
 Whistling and cheering them to aid,
 Around his back he wreathes the plaid :
 His flock he gathers, and he guides,
 To open downs, and mountain-sides,
 Where fiercest though the tempest blow,
 Least deeply lies the drift below.
 The blast, that whistles o'er the fells,
 Stiffens his locks to icicles ;
 Oft he looks back, while streaming far,
 His cottage window seems a star,—
 Loses its feeble gleam,—and then
 Turns patient to the blast again,

And, facing to the tempest's sweep,
 Drives through the gloom his lagging sheep.
 If fails his heart, if his limbs fail,
 Benumbing death is in the gale :
 His paths, his landmarks, all unknown,
 Close to the hut no more his own,
 Close to the aid he sought in vain,
 The morn may find the stiffen'd swain :
 The widow sees, at dawning pale,
 His orphans raise their feeble wail ;
 And, close beside him, in the snow,
 Poor Yarrow, partner of their woe,
 Couches upon his master's breast,
 And licks his cheeks to break his rest.

Who envies now the shepherd's lot,
 His healthy fare, his rural cot,
 His summer couch by greenwood tree,
 His rustic kirk's* loud revelry,
 His native hill-notes tuned on high,
 To Marion of the blithesome eye ;
 His crook, his scrip, his oaten reed,
 And all Arcadia's golden creed ?

Changes not so with us, my Skene,
 Of human life the varying scene !
 Our youthful summer oft we see
 Dance by on wings of game and glee,
 While the dark storm reserves its rage,
 Against the winter of our age :
 As he, the ancient Chief of Troy,
 His manhood spent in peace and joy ;
 But Grecian fires, and loud alarms,
 Call'd ancient Priam forth to arms.
 Then happy those, since each must drain
 His share of pleasure, share of pain,—
 Then happy those, beloved of Heaven,
 To whom the mingled cup is given ;
 Whose lenient sorrows find relief,
 Whose joys are chasten'd by their grief.
 And such a lot, my Skene, was thine,
 When thou, of late, wert doom'd to twine,
 Just when thy bridal hour was by,—
 The cypress with the myrtle tie.
 Just on thy bride her Sire had smiled,
 And bless'd the union of his child,
 When love must change its joyous cheer,
 And wipe affection's filial tear.
 Nor did the actions next his end,
 Speak more the father than the friend :
 Scarce had lamented Forbes paid
 The tribute to his Minstrel's shade ;
 The tale of friendship scarce was told,
 Ere the narrator's heart was cold—

* The Scottish Harvest-home.

Far may we search before we find
 A heart so manly and so kind !
 But not around his honour'd urn,
 Shall friends alone and kindred mourn ;
 The thousand eyes his care had dried,
 Pour at his name a bitter tide ;
 And frequent falls the grateful dew,
 For benefits the world ne'er knew.
 If mortal charity dare claim
 The Almighty's attributed name,
 Inscribe above his mouldering clay,
 " The widow's shield, the orphan's stay."
 Nor, though it wake thy sorrow, deem
 My verse intrudes on this sad theme ;
 For sacred was the pen that wrote,
 " Thy father's friend forget thou not :"
 And grateful title may I plead,
 For many a kindly word and deed,
 To bring my tribute to his grave :—
 'Tis little—but 'tis all I have.

To thee, perchance, this rambling strain
 Recalls our summer walks again ;
 When, doing nought,—and, to speak true,
 Not anxious to find aught to do,—
 The wild unbounded hills we ranged,
 While oft our talk its topic changed,
 And, desultory as our way,
 Ranged, unconfined, from grave to gay.
 Even when it flagg'd, as oft will chance,
 No effort made to break its trance,
 We could right pleasantly pursue
 Our sports in social silence too ;
 Thou gravely labouring to portray
 The blighted oak's fantastic spray ;
 I spelling o'er, with much delight,
 The legend of that antique knight,
 Tirante by name, yclep'd the White.
 At either's feet a trusty squire,
 Pandour and Camp, with eyes of fire,
 Jealous, each other's motions view'd,
 And scarce suppress'd their ancient feud.
 The laverock whistled from the cloud ;
 The stream was lively, but not loud ;
 From the white thorn the May-flower shed
 Its dewy fragrance round our head :
 Not Ariel lived more merrily
 Under the blossom'd bough, than we.

And blithesome nights, too, have been ours,
 When Winter stript the Summer's bowers.
 Careless we heard, what now I hear,
 The wild blast sighing deep and drear,
 When fires were bright, and lamps beam'd gay,
 And ladies tuned the lovely lay ;

And he was held a laggard soul,
 Who shunn'd to quaff the sparkling bowl.
 Then he, whose absence we deplore,
 Who breathes the gales of Devon's shore,
 The longer miss'd, bewail'd the more ;
 And thou, and I, and dear-loved Rae,
 And one whose name I may not say,—
 For not Mimosa's tender tree
 Shrinks sooner from the touch than he,—
 In merry chorus well combined,
 With laughter drown'd the whistling wind.
 Mirth was within ; and Care without
 Might gnaw her nails to hear our shout.
 Not but amid the buxom scene
 Some grave discourse might intervene—
 Of the good horse that bore him best,
 His shoulder, hoof, and arching crest :
 For, like mad Tom's, our chiefest care,
 Was horse to ride, and weapon wear.
 Such nights we've had ; and, though the game
 Of manhood be more sober tame,
 And though the field-day, or the drill,
 Seem less important now—yet still
 Such may we hope to share again.
 The sprightly thought inspires my strain !
 And mark, how like a horseman true,
 Lord Marmion's march I thus renew.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE CAMP.

I.

EUSTACE, I said, did blithely mark
 The first notes of the merry lark.
 The lark sang shrill, the cock he crew,
 And loudly Marmion's bugles blew,
 And with their light and lively call,
 Brought groom and yeoman to the stall.
 Whistling they came, and free of heart,
 But soon their mood was changed ;
 Complaint was heard on every part,
 Of something disarranged.
 Some clamour'd loud for armour lost ;
 Some brawl'd and wrangled with the host ;
 " By Becket's bones," cried one, " I fear,
 That some false Scot has stolen my spear !"
 Young Blount, Lord Marmion's second squire,
 Found his steed wet with sweat and mire ;

Although the rated horse-boy sware,
 Last night he dress'd him sleek and fair.
 While chafed the impatient squire like thunder.
 Old Hubert shouts, in fear and wonder,—
 " Help, gentle Blount! help, comrades all!
 Bevis lies dying in his stall:
 To Marmion who the plight dare tell,
 Of the good steed he loves so well?"
 Gaping for fear and ruth, they saw
 The charger panting on his straw;
 Till one who would seem wisest, cried,—
 " What else but evil could betide,
 With that cursed Palmer for our guide?
 Better we had through mire and bush
 Been lantern-led by Friar Rush."

II.

Fitz-Eustace, who the cause but guess'd,
 Nor wholly understood,
 His comrades' clamorous complaints suppress'd;
 He knew Lord Marmion's mood.
 Him, ere he issued forth, he sought,
 And found deep plunged in gloomy thought,
 And did his tale display
 Simply as if he knew of nought
 To cause such disarray.
 Lord Marmion gave attention cold,
 Nor marvell'd at the wonders told,—
 Pass'd them as accidents of course,
 And bade his clarions sound to horse.

III.

Young Henry Blount, meanwhile, the cost
 Had reckon'd with their Scottish host;
 And, as the charge he cast and paid,
 " Ill thou deservest thy hire," he said;
 " Dost see, thou knave, my horse's plight?
 Fairies have ridden him all the night,
 And left him in a foam!
 I trust that soon a conjuring band,
 With English cross, and blazing brand,
 Shall drive the devils from this land,
 To their infernal home:
 For in this haunted den, I trow,
 All night they trample to and fro."—
 The laughing host look'd on the hire,
 " Gramercy, gentle Southern squire,
 And if thou comest among the rest,
 With Scottish broadsword to be blest,
 Sharp be the brand, and sure the blow
 And short the pang to undergo."
 Here stay'd their talk,—for Marmion
 Gave now the signal to set on.
 The Palmer showing forth the way,
 They journey'd all the morning day.

IV.

The green-sward way was smooth and good,
 Through Humble's and through Saltoun's wood ;
 A forest glade, which, varying still,
 Here gave a view of dale and hill,
 There narrower closed, till over head
 A vaulted screen the branches made.
 " A pleasant path," Fitz-Eustace said ;
 " Such as where errant-knights might see
 Adventures of high chivalry ;
 Might meet some damsel flying fast,
 With hair unbound, and looks aghast ;
 And smooth and level course were here,
 In her defence to break a spear.
 Here, too, are twilight nooks and dells ;
 And oft, in such, the story tells,
 The damsel kind, from danger freed,
 Did grateful pay her champion's meed."
 He spoke to cheer Lord Marmion's mind :
 Perchance to show his lore design'd ;
 For Eustace much had pored
 Upon a huge romantic tome,
 In the hall-window of his home,
 Imprinted at the antique dome
 Of Caxton, or De Worde.
 Therefore he spoke,—but spoke in vain,
 For Marmion answer'd nought again.

V.

Now sudden, distant trumpets shrill,
 In notes prolong'd by wood and hill,
 Were heard to echo far ;
 Each ready archer grasp'd his bow,
 But by the flourish soon they know,
 They breathed no point of war.
 Yet cautious, as in foeman's land,
 Lord Marmion's order speeds the band,
 Some opener ground to gain ;
 And scarce a furlong had they rode,
 When thinner trees, receding, show'd
 A little woodland plain.
 Just in that advantageous glade,
 The halting troop a line had made,
 As forth from the opposing shade
 Issued a gallant train.

VI.

First came the trumpets, at whose clang
 So late the forest echoes rang ;
 On prancing steeds they forward press'd,
 With scarlet mantle, azure vest ;
 Each at his trump a banner wore,
 Which Scotland's royal scutcheon bore :
 Heralds and pursuivants, by name
 Bute, Islay, Marchmount, Bothsay, came,

In painted tabards, proudly showing
 Gules, Argent, Or, and Azure glowing,
 Attendant on a King-at-arms,
 Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
 That feudal strife had often quell'd,
 When wildest its alarms.

VII.

He was a man of middle age ;
 In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
 As on King's errand come ;
 But in the glances of his eye,
 A penetrating, keen, and sly
 Expression found its home ;
 The flash of that satiric rage,
 Which, bursting on the early stage,
 Branded the vices of the age,
 And broke the keys of Rome.
 On milk-white palfrey forth he paced ;
 His cap of maintenance was graced
 With the proud heron-plume.
 From his steed's shoulder, loin, and breast
 Silk housings swept the ground,
 With Scotland's arms, device, and crest,
 Embroider'd round and round.
 The double tressure might you see,
 First by Achais borne,
 The thistle and the fleur-de-lis,
 And gallant unicorn.
 So bright the King's armorial coat,
 That scarce the dazzled eye could note,
 In living colours, blazon'd brave,
 The Lion, which his title gave ;
 A train, which well beseem'd his state,
 But all unarm'd, around him wait.
 Still is thy name in high account,
 And still thy verse has charms,
 Sir David Lindesay of the Mount,
 Lord Lion King-at-arms !

VIII.

Down from his horse did Marmion spring,
 Soon as he saw the Lion-King ;
 For well the stately Baron knew
 To him such courtesy was due,
 Whom Royal James himself had crown'd,
 And on his temples placed the round
 Of Scotland's ancient diadem :
 And wet his brow with hallow'd wine,
 And on his finger given to shine
 The emblematic gem.
 Their mutual greetings duly made,
 The Lion thus his message said :—
 " Though Scotland's King hath deeply sworn
 Ne'er to knit faith with Henry more,

And strictly hath forbid resort
 From England to his royal court ;
 Yet, for he knows Lord Marmion's name,
 And honours much his warlike fame,
 My liege hath deem'd it shame, and lack
 Of courtesy, to turn him back ;
 And, by his order, I, your guide,
 Must lodging fit and fair provide,
 Till finds King James meet time to see
 The flower of English chivalry."

IX.

Though inly chafed at this delay,
 Lord Marmion bears it as he may.
 The Palmer, his mysterious guide,
 Beholding thus his place supplied,
 Sought to take leave in vain :
 Strict was the Lion-King's command,
 That none, who rode in Marmion's band,
 Should sever from the train :
 " England has here enow of spics
 In Lady Heron's witching eyes :"
 To Marchmount thus, apart, he said,
 But fair pretext to Marmion made.
 The right-hand path they now decline,
 And trace against the stream the Tyne.

X.

At length up that wild dale they wind,
 Where Crichtoun Castle crowns the bank
 For there the Lion's care assign'd
 A lodging meet for Marmion's rank.
 That Castle rises on the steep
 Of the green vale of Tyne :
 And far beneath, where slow they creep,
 From pool to eddy, dark and deep,
 Where alders moist, and willows weep.
 You hear her streams repine.
 The towers in different ages rose ;
 Their various architecture shows
 The builders' various hands ;
 A mighty mass, that could oppose,
 When deadliest hatred fired its foes,
 The vengeful Douglas bands.

XI.

Crichtoun ! though now thy miry court
 But pens the lazy steer and sheep,
 Thy turrets rude, and totter'd Keep,
 Have been the minstrel's loved resort.
 Oft have I traced, within thy fort,
 Of mouldering shields the mystic sense,
 Scutcheons of honour, or pretence.
 Quarter'd in old armorial sort,
 Remains of rude magnificence.

Nor wholly yet had time defaced
 Thy lordly gallery fair ;
 Nor yet the stony cord unbraced,
 Whose twisted knots, with roses laced,
 Adorn thy ruin'd stair.
 Still rises unimpair'd below,
 The court-yard's graceful portico ;
 Above its cornice, row and row
 Of fair hewn facets richly show
 Their pointed diamond form,
 Though there but houseless cattle go,
 To shield them from the storm.
 And, shuddering, still may we explore,
 Where oft whilom were captives pent,
 The darkness of thy Massy More ;
 Or, from thy grass-grown battlement,
 May trace, in undulating line,
 The sluggish mazes of the Tyne.

XII.

Another aspect Crichtoun show'd,
 As through its portal Marmion rode ;
 But yet 'twas melancholy state
 Received him at the outer gate ;
 For none were in the Castle then,
 But women, boys, or aged men.
 With eyes scarce dried, the sorrowing dame,
 To welcome noble Marmion, came ;
 Her son, a stripling twelve years old,
 Proffer'd the Baron's rein to hold ;
 For each man that could draw a sword
 Had march'd that morning with their lord,
 Earl Adam Hepburn,—he who died
 On Flodden, by his sovereign's side :
 Long may his Lady look in vain !
 She ne'er shall see his gallant train
 Come sweeping back through Crichtoun-Dean
 'Twas a brave race, before the name
 Of hated Bothwell stain'd their fame.

XIII.

And here two days did Marmion rest,
 With every rite that honour claims,
 Attended as the King's own guest ;—
 Such the command of Eoyal James,
 Who marshall'd then his land's array,
 Upon the Borough-moor that lay.
 Perchance he would not foeman's eye
 Upon his gathering host should pry,
 Till full prepared was every band
 To march against the English land.
 Here while they dwelt, did Lindesay's wit
 Oft cheer the Baron's moodier fit ;
 And, in his turn, he knew to prize
 Lord Marmion's powerful mind, and wise,—

Train'd in the lore of Rome and Greece,
And policies of war and peace.

XIV.

It chanced, as fell the second night,
That on the battlements they walk'd,
And, by the slowly fading light,
Of varying topics talk'd;
And, unaware, the Herald-bard
Said, Marmion might his toil have spared,
In travelling so far;
For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war;
And, closer question'd, thus he told
A tale, which chronicles of old
In Scottish story have enroll'd:—

XV.

Sir David Lindesay's Tale.

“ Of all the palaces so fair,
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland, far beyond compare
Linlithgow is excelling;
And in its park, in jovial June,
How sweet the merry linnet's tune,
How blithe the blackbird's lay!
The wild-buck-bells from ferny brake,
The coot dives merry on the lake;
The saddest heart might pleasure take
To see all nature gay.
But June is to our Sovereign dear,
The heaviest month in all the year:
Too well his cause of grief you know,—
June saw his father's overthrow.
Woe to the traitors, who could bring
The princely boy against his King!
Still in his conscience burns the sting.
In offices as strict as Lent,
King James's June is ever spent.

XVI.

“ When last this ruthless month was come,
And in Linlithgow's holy dome
The King, as wont, was praying;
While, for his royal father's soul,
The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
The Bishop mass was saying—
For now the year brought round again
The day the luckless King was slain—
In Katharine's aisle the Monarch knelt.
With sackcloth-shirt and iron belt,
And eyes with sorrow streaming;
Around him, in their stalls of state,
The Thistle's Knight-Companions sate,
Their banners o'er them beaming.

I too was there, and, sooth to tell,
 Bedeafen'd with the jangling knell,
 Was watching where the sunbeams fell,
 Through the stain'd casement gleaming;
 But, while I mark'd what next befell,
 It seem'd as I were dreaming.
 Stepp'd from the crowd a ghostly wight,
 In azure gown, with cincture white;
 His forehead bald, his head was bare,
 Down hung at length his yellow hair.—
 Now, mock me not, when, good my Lord,
 I pledge to you my knightly word,
 That, when I saw his placid grace,
 His simple majesty of face,
 His solemn bearing, and his pace
 So stately gliding on,
 Seem'd to me ne'er did limner paint
 So just an image of the Saint,
 Who propp'd the Virgin in her faint,—
 The loved Apostle John!

XVII.

“ He stepp'd before the Monarch's chair,
 And stood with rustic plainness there,
 And little reverence made;
 Nor head, nor body, bow'd nor bent,
 But on the desk his arm he leant,
 And words like these he said,
 In a low voice—but never tone
 So thrill'd through vein, and nerve, and bone:—
 ‘ My mother sent me from afar,
 Sir King, to warn thee not to war,—
 Woe waits on thine array;
 If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
 Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
 James Stuart, doubly warn'd, beware:
 God keep thee as he may!’—
 The wondering Monarch seem'd to seek
 For answer, and found none;
 And when he raised his head to speak,
 The monitor was gone.
 The Marshal and myself had cast
 To stop him as he outward pass'd;
 But, lighter than the whirlwind's blast,
 He vanish'd from our eyes,
 Like sunbeam on the billow cast,
 That glances but, and dies.”

XVIII.

While Lindesay told his marvel strange,
 The twilight was so pale,
 He mark'd not Marmion's colour change,
 While listening to the tale;
 But, after a suspended pause,
 The Baron spoke:—“ Of Nature's laws

So strong I held the force,
 That never superhuman cause
 Could e'er control their course;
 And, three days since, had judged your aim
 Was but to make your guest your game.
 But I have seen, since past the Tweed,
 What much has changed my sceptic creed,
 And made me credit aught—" He staid,
 And seem'd to wish his words unsaid:
 But, by that strong emotion press'd,
 Which prompts us to unload our breast,
 Even when discovery's pain,
 To Lindesay did at length unfold
 The tale his village host had told,
 At Gifford, to his train.
 Nought of the Palmer says he there,
 And nought of Constance or of Clare;
 The thoughts which broke his sleep, he seems
 To mention but as feverish dreams.

XIX.

"In vain," said he, "to rest I spread
 My burning limbs, and couch'd my head:
 Fantastic thoughts return'd;
 And, by their wild dominion led,
 My heart within me burn'd.
 So sore was the delirious goad,
 I took my steed, and forth I rode,
 And, as the moon shone bright and cold,
 Soon reach'd the camp upon the wold.
 The southern entrance I pass'd through,
 And halted, and my bugle blew.
 Methought an answer met my ear,—
 Yet was the blast so low and drear,
 So hollow, and so faintly blown,
 It might be echo of my own.

XX.

"Thus judging, for a little space
 I listen'd, ere I left the place;
 But scarce could trust mine eyes,
 Nor yet can think they served me true,
 When sudden in the ring I view,
 In form distinct of shape and hue,
 A mounted champion rise.—
 I've fought, Lord-Lion, many a day,
 In single fight, and mix'd affray,
 And ever, I myself may say,
 Have borne me as a knight;
 But when this unexpected foe
 Seem'd starting from the gulf below,
 I care not though the truth I show,
 I trembled with affright;
 And as I placed in rest my spear
 My hand so shook for very fear,
 I scarce could couch it right.

XXI.

"Why need my tongue the issue tell?
 We ran our course,—my charger fell;—
 What could he 'gainst the shock of hell?—
 I roll'd upon the plain.
 High o'er my head, with threatening hand
 The spectre shook his naked brand,—
 Yet did the worst remain :
 My dazzled eyes I upward cast,—
 Not opening hell itself could blast
 Their sight, like what I saw!
 Full on his face the moonbeam strook,—
 A face could never be mistook !
 I knew the stern vindictive look,
 And held my breath for awe.
 I saw the face of one who, fled
 To foreign climes, has long been dead,
 I well believe the last ;
 For ne'er, from visor raised, did stare
 A human warrior, with a glare
 So grimly and so ghost.
 Thrice o'er my head he shook the blade ;
 But when to good Saint George I pray'd.
 (The first time e'er I ask'd his aid,)
 He plunged it in the sheath ;
 And, on his courser mounting light,
 He seem'd to vanish from my sight :
 The moonbeam droop'd, and deepest night
 Sunk down upon the heath.—
 'Twere long to tell what cause I have
 To know his face, that met me there,
 Call'd by his hatred from the grave,
 To cumber upper air :
 Dead or alive, good cause had he
 To be my mortal enemy."

XXII.

Marvell'd Sir David of the Mount ;
 Then, learn'd in story, 'gan recount
 Such chance had happ'd of old,
 When once, near Norham, there did fight
 A spectre fell of fiendish might,
 In likeness of a Scottish knight,
 With Brian Bulmer bold,
 And train'd him nigh to disallow
 The aid of his baptismal vow.
 "And such a phantom, too, 'tis said,
 With Highland broadsword, targe, and plaid,
 And fingers red with gore,
 Is seen in Rothiemurcus' glade,
 Or where the sable pine-trees shade
 Dark Tomantoul, and Auchnaslaid,
 Dromouchty, or Glenmore.

And yet, whate'er such legends say,
 Of warlike demon, ghost, or fay,
 On mountain, moor, or plain,
 Spotless in faith, in bosom bold,
 True son of chivalry should hold
 These midnight terrors vain ;
 For seldom hath such spirits power
 To harm, save in the evil hour,
 When guilt we meditate within,
 Or harbour unrepented sin."—
 Lord Marmion turn'd him half aside,
 And twice to clear his voice he tried,
 Then press'd Sir David's hand,—
 But nought, at length, in answer said,
 And here their farther converse staid,
 Each ordering that his band
 Should bowne them with the rising day,
 To Scotland's camp to take their way,—
 Such was the King's command.

XXIII.

Early they took Dun-Edin's road,
 And I could trace each step they trode :
 Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
 Lies on the path to me unknown.
 Much might it boast of storied lore ;
 But, passing such digression o'er,
 Suffice it that the rout was laid
 Across the furzy hills of Braid.
 They pass'd the glen and scanty rill,
 And climb'd the opposing bank, until
 They gain'd the top of Blackford Hill.

XXIV.

Blackford ! on whose uncultured breast,
 Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
 A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
 Or listed, as I lay at rest,
 While rose on breezes thin,
 The murmur of the city crowd,
 And, from his steeple jangling loud,
 Saint Giles's mingling din.
 Now, from the summit to the plain,
 Waves all the hill with yellow grain ;
 And o'er the landscape as I look,
 Nought do I see unchanged remain,
 Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
 To me they make a heavy moan,
 Of early friendships past and gone.

XXV.

But different far the change has been,
 Since Marmion, from the crown
 Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
 Upon the bent so brown :

Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
 Spread all the Borough-moor below,
 Upland, and dale, and down :—
 A thousand, did I say ? I ween,
 Thousands on thousands there were seen,
 That chequer'd all the heath between
 The streamlet and the town ;
 In crossing ranks extending far,
 Forming a camp irregular ;
 Oft giving way, where still there stood
 Some relics of the old oak wood,
 That darkly huge did intervene,
 And tamed the glaring white with green :
 In these extended lines there lay
 A martial kingdom's vast array.

XXVI.

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
 To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
 And from the southern Redswire edge,
 To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge ;
 From west to east, from south to north,
 Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
 Marmion might hear the mingled hum
 Of myriads up the mountain come ;
 The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
 Where chiefs review'd their vassal rank,
 And charger's shrilling neigh ;
 And see the shifting lines advance,
 While frequent flash'd, from shield and lance,
 The sun's reflected ray.

XXVII.

Thin curling in the morning air,
 The wreaths of failing smoke declare
 To embers now the brands decay'd,
 Where the night-watch their fires had made.
 They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
 Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
 And dire artillery's clumsy car,
 By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war ;
 And there were Borthwick's sisters seven,*
 And culverins which France had given.
 Ill-omen'd gift ! the guns remain
 The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

XXVIII.

Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
 A thousand streamers flaunted fair ;
 Various in shape, device, and hue,
 Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
 Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and square,
 Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there
 O'er the pavilions flew.

* Seven culverins so called, cast by one Borthwick.

Highest and midmost, was descried
 The royal banner floating wide ;
 The staff, a pine-tree, strong and straight,
 Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone,
 Which still in memory is shown,
 Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
 Whene'er the western wind unroll'd,
 With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
 And gave to view the dazzling field,
 Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
 The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.

XXIX.

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright,—
 He view'd it with a chief's delight,—
 Until within him burn'd his heart,
 And lightning from his eye did part,
 As on the battle-day ;
 Such glance did falcon never dart,
 When stooping on his prey.
 " Oh ! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
 Thy King from warfare to dissuade
 Were but a vain essay :
 For, by St George, were that host mine,
 Not power infernal nor divine,
 Should once to peace my soul incline,
 Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
 In glorious battle-fray !"
 Answer'd the Bard, of milder mood,—
 " Fair is the sight,—and yet 'twere good,
 That kings would think withal,
 When peace and wealth their land has bless'd,
 'Tis better to sit still at rest,
 Than rise, perchance to fall.

XXX.

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
 For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
 When sated with the martial show
 That peopled all the plain below,
 The wandering eye could o'er it go,
 And mark the distant city glow
 With gloomy splendour red ;
 For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
 That round her sable turrets flow,
 The morning beams were shed,
 And tinged them with a lustre proud,
 Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud
 Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
 Where the huge Castle holds its state,
 And all the steep slope down,
 Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
 Filed deep and massy, close and high,
 Mine own romantic town'

But northward far, with purer blaze,
 On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
 And as each heathy top they kiss'd,
 It gleam'd a purple amethyst.
 Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
 Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law:
 And, broad between them roll'd,
 The gallant Frith the eye might note,
 Whose islands on its bosom float,
 Like emeralds chased in gold.
 Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
 As if to give his rapture vent,
 The spur he to his charger lent,
 And raised his bridle hand,
 And, making demi-volte in air,
 Cried, " Where's the coward that would not dare
 To fight for such a land!"
 The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
 Nor Marmion's frown repress'd his glee.

XXXI.

Thus while they look'd, a flourish proud,
 Where mingled trump, and clarion loud,
 And fife, and kettle-drum,
 And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
 And war-pipe with discordant cry,
 And cymbal clattering to the sky,
 Making wild music bold and high,
 Did up the mountain come;
 The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
 Merrily toll'd the hour of prime,
 And thus the Lindesay spoke:
 " Thus clamour still the war-notes when
 The King to mass his way has ta'en,
 Or to St Katharine's of Sienne,
 Or Chapel of Saint Rocque.
 To you they speak of martial fame;
 But me remind of peaceful game,
 When blither was their cheer,
 Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
 In signal none his steed should spare,
 But strive which foremost might repair
 To the downfall of the deer.

XXXII.

" Nor less," he said,—“ when looking forth,
 I view yon Empress of the North
 Sit on her hilly throne;
 Her palace's imperial bowers,
 Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
 Her stately halls and holy towers—
 Nor less," he said, " I moan,
 To think what woe mischance may bring,
 And how these merry bells may ring
 The death-dirge of our gallant King;

Or with the larum call
 The burghers forth to watch and ward,
 'Gainst Southern sack and fires to guard
 Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
 But not for my presaging thought,
 Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
 Lord Marmion, I say nay:
 God is the guider of the field,
 He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
 But thou thyself shalt say,
 When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
 That England's dames must weep in howr,
 Her monks the death-mass sing;
 For never saw'st thou such a power
 Led on by such a King.”—
 And now, down winding to the plain,
 The barriers of the camp they gain,
 And there they made a stay.—
 There stays the Minstrel, till he fling
 His hand o'er every Border string,
 And fit his harp, the pomp to sing
 Of Scotland's ancient Court and King,
 In the succeeding lay.

 INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIFTH.

TO GEORGE ELLIS, ESQ.

Edinburgh

WHEN dark December glooms the day,
 And takes our autumn joys away;
 When short and scant the sunbeam throws,
 Upon the weary waste of snows,
 A cold and profitless regard,
 Like patron on a needy bard;
 When silvan occupation's done,
 And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
 And hang, in idle trophy, near,
 The game-pouch, fishing-rod, and spear;
 When wiry terrier, rough and grim,
 And greyhound, with his length of limb,
 And pointer, now employ'd no more,
 Cumber our parlour's narrow floor;
 When in his stall the impatient steed
 Is long condemn'd to rest and feed;
 When from our snow-encircled home,
 Scarce cares the hardest step to roam.

Since path is none, save that to bring
 The needful water from the spring;
 When wrinkled news-page, thrice conn'd o'er,
 Beguiles the dreary hour no more,
 And darkling politician, cross'd,
 Inveighs against the lingering post,
 And answering housewife sore complains
 Of carriers' snow-impeded wains;—
 When such the country cheer, I come,
 Well pleased, to seek our city home;
 For converse, and for books, to change
 The Forest's melancholy range,
 And welcome, with renew'd delight,
 The busy day and social night.

Not here need my desponding rhyme
 Lament the ravages of time,
 As erst by Newark's riven towers,
 And Ettrick stripp'd of forest bowers.
 True,—Caledonia's Queen is changed,
 Since on her dusky summit ranged,
 Within its steepy limits pent,
 By bulwark, line, and battlement,
 And flanking towers, and laky flood,
 Guarded and garrison'd she stood,
 Denying entrance or resort,
 Save at each tall embattled port;
 Above whose arch, suspended, hung
 Portcullis spiked with iron prong.
 That long is gone,—but not so long,
 Since, early closed, and opening late,
 Jealous revolved the studded gate,
 Whose task, from eve to morning tide,
 A wicket churlishly supplied.
 Stern then, and steel-girt was thy brow,
 Dun-Edin! O, how alter'd now,
 When safe amid thy mountain court
 Thou sitt'st, like Empress at her sport,
 And liberal, unconfined, and free,
 Flinging thy white arms to the sea,
 For thy dark cloud, with umber'd lower,
 That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and tower,
 Thou gleam'st against the western ray
 Ten thousand lines of brighter day.

Not she, the Championess of old,
 In Spenser's magic tale enroll'd,—
 She for the charmed spear renown'd,
 Which forced each knight to kiss the ground,—
 Not she more changed, when, placed at rest,
 What time she was Malbecco's guest,
 She gave to flow her maiden vest;
 When from the corselet's grasp relieved,
 Free to the sight her bosom heaved;

Sweet was her blue eye's modest smile,
 Erst hidden by the aventayle ;
 And down her shoulders graceful roll'd
 Her locks profuse, of paly gold.
 They who whilom, in midnight fight,
 Had marvell'd at her matchless might,
 No less her maiden charms approved,
 But looking liked, and liking loved.
 The sight could jealous pangs beguile,
 And charm Malbecco's cares a while ;
 And he, the wandering Squire of Dames,
 Forgot his Columbella's claims,
 And passion, erst unknown, could gain
 The breast of blunt Sir Satyrane ;
 Nor durst light Paridel advance,
 Bold as he was, a looser glance.
 She charm'd, at once, and tamed the heart,
 Incomparable Britomarte !

So thou, fair City ! disarray'd
 Of battled wall, and rampart's aid,
 As stately seem'st, but lovelier far
 Than in that panoply of war.
 Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
 Strength and security are flown ;
 Still, as of yore, Queen of the North !
 Still canst thou send thy children forth.
 Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
 Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
 Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
 Thy dauntless voluntary line ;
 For fosse and turret proud to stand,
 Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
 Thy thousands, train'd to martial toil,
 Full red would stain their native soil,
 Ere from thy mural crown there fell
 The slightest knosp, or pinnacle.
 And if it come,—as come it may,
 Dun-Edin ! that eventful day,—
 Renown'd for hospitable deed,
 That virtue much with Heaven may plead.
 In patriarchal times whose care
 Descending angels deign'd to share ;
 That claim may wrestle blessings down
 On those who fight for The Good Town,
 Destined in every age to be
 Refuge of injured royalty ;
 Since first, when conquering York arose,
 To Henry meek she gave repose,
 Till late, with wonder, grief, and awe,
 Great Bourbon's relics, sad she saw.

Truce to these thoughts !—for, as they rise,
 How gladly I avert mine eyes,

Bodings, or true or false, to change,
 For Fiction's fair romantic range,
 Or for tradition's dubious light,
 That hovers 'twixt the day and night :
 Dazzling alternately and dim,
 Her wavering lamp I'd rather trim,
 Knights, squires, and lovely dames to see,
 Creation of my fantasy,
 Than gaze abroad on reeky fen,
 And make of mists invading men.
 Who loves not more the night of June
 Than dull December's gloomy noon ;
 The moonlight than the fog of frost ?
 And can we say, which cheats the most ?

But who shall teach my harp to gain
 A sound of the romantic strain,
 Whose Anglo-Norman tones whilere
 Could win the royal Henry's ear,
 Famed Beauclerc call'd, for that he loved
 The Minstrel, and his lay approved ?
 Who shall these lingering notes redeem,
 Decaying on Oblivion's stream ;
 Such notes as from the Breton tongue
 Marie translated, Blondel sung ?—
 O! born, Time's ravage to repair,
 And make the dying Muse thy care ;
 Who, when his scythe her hoary foe
 Was poisoning for the final blow,
 The weapon from his hand could wring,
 And break his glass, and shear his wing,
 And bid, reviving in his strain,
 The gentle poet live again ;
 Thou, who canst give to lightest lay
 An unpedantic moral gay,
 Nor less the dullest theme bid flit
 On wings of unexpected wit ;
 In letters as in life approved,
 Example honour'd, and beloved,—
 Dear ELLIS ! to the Bard impart
 A lesson of thy magic art,
 To win at once the head and heart,—
 At once to charm, instruct, and mend,
 My guide, my pattern, and my friend !

Such minstrel lesson to bestow
 Be long thy pleasing task,—but O !
 No more by thy example teach,
 —What few can practise, all can preach—
 With even patience to endure
 Lingering disease, and painful cure,
 And boast affliction's pangs subdued
 By mild and manly fortitude.
 Enough, the lesson has been given :
 Forbid the repetition, Heaven !

Come listen, then ! for thou hast known,
 And loved the Minstrel's varying tone,
 Who, like his Border sires of old,
 Waked a wild measure rude and bold,
 Till Windsor's oaks, and Ascot plain,
 With wonder heard the Northern strain.
 Come listen ! bold in thy applause,
 The Bard shall scorn pedantic laws ;
 And, as the ancient art could stain
 Achievements on the storied pane,
 Irregularly traced and plann'd,
 But yet so glowing and so grand,—
 So shall he strive, in changeful hue,
 Field, feast, and combat, to renew,
 And loves, and arms, and harpers' glee,
 And all the pomp of chivalry.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE COURT.

L.

THE train has left the hills of Braid ;
 The barrier guard have open made
 (So Lindesay bade) the palisade,
 That closed the tented ground ;
 Their men the warders backward drew,
 And carried pikes as they rode through,
 Into its ample bound.
 Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,
 Upon the Southern band to stare :
 And envy with their wonder rose,
 To see such well-appointed foes ;
 Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,
 So huge, that many simply thought,
 But for a vaunt such weapons wrought ;
 And little deem'd their force to feel,
 Through links of mail, and plates of steel,
 When rattling upon Flodden vale,
 The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.

II.

Nor less did Marmion's skilful view
 Glance every line and squadron through ;
 And much he marvell'd one small land
 Could marshal forth such various band ;
 For men-at-arms were here,
 Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,
 Like iron towers for strength and weight,
 On Flemish steeds of bone and height,
 With battle-axe and spear.

Young knights and squires, a lighter train,
Practised their chargers on the plain.
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,

Each warlike feat to show,
To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,
And high curvett, that not in vain
The sword sway might descend amain
On foeman's casque below.

He saw the hardy burghers there
March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,
For vizor they wore none,
Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;
But burnish'd were their corslets bright,
Their brigantines, and gorgets light,
Like very silver shone.

Long pikes they had for standing fight,
Two-handed swords they wore,
And many wielded mace of weight,
And bucklers bright they bore.

III.

On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,
With iron quilted well;
Each at his back (a slender store)
His forty days' provision bore,
As feudal statutes tell;
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear
A crossbow there, a hagbut here,
A dagger-knife, and brand.
Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,
As loth to leave his cottage dear,
And march to foreign strand;
Or musing who would guide his steer,
To till the fallow land.
Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye
Did aught of dastard terror lie;
More dreadful far his ire,
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name.
In eager mood to battle came,
Their valour like light straw on flame,
A fierce but fading fire.

IV

Not so the Borderer:—bred to war,
He new the battle's din afar,
And joy'd to hear it swell.
His peaceful day was slothful ease;
Nor harp nor pipe his ear could please
Like the loud stogan yell.
On active steed, with lance and blade,
The light-arm'd pricker plied his trade,—
Let nobles fight for fame;
Let vassals follow where they lead,
Burghers to guard their townships bleed,
But war's the Borderer's game.

Their gain, their glory, their delight,
 To sleep the day, maraud the night,
 O'er mountain, moss, and moor ;
 Joyful to fight they took their way,
 Scarce caring who might win the day,
 Their booty was secure.

These, as Lord Marmion's train pass'd by,
 Look'd on at first with careless eye,
 Nor marvell'd aught, well taught to know
 The form and force of English bow.
 But when they saw the Lord array'd
 In splendid arms and rich brocade,
 Each Borderer to his kinsman said,—

“ Hist, Ringan ! seest thou there !
 Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride ?—
 O ! could we but on Border side,
 By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,
 Beset a prize so fair !
 That fangless Lion, too, their guide,
 Might chance to lose his glistering hide ;
 Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,
 Could make a kirtle rare.”

v.

Next, Marmion mark'd the Celtic race,
 Of different language, form, and face,
 A various race of man ;
 Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,
 And wild and garish semblance made,
 The chequer'd trews, and belted plaid,
 And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd,
 To every varying clan ;
 Wild through their red or sable hair
 Look'd out their eyes with savage stare,
 On Marmion as he pass'd ;
 Their legs above the knee were bare ;
 Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,
 And harden'd to the blast ;
 Of taller race, the Chiefs they own
 Were by the eagle's plumage known.
 The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide
 Their hairy buskins well supplied ;
 The graceful bonnet deck'd their head ;
 Back from their shoulders hung the plaid ;
 A broadsword of unwieldy length,
 A dagger proved for edge and strength,
 A studded targe they wore,
 And quivers, bows, and shafts,—but, O !
 Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,
 To that which England bore.
 The Isles-men carried at their backs
 The ancient Danish battle-axe.
 They raised a wild and wondering cry,
 As with his guide rode Marmion by.

Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when
 The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,
 And, with their cries discordant mix'd,
 Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.

VI.

Thus through the Scottish camp they pass'd,
 And reach'd the City gate at last,
 Where all around, a wakeful guard,
 Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.
 Well had they cause of jealous fear,
 When lay encamp'd, in field so near,
 The Borderer and the Mountaineer.
 As through the bustling streets they go,
 All was alive with martial show :
 At every turn, with dinning clang,
 The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang ;
 Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel
 The bar that arms the charger's heel ;
 Or axe, or falchion, to the side
 Of jarring grindstone was applied.
 Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace,
 Through street, and lane, and market-place,
 Bore lance, or casque, or sword ;
 While burghers, with important face,
 Described each new-come lord,
 Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,
 His following, and his warlike fame.
 The Lion led to lodging meet,
 Which high o'erlook'd the crowded street ;
 There must the Baron rest,
 Till past the hour of vesper tide,
 And then to Holy-Rood must ride,—
 Such was the King's behest.
 Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns
 A banquet rich, and costly wines,
 To Marmion and his train ;
 And when the appointed hour succeeds,
 The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,
 And following Lindesay as he leads,
 The palace-halls they gain.

VII.

Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,
 That night, with wassel, mirth, and glee ;
 King James within her princely bower,
 Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's power,
 Summon'd to spend the parting hour ;
 For he had charged, that his array
 Should southward march by break of day.
 Well loved that splendid Monarch aye
 The banquet and the song ;
 By day the tourney, and by night
 The merry dance, traced fast and light,
 The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,
 The revel loud and long.

This feast outshone his banquets past,
 It was his blithest—and his last.
 The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,
 Cast on the Court a dancing ray.
 Here to the harp did minstrels sing ;
 There ladies touch'd a softer string ;
 With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,
 The licensed fool retail'd his jest ;
 His magic tricks the juggler plied ;
 At dice and draughts the gallants vied :
 While some, in close recess apart,
 Courted the ladies of their heart,
 Nor courted them in vain ;
 For often, in the parting hour,
 Victorious Love asserts his power
 O'er coldness and disdain ;
 And flinty is her heart, can view
 To battle march a lover true—
 Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,
 Nor own her share of pain.

VIII.

Through this mix'd crowd of glee and game,
 The King to greet Lord Marmion came,
 While, reverent, all made room.
 An easy task it was, I trow,
 King James's manly form to know.
 Although, his courtesy to show,
 He doff'd, to Marmion bending low,
 His broider'd cap and plume.
 For royal was his garb and mien,
 His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,
 Trimm'd with the fur of martin wild ;
 His vest of changeful satin sheen,
 The dazzled eye beguiled ;
 His gorgeous collar hung adown,
 Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown.
 The thistle brave, of old renown :
 His trusty blade, Toledo right,
 Descended from a baldrick bright ;
 White were his buskins ; on the heel
 His spurs inlaid of gold and steel ;
 His bonnet, all of crimson fair,
 Was button'd with a ruby rare :
 And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen
 A prince of such a noble mien.

IX.

The Monarch's form was middle size ;
 For feat of strength, or exercise,
 Shaped in proportion fair ;
 And hazel was his eagle eye,
 And auburn of the darkest dye,
 His short curl'd beard and hair.

Light was his footstep in the dance,
 And firm his stirrup in the lists;
 And, oh! he had that merry glance,
 That seldom lady's heart resists.
 Lightly from fair to fair he flew,
 And loved to plead, lament, and sue;—
 Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain,
 For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.

I said he joy'd in banquet bower;
 But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,
 How suddenly his cheer would change,

His look o'ercast and lower,
 If, in a sudden turn, he felt
 The pressure of his iron belt,
 That bound his breast in penance pain,
 In memory of his father slain.

Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,
 Soon as the passing pang was o'er,
 Forward he rush'd, with double glee,
 Into the stream of revelry:

Thus, dim-seen object of affright
 Startles the courser in his flight,
 And half he halts, half springs aside;
 But feels the quickening spur applied,
 And, straining on the tighten'd rein,
 Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.

x.

O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,
 Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:

To Scotland's Court she came,
 To be a hostage for her lord,
 Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored.
 And with the King to make accord,

Had sent his lovely dame.
 Nor to that lady free alone
 Did the gay King allegiance own;

For the fair Queen of France
 Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
 And charged him, as her knight and love.

For her to break a lance;
 And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
 And march three miles on Southron land,
 And bid the banners of his band

In English breezes dance.
 And thus, for France's Queen he drest
 His manly limbs in mailed vest;
 And thus admitted English fair
 His inmost counsels still to share;

And thus, for both, he madly plann'd
 The ruin of himself and land!

And yet, the sooth to tell,
 Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,
 Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,
 From Margaret's eyes that fell,—

His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's bower,
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.

XI.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day,
The war against her native soil,
Her Monarch's risk in battle broil:—
And in gay Holy-Bood, the while,
Dame Heron rises with a smile,
Upon the harp to play.
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er
The strings her fingers flew;
And as she touch'd and tuned them all,
Ever her bosom's rise and fall
Was plainer given to view;
For, all for heat, was laid aside
Her wimple, and her hood untied.
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,
And then around the silent ring;
And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say
Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,
She could not, would not, durst not play!
At length, upon the harp, with glee,
Mingled with arch simplicity,
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,
While thus the wily lady sung;—

XII.

LOCHINVAR.

Lady Heron's Song.

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stay'd not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,
The bride had consented, the gallant came late;
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,
"O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"—

"I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;—
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—

And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,—
"Now tread we a measure!" said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "'Twere better by far,
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar."

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
"She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow," quoth young Lochinvar.

There was mounting 'mong Græmes of the Netherby clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran;
There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

XIII.

The Monarch o'er the siren hung,
And beat the measure as she sung;
And, pressing closer, and more near,
He whisper'd praises in her ear.
In loud applause the courtiers vied;
And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside.
The witching dame to Marmion threw
A glance, where seem'd to reign
The pride that claims applauses due,
And of her royal conquest too,
A real or feign'd disdain:
Familiar was the look, and told,
Marmion and she were friends of old.
The King observed their meeting eyes,
With something like displeas'd surprise;
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,
Even in a word, or smile, or look.
Straight took he forth the parchment broad,
Which Marmion's high commission show'd:—
"Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,
Our peaceful liege-men robb'd," he said;
"On day of truce our Warden slain,
Stout Barton kill'd, his vassals ta'en—

Unworthy were we here to reign,
Should these for vengeance cry in vain :
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,
Our herald has to Henry borne."

XIV.

He paused, and led where Douglas stood,
And with stern eye the pageant view'd :
I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,
Who coronet of Angus bore,
And, when his blood and heart were high,
Did the third James in camp defy,
And all his minions led to die
On Lauder's dreary flat :
Princes and favourites long grew tame,
And trembled at the homely name
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat ;
The same who left the dusky vale
Of Hermitage in Liddesdale,
Its dungeons and its towers,
Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,
To fix his princely bowers.
Though now, in age, he had laid down
His armour for the peaceful gown,
And for a staff his brand,
Yet often would flash forth the fire,
That could, in youth, a monarch's ire
And minion's pride withstand ;
And even that day, at council board,
Unapt to soothe his Sovereign's mood,
Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.

XV.

His giant form, like ruin'd tower,
Though fallen its muscles' brawny vaunt,
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,
Seem'd o'er the gaudy scene to lower :
His locks and beard in silver grew ;
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,
His bitter speech he thus pursued :
" Lord Marmion, since these letters say,
That in the North you needs must stay,
While slightest hopes of peace remain,
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,
To say—Return to Lindisfarne,
Until my herald come again.
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold ;
Your host shall be the Douglas bold,—
A chief unlike his sires of old.
He wears their motto on his blade,
Their blazon o'er his towers display'd ;

Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,
 More than to face his country's foes.
 And, I bethink me, by St Stephen,
 But e'en this morn to me was given
 A prize, the first fruits of the war,
 Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,
 A bevy of the maids of Heaven.
 Under your guard, these holy maids
 Shall safe return to cloister shades,
 And, while they at Tantallon stay,
 Requiem for Cochran's soul may say.
 And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,
 Across the Monarch's brow there came
 A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.

XVI.

In answer nought could Angus speak;
 His proud heart swell'd well-nigh to break :
 He turn'd aside, and down his cheek
 A burning tear there stole.
 His hand the Monarch sudden took,
 That sight his kind heart could not brook :
 " Now, by the Bruce's soul,
 Angus, my hasty speech forgive!
 For sure as doth his spirit live,
 As he said of the Douglas old,
 I well may say of you,—
 That never king did subject hold,
 In speech more free, in war more bold,
 More tender and more true:
 Forgive me, Douglas, once again."—
 And, while the King his hand did strain,
 The old man's tears fell down like rain.
 To seize the moment Marmion tried,
 And whisper'd to the King aside :
 " Oh ! let such tears unwonted plead
 For respite short from dubious deed !
 A child will weep a bramble's smart,
 A maid to see her sparrow part,
 A stripling for a woman's heart :
 But woe awaits a country, when
 She sees the tears of bearded men.
 Then, oh ! what omen, dark and high,
 When Douglas wets his manly eye !"

XVII.

Displeas'd was James, that stranger view'd
 And tamper'd with his changing mood.
 " Laugh those that can, weep those that may,"
 Thus did the fiery Monarch say,
 " Southward I march by break of day ;
 And if within Tantallon strong,
 The good Lord Marmion tarries long,
 Perchance our meeting next may fall
 At Tamworth, in his castle-hall."—

The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,
 And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt :
 " Much honour'd were my humble home,
 If in its halls King James should come ;
 But Nottingham has archers good,
 And Yorkshire men are stern of mood ;
 Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.
 On Derby Hills the paths are steep ;
 In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep ;
 And many a banner will be torn,
 And many a knight to earth be borne,
 And many a sheaf of arrows spent,
 Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent :
 Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may !"
 The Monarch lightly turn'd away,
 And to his nobles loud did call,—
 " Lords, to the dance,—a hall ! a hall !"
 Himself his cloak and sword flung by,
 And led Dame Heron gallantly ;
 And minstrels, at the royal order,
 Rung out—" Blue Bonnets o'er the Border

XVIII.

Leave we these revels now, to tell
 What to Saint Hilda's maids befell,
 Whose galley, as they sail'd again
 To Whitby, by a Scot was ta'en.
 Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,
 Till James should of their fate decide ;
 And soon, by his command,
 Were gently summon'd to prepare
 To journey under Marmion's care,
 As escort honour'd, safe, and fair,
 Again to English land.
 The Abbess told her chaplet o'er,
 Nor knew which saint she should implore ;
 For, when she thought of Constance, sore
 She fear'd Lord Marmion's mood.
 And judge what Clara must have felt !
 The sword, that hung in Marmion's belt,
 Had drunk De Wilton's blood.
 Unwittingly, King James had given,
 As guard to Whitby's shades,
 The man most dreaded under Heaven
 By these defenceless maids :
 Yet what petition could avail,
 Or who would listen to the tale
 Of woman, prisoner, and nun,
 'Mid bustle of a war begun ?
 They deem'd it hopeless to avoid
 The convoy of their dangerous guide.

XIX.

Their lodging, so the King assign'd,
 To Marmion's, as their guardian, join'd :

* The ancient cry to make room for a dance, or pageant.

And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,
 The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,
 Who warn'd him by a scroll,
 She had a secret to reveal,
 That much concern'd the Church's weal,
 And health of sinner's soul ;
 And, with deep charge of secrecy,
 She named a place to meet,
 Within an open balcony,
 That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,
 Above the stately street ;
 To which, as common to each home,
 At night they might in secret come.

xx.

At night, in secret, there they came,
 The Palmer and the holy Dame.
 The moon among the clouds rose high,
 And all the city hum was by.
 Upon the street, where late before
 Did din of war and warriors roar,
 You might have heard a pebble fall,
 A beetle hum, a cricket sing,
 An owlet flap his boding wing
 On Giles's steeple tall.
 The antique buildings, climbing high,
 Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,
 Were here wrapt deep in shade :
 There on their brows the moonbeam broke,
 Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,
 And on the casements play'd.
 And other light was none to see,
 Save torches gliding far
 Before some chieftain of degree,
 Who left the royal revelry
 To bowne him for the war.—
 A solemn scene the Abbess chose—
 A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.

xxi.

“ Oh, holy Palmer !” she began,—
 “ For sure he must be sainted man,
 Whose blessed feet have trod the ground
 Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,—
 For his dear Church's sake, my tale
 Attend, nor deem of light avail,
 Though I must speak of worldly love,—
 How vain to those who wed above !—
 De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd
 Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood ;
 (Idle it were of Whitby's Dame,
 To say of that same blood I came ;)
 And once, when jealous rage was high,
 Lord Marmion said despiteously,
 Wilton was traitor in his heart,
 And had made league with Martin Swart.

When he came here on Simnel's part ;
 And only cowardice did restrain
 His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,—
 And down he through his glove :—the thing
 Was tried, as wont, before the King ;
 Where frankly did De Wilton own,
 That Swart in Gueldres he had known ;
 And that between them then there went
 Some scroll of courteous compliment.
 For this he to his castle sent ;
 But when his messenger return'd,
 Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd !
 For in his packet there was laid
 Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,
 And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.
 His fame, thus blighted, in the field
 He strove to clear, by spear and shield ;—
 To clear his fame in vain he strove,
 For wondrous are His ways above !
 Perchance some form was unobserved ;
 Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved ;
 Else how could guiltless champion quail,
 Or how the blessed ordeal fail ?

XXII.

“ His squire, who now De Wilton saw
 As recreant doom'd to suffer law,
 Repentant, own'd in vain,
 That, while he had the scrolls in care,
 A stranger maiden, passing fair,
 Had drench'd him with a beverage rare ;
 His words no faith could gain.
 With Clare alone he credence won,
 Who, rather than wed Marmion,
 Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,
 To give our house her livings fair,
 And die a vestal vot'ress there.
 The impulse from the earth was given,
 But bent her to the paths of heaven.
 A purer heart, a lovelier maid,
 Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,
 No, not since Saxon Edelfied ;
 Only one trace of earthly stain,
 That for her lover's loss
 She cherishes a sorrow vain,
 And murmurs at the cross.—
 And then her heritage ;—it goes
 Along the banks of Tame ;
 Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,
 In meadows rich the heifer lows,
 The falconer and huntsman knows
 Its woodlands for the game.
 Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,
 And I, her humble vot'ress here,

Should do a deadly sin,
 Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,
 If this false Marmion such a prize
 By my consent should win ;
 Yet hath our boisterous Monarch sworn
 That Clare shall from our house be torn ;
 And grievous cause have I to fear,
 Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.

XXIII.

“ Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd
 To evil power, I claim thine aid,
 By every step that thou hast trod
 To holy shrine and grotto dim,
 By every martyr's tortured limb,
 By angel, saint, and seraphim,
 And by the Church of God !
 For mark :—When Wilton was betray'd,
 And with his squire forged letters laid,
 She was,—alas ! that sinful maid
 By whom the deed was done,—
 O ! shame and horror to be said !—
 She was a perjured nun !
 No clerk in all the land, like her,
 Traced quaint and varying character.
 Perchance you may a marvel deem,
 That Marmion's paramour
 (For such vile thing she was) should scheme
 Her lover's nuptial hour ;
 But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,
 As privy to his honour's stain,
 Illimitable power :
 For this she secretly retain'd
 Each proof that might the plot reveal.
 Instructions with his hand and seal ;
 And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,
 Through sinners' perfidy impure,
 Her house's glory to secure,
 And Clare's immortal weal.

XXIV.

“ 'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,
 How to my hand these papers fell ;
 With me they must not stay.
 Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true !
 Who knows what outrage he might do,
 While journeying by the way !—
 O blessed Saint, if e'er again
 I venturous leave thy calm domain,
 To travel or by land or main,
 Deep penance may I pay !—
 Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer
 I give this packet to thy care,
 For thee to stop they will not dare :

And oh, with cautious speed,
 To Wolsey's hand the papers bring,
 That he may show them to the King :
 And, for thy well-earn'd meed,
 Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine
 A weekly mass shall still be thine,
 While priests can sing and read. —
 What ail'st thou ?—Speak !"—For as he took
 The charge, a strong emotion shook
 His frame ; and, ere reply,
 They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,
 Like distant clarion feebly blown,
 That on the breeze did die ;
 And loud the Abbess shriek'd in fear,
 " Saint Withold, save us !—What is here !
 Look at yon City Cross !
 See on its battled tower appear
 Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear.
 And blazon'd banners toss !"—

XXV.

Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone.
 Rose on a turret octagon ;
 (But now is razed that monument,
 Whence royal edict rang,
 And voice of Scotland's law was sent
 In glorious trumpet-clang.
 O ! be his tomb as lead to lead,
 Upon its dull destroyer's head !—
 A minstrel's malison is said.)—
 Then on its battlements they saw
 A vision, passing Nature's law,
 Strange, wild, and dimly seen ;
 Figures that seem'd to rise and die,
 Gibber and sign, advance and fly,
 While nought confirm'd could ear or eye
 Discern of sound or mien.
 Yet darkly did it seem, as there
 Heralds and pursuivants prepare,
 With trumpet sound and blazon fair,
 A summons to proclaim :
 But indistinct the pageant proud,
 As fancy forms of midnight cloud,
 When fings the moon upon her shroud
 A wavering tinge of flame ;
 It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,
 From midmost of the spectre crowd,
 This awful summons came :—

XXVI.

" Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer
 Whose names I now shall call,
 Scottish, or foreigner, give ear ;
 Subjects of him who sent me here,
 At his tribunal to appear,
 I summon one and all :

I cite you by each deadly sin,
That e'er hath soil'd your hearts within :
I cite you by each brutal lust,
That e'er defiled your earthly dust,—

By wrath, by pride, by fear,
By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,
By the dark grave, and dying groan !
When forty days are pass'd and gone,
I cite you, at your Monarch's throne,
To answer and appear."

Then thunder'd forth a roll of names :
The first was thine, unhappy James !

Then all thy nobles came ;
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,—
Why should I tell their separate style ?

Each chief of birth and fame,
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,
Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage pile,
Was cited there by name ;

And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scriverbaye ;
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,
The self-same thundering voice did say.—

But then another spoke :
" Thy fatal summons I deny,
And thine infernal Lord defy,
Appealing me to Him on High,
Who burst the sinner's yoke."

At that dread accent, with a scream,
Parted the pageant like a dream,
The summoner was gone.

Prone on her face the Abbess fell,
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell ;
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,
And found her there alone.

She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,
What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.

XXVII.

Shift we the scene.—The camp doth move,

Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,
Save when, for weal of those they love,
To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,
The tottering child, the anxious fair,
The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,
To chapels and to shrines repair—
Where is the Palmer now ? and where
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare ?—
Bold Douglas ! to Tantallon fair

They journey in thy charge :
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,
The Palmer still was with the band ;
Angus, like Lindesay, did command.
That none should roam at large.

But in that Palmer's alter'd mien
 A wondrous change might now be seen ;
 Freely he spoke of war,
 Of marvels wrought by single hand,
 When lifted for a native land :
 And still look'd high, as if he plann'd
 Some desperate deed afar.
 His courser would he feed and stroke,
 And, tucking up his sable frocke,
 Would first his mettle bold provoke.
 Then soothe or quell his pride.
 Old Hubert said, that never one
 He saw, except Lord Marmion,
 A steed so fairly ride.

XXVIII.

Some half-hour's march behind, there came,
 By Eustace govern'd fair,
 A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,
 With all her nuns, and Clare.
 No audience had Lord Marmion sought ;
 Ever he fear'd to aggravate
 Clara de Clare's suspicious hate ;
 And safer 't was, he thought,
 To wait till, from the nuns removed,
 The influence of kinsmen loved,
 And suit by Henry's self approved,
 Her slow consent had wrought.
 His was no flickering flame, that dies
 Unless when fann'd by looks and sighs,
 And lighted oft at lady's eyes ;
 He long'd to stretch his wide command
 O'er luckless Clara's ample land :
 Besides, when Wilton with him vied,
 Although the pang of humbled pride
 The place of jealousy supplied,
 Yet conquest, by that meanness won
 He almost loathed to think upon,
 Led him, at times, to hate the cause
 Which made him burst through honour's laws,
 If e'er he loved, 't was her alone,
 Who died within that vault of stone.

XXIX.

And now, when close at hand they saw
 North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,
 Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while,
 Before a venerable pile,
 Whose turrets view'd, afar,
 The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,
 The ocean's peace or war.
 At tolling of a bell, forth came
 The convent's venerable Dame,
 And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest
 With her, a loved and honour'd guest,

Till Douglas should a bark prepare
 To waft her back to Whitby fair.
 Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,
 And thank'd the Scottish Prioress ;
 And tedious were to tell, I ween,
 The courteous speech that pass'd between.
 O'erjoy'd, the nuns their palfreys leave ;
 But when fair Clara did intend,
 Like them, from horseback to descend,
 Fitz-Eustace said,—“ I grieve,
 Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,
 Such gentle company to part ;—
 Think not discourtesy,
 But lords' commands must be obey'd ;
 And Marmion and the Douglas said,
 That you must wend with me.
 Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,
 Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,
 Commanding, that, beneath his care,
 Without delay, you shall repair
 To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.”

xxx.

The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd ;
 But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,
 Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,—
 She deem'd she heard her death-doom read.
 “ Cheer thee, my child ! ” the Abbess said,
 “ They dare not tear thee from my hand,
 To ride alone with armed band.”—
 “ Nay, holy mother, nay,”
 Fitz-Eustace said, “ the lovely Clare
 Will be in Lady Angus' care,
 In Scotland while we stay ;
 And, when we move, an easy ride
 Will bring us to the English side,
 Female attendance to provide
 Befitting Gloster's heir ;
 Nor thinks nor dreams my noble lord,
 By slightest look, or act, or word,
 To harass Lady Clare ;
 Her faithful guardian he will be,
 Nor sue for slightest courtesy
 That e'en to stranger fails,
 Till he shall place her, safe and free,
 Within her kinsman's halls.”
 He spoke, and blush'd with earnest grace ;
 His faith was painted on his face,
 And Clare's worst fear relieved.
 The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd
 On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,
 Entreated, threaten'd, grieved ;
 To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd
 Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,
 And call'd the Prioress to aid.

To curse with candle, bell, and book.
 Her head the grave Cistercian shook :
 "The Douglas, and the King," she said,
 "In their commands will be obey'd ;
 Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall
 The maiden in Tantallon hall."

XXXI.

The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,
 Assumed her wonted state again,—
 For much of state she had,—
 Composed her veil, and raised her head,
 And—"Bid," in solemn voice she said,
 "Thy master, bold and bad,
 The records of his house turn o'er,
 And, when he shall there written see,
 That one of his own ancestry
 Drove the Monks forth of Coventry,
 Bid him his fate explore !
 Prancing in pride of earthly trust,
 His charger hurl'd him to the dust,
 And, by a base plebeian thrust,
 He died his band before.
 God judge 'twixt Marmion and me :
 He is a Chief of high degree,
 And I a poor recluse :
 Yet oft, in holy writ, we see
 Even such weak minister as me
 May the oppressor bruise :
 For thus, inspired, did Judith slay
 The mighty in his sin,
 And Jael thus, and Deborah"—
 Here hasty Blount broke in :
 "Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band :
 St Anton' fire thee ! wilt thou stand
 All day, with bonnet in thy hand,
 To hear the Lady preach ?
 By this good light ! if thus we stay,
 Lord Marmion for our fond delay,
 Will sharper sermon teach.
 Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse
 The Dame must patience take perforce."

XXXII.

"Submit we then to force," said Clare,
 "But let this barbarous lord despair
 His purposed aim to win ;
 Let him take living, land, and life ;
 But to be Marmion's wedded wife
 In me were deadly sin :
 And if it be the King's decree,
 That I must find no sanctuary,
 In that inviolable dome,
 Where even a homicide might come,

And safely rest his head,
 Though at its open portals stood,
 Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,
 The kinsmen of the dead :
 Yet one asylum is my own
 Against the dreaded hour ;
 A low, a silent, and a lone,
 Where kings have little power.
 One victim is before me there.—
 Mother, your blessing, and in prayer
 Remember your unhappy Clare !
 Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows
 Kind blessings many a one :
 Weeping and wailing loud arose,
 Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes
 Of every simple nun.
 His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,
 And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.
 Then took the squire her rein,
 And gently led away her steed,
 And, by each courteous word and deed,
 To cheer her strove in vain.

XXXIII.

But scant three miles the band had rode,
 When o'er a height they pass'd,
 And, sudden, close before them show'd
 His towers, Tantallon vast ;
 Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
 And held impregnable in war,
 On a projecting rock they rose,
 And round three sides the ocean flows,
 The fourth did battled walls enclose,
 And double mound and fosse.
 By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,
 Through studded gates, an entrance long,
 To the main court they cross.
 It was a wide and stately square :
 Around were lodgings, fit and fair,
 And towers of various form,
 Which on the court projected far,
 And broke its lines quadrangular.
 Here was square keep, there turret high,
 Or pinnacle that sought the sky,
 Whence oft the Warder could desory
 The gathering ocean-storm.

XXXIV.

Here did they rest.—The princely care
 Of Douglas, why should I declare,
 Or say they met reception fair ?
 Or why the tidings say,
 Which, varying, to Tantallon came,
 By hurrying posts or fleeter fame,
 With every varying day !

And, first, they heard King James had won
 Etall, and Wark, and Ford ; and then,
 That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.
 At that sore marvell'd Marmion ;—
 And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand
 Would soon subdue Northumberland :
 But whisper'd news there came,
 That, while his host inactive lay,
 And melted by degrees away,
 King James was dallying off the day
 With Heron's wily dame.—
 Such acts to chronicles I yield ;
 Go seek them there and see :
 Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,
 And not a history.—
 At length they heard the Scottish host
 On that high ridge had made their post,
 Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain ;
 And that brave Surrey many a band
 Had gather'd in the Southern land,
 And march'd into Northumberland,
 And camp at Wooler ta'en.
 Marmion, like charger in the stall,
 That hears, without, the trumpet-call,
 Began to chafe, and swear :—
 " A sorry thing to hide my head
 In castle, like a fearful maid,
 When such a field is near !
 Needs must I see this battle-day :
 Death to my fame if such a fray
 Were fought, and Marmion away !
 The Douglas, too, I wot not why,
 Hath 'bated of his courtesy :
 No longer in his halls I'll stay."
 Then bade his band they should array
 For march against the dawning day.

 INTRODUCTION TO CANTO SIXTH.

TO RICHARD HEBER, ESQ.

Mertoun House, Christmas

HEAR on more wood !—the wind is chill ;
 But let it whistle as it will,
 We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
 Each age has deem'd the new-born year
 The fittest time for festal cheer :
 Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane
 At Iol more deep the mead did drain ;

High on the beach his galleys drew,
 And feasted all his pirate crew ;
 Then in his low and pine-built hall,
 Where shields and axes deck'd the wall,
 They gorged upon the half-dress'd steer,
 Caroused in seas of sable beer ;
 While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
 The half-gnaw'd rib, and marrow-bone :
 Or listen'd all, in grim delight,
 While Scalds yell'd out the joys of fight.
 Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
 While wildly-loose their red locks fly,
 And dancing round the blazing pile,
 They make such barbarous mirth the while,
 As best might to the mind recall
 The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.

And well our Christian sires of old
 Loved when the year its course had roll'd,
 And brought blithe Christmas back again,
 With all his hospitable train.
 Domestic and religious rite
 Gave honour to the holy night ;
 On Christmas eve the bells were rung ;
 On Christmas eve the mass was sung :
 That only night in all the year,
 Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
 The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen ;
 The hall was dress'd with holly green ;
 Forth to the wood did merry men go,
 To gather in the misletoe.
 Then open'd wide the Baron's hall
 To vassal, tenant, serf, and all ;
 Power laid his rod of rule aside,
 And Ceremony doff'd his pride.
 The heir, with roses in his shoes,
 That night might village partner choose ;
 The Lord, underogating, share
 The vulgar game of "post and pair."
 All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,
 And general voice, the happy night,
 That to the cottage, as the crown,
 Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
 Went roaring up the chimney wide ;
 The huge hall-table's oaken face,
 Scrubb'd till it shone, the day to grace,
 Bore then upon its massive board
 No mark to part the squire and lord.
 Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
 By old blue-coated serving-man ;
 Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,
 Crested with bays and rosemary.

Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,
 How, when, and where, the monster fell ;
 What dogs before his death he tore,
 And all the baiting of the boar.
 The wassel round, in good brown bowls,
 Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls,
 There the huge sirloin reek'd ; hard by
 Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie ;
 Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,
 At such high tide, her savoury goose.
 Then came the merry maskers in,
 And carols roar'd with blithesome din ;
 If unmelodious was the song,
 It was a hearty note, and strong.
 Who lists may in their mumming see
 Traces of ancient mystery ;
 White shirts supplied the masquerade,
 And smutt'd cheeks the visors made ;
 But, oh ! what maskers, richly dight,
 Can boast of bosoms half so light !
 England was merry England, when
 Old Christmas brought his sports again.
 'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale ;
 'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale ;
 A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
 The poor man's heart through half the year.

Still linger, in our northern clime,
 Some remnants of the good old time ;
 And still, within our valleys here,
 We hold the kindred title dear,
 Even when, perchance, its far-fetch'd claim,
 To Southron ear sounds empty name ;
 For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
 Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
 And thus, my Christmas still I hold
 Where my great-grandsire came of old,
 With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
 And reverend apostolic air—
 The feast and holy-tide to share,
 And mix sobriety with wine,
 And honest mirth with thoughts divine :
 Small thought was his, in after time
 E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme.
 The simple sire could only boast,
 That he was loyal to his cost ;
 The banish'd race of kings revered,
 And lost his land,—but kept his beard.

In these dear halls, where welcome kind
 Is with fair liberty combined ;
 Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
 And flies constraint the magic wand
 Of the fair dame that rules the land ;

Little we heed the tempest drear,
 While music, mirth, and social cheer,
 Speed on their wings the passing year.
 And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
 When not a leaf is on the bough.
 Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
 As loath to leave the sweet domain,
 And holds his mirror to her face,
 And clips her with a close embrace :—
 Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
 And as reluctant turn us home.

How just, that, at this time of glee,
 My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee !
 For many a merry hour we've known,
 And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.
 Cease, then, my friend ! a moment cease,
 And leave these classic tomes in peace !
 Of Roman and of Grecian lore,
 Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
 These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
 " Were pretty fellows in their day ;"
 But time and tide o'er all prevail—
 On Christmas eve a Christmas tale—
 Of wonder and of war—" Profane !
 What ! leave the lofty Latian strain,
 Her stately prose, her verse's charms,
 To hear the clash of rusty arms :
 In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,
 To jostle conjurer and ghost,
 Goblin and witch !" —Nay, Heber, dear.
 Before you touch my charter, hear :
 Though Leyden aids, alas ! no more,
 My cause with many-languaged lore,
 This may I say :—In realms of death
 Ulysses meets Alcides' *wraith* ;
 Æneas, upon Thracia's shore,
 The ghost of murder'd Polydore ;
 For omens, we in Livy cross,
 At every turn, *locutus Bos*.
 As grave and duly speaks that ox,
 As if he told the price of stocks ;
 Or held, in Rome republican,
 The place of Common-councilman.

All nations have their omens drear,
 Their legends wild of woe and fear.
 To Cambria look—the peasant see,
 Bethink him of Glendowerdy,
 And shun " the spirit's Blasted Tree."
 The Highlander, whose red claymore
 The battle turn'd on Maida's shore,
 Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
 If ask'd to tell a fairy tale :

He fears the vengeful Elfin King,
 Who leaves that day his grassy ring :
 Invisible to human ken,
 He walks among the sons of men.

Didst e'er, dear Heber, pass along
 Beneath the towers of Franchémont,
 Which, like an eagle's nest in air,
 Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair ?
 Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,
 A mighty treasure buried lay,
 Amass'd through rapine and through wrong
 By the last Lord of Franchémont.
 The iron chest is bolted hard ;
 A huntsman sits, its constant guard ;
 Around his neck his horn is hung,
 His hanger in his belt is slung ;
 Before his feet his blood-hounds lie :
 An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,
 Whose withering glance no heart can brook,
 As true a huntsman doth he look,
 As bogle e'er in brake did sound,
 Or ever halloo'd to a hound.
 To chase the fiend, and win the prize,
 In that same dungeon ever tries
 An aged necromantic priest ;
 It is an hundred years at least,
 Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,
 And neither yet has lost nor won.
 And oft the Conjuror's words will make
 The stubborn Demon groan and quake ;
 And oft the bands of iron break,
 Or bursts one lock, that still amain,
 Fast as 'tis open'd, shuts again.
 That magic strife within the tomb
 May last until the day of doom,
 Unless the adept shall learn to tell
 The very word that clench'd the spell,
 When Franch'mont lock'd the treasure cell.
 An hundred years are past and gone,
 And scarce three letters has he won.

Such general superstition may
 Excuse for old Pitscottie say ;
 Whose gossip history has given
 My song the messenger from Heaven,
 That warn'd, in Lithgow, Scotland's King,
 Nor less the infernal summoning ;
 May pass the Monk of Durham's tale,
 Whose demon fought in Gothic mail ;
 May pardon plead for Fordun grave,
 Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.
 But why such instances to you,
 Who, in an instant, can renew

Your treasured hoards of various lore,
 And furnish twenty thousand more?
 Hoards, not like theirs whose volumes rest
 Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest,
 While gripple owners still refuse
 'To others what they cannot use;
 Give them the priest's whole century,
 They shall not spell you letters three;
 Their pleasure in the books the same
 The magpie takes in pilfer'd gem.
 Thy volumes, open as thy heart,
 Delight, amusement, science, art,
 To every ear and eye impart;
 Yet who of all who thus employ them,
 Can like the owner's self enjoy them?
 But, hark! I hear the distant drum!
 The day of Flodden Field is come.—
 Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,
 And store of literary wealth!

CANTO SIXTH.

THE BATTLE.

I.

WHILE great events were on the gale,
 And each hour brought a varying tale,
 And the demeanour, changed and cold,
 Of Douglas, fretted Marmion bold,
 And, like the impatient steed of war,
 He snuff'd the battle from afar;
 And hopes were none, that back again
 Herald should come from Terouenne,
 Where England's King in leaguer lay,
 Before decisive battle-day;—
 Whilst these things were, the mournful Clare
 Did in the Dame's devotions share:
 For the good Countess ceaseless pray'd
 To Heaven and Saints, her sons to aid,
 And, with short interval, did pass
 From prayer to book, from book to mass,
 And all in high Baronial pride,—
 A life both dull and dignified;—
 Yet as Lord Marmion nothing press'd
 Upon her intervals of rest,
 Dejected Clara well could bear
 The formal state, the lengthen'd prayer,
 Though dearest to her wounded heart
 The hours that she might spend apart.

II.

I said, Tantallon's dizzy steep
 Hung o'er the margin of the deep.
 Many a rude tower and rampart there
 Repell'd the insult of the air,
 Which, when the tempest vex'd the sky,
 Half breeze, half spray, came whistling by.
 Above the rest, a turret square
 Did o'er its Gothic entrance bear,
 Of sculpture rude, a stony shield;
 The Bloody Heart was in the Field,
 And in the chief three mullets stood,
 The cognizance of Douglas blood.
 The turret held a narrow stair,
 Which, mounted, gave you access where
 A parapet's embattled row
 Did seaward round the castle go.
 Sometimes in dizzy steps descending,
 Sometimes in narrow circuit bending,
 Sometimes in platform broad extending,
 Its varying circle did combine
 Bulwark, and bartizan, and line,
 And bastion, tower, and vantage-coign;
 Above the booming ocean leant
 The far-projecting battlement;
 The billows burst, in ceaseless flow,
 Upon the precipice below.
 Where'er Tantallon faced the land,
 Gate-works, and walls, were strongly mann'd;
 No need upon the sea-girt side—
 The steepy rock, and frantic tide,
 Approach of human step denied;
 And thus these lines, and ramparts rude,
 Were left in deepest solitude.

III.

And, for they were so lonely, Clare
 Would to these battlements repair,
 And muse upon her sorrows there,
 And list the sea-bird's cry;
 Or slow, like noontide ghost, would glide
 Along the dark-grey bulwarks' side,
 And ever on the heaving tide
 Look down with weary eye.
 Oft did the cliff, and swelling main,
 Recall the thoughts of Whitby's fane,—
 A home she ne'er might see again;
 For she had laid adown,
 So Douglas bade, the hood and veil,
 And frontlet of the cloister pale,
 And Benedictine gown:
 It were unseemly sight, he said.
 A novice out of convent shade.—

Now her bright locks, with sunny glow,
 Again adorn'd her brow of snow ;
 Her mantle rich, whose borders, round,
 A deep and fretted broidery bound,
 In golden foldings sought the ground ;
 Of holy ornament, alone
 Remain'd a cross with ruby stone ;
 And often did she look
 On that which in her hand she bore,
 With velvet bound, and broider'd o'er,
 Her breviary book.
 In such a place, so lone, so grim,
 At dawning pale, or twilight dim,
 It fearful would have been
 To meet a form so richly dress'd,
 With book in hand, and cross on breast,
 And such a woeful mien.
 Fitz-Eustace, loitering with his bow,
 To practise on the gull and crow,
 Saw her, at distance, gliding slow,
 And did by Mary swear,—
 Some love-lorn Fay she might have been,
 Or, in Romance, some spell-bound Queen ;
 For ne'er, in work-day world, was seen
 A form so witching fair.

IV.

Once walking thus, at evening tide,
 It chanced a gliding sail she spied,
 And, sighing, thought—"The Abbess, there,
 Perchance, does to her home repair ;
 Her peaceful rule, where Duty, free,
 Walks hand in hand with Charity ;
 Where oft Devotion's tranced glow
 Can such a glimpse of heaven bestow.
 That the enraptured sisters see
 High vision and deep mystery ;
 The very form of Hilda fair,
 Hovering upon the sunny air,
 And smiling on her votaries' prayer.
 O ! wherefore, to my duller eye,
 Did still the Saint her form deny ?
 Was it, that, sear'd by sinful scorn,
 My heart could neither melt nor burn ?
 Or lie my warm affections low,
 With him that taught them first to glow ?
 Yet, gentle Abbess, well I knew,
 To pay thy kindness grateful due,
 And well could brook the mild command,
 That ruled thy simple maiden band.
 How different now ! condemn'd to bide
 My doom from this dark tyrant's pride.—
 But Marmion has to learn, ere long,
 That constant mind, and hate of wrong,

Descended to a feeble girl,
 From Red De Clare, stout Gloster's Earl :
 Of such a stem, a sapling weak,
 He ne'er shall bend, although he break.

v.

" But see !—what makes this armour here ?"—
 For in her path there lay
 Targe, corslet, helm ;—she view'd them near.—
 " The breast-plate pierced !—Ay, much I fear,
 Weak fence wert thou 'gainst foeman's spear,
 That hath made fatal entrance here,
 As these dark blood-gouts say.—
 Thus Wilton !—Oh ! not corslet's ward,
 Not truth, as diamond pure and hard,
 Could be thy manly bosom's guard,
 On yon disastrous day !"—

She raised her eyes in mournful mood,—
 WILTON himself before her stood !
 It might have seem'd his passing ghost,
 For every youthful grace was lost ;
 And joy unwonted, and surprise,
 Gave their strange wildness to his eyes.—
 Expect not, noble dames and lords,
 That I can tell such scene in words :
 What skilful limner e'er would choose
 To paint the rainbow's varying hues,
 Unless to mortal it were given
 To dip his brush in dyes of heaven ?
 Far less can my weak line declare
 Each changing passion's shade ;
 Brightening to rapture from despair,
 Sorrow, surprise, and pity there,
 And joy, with her angelic air,
 And hope, that paints the future fair,
 Their varying hues display'd :
 Each o'er its rival's ground extending,
 Alternate conquering, shifting, blending,
 Till all, fatigued, the conflict yield,
 And mighty Love retains the field.
 Shortly I tell what then he said,
 By many a tender word delay'd,
 And modest blush, and bursting sigh,
 And question kind, and fond reply :—

vi.

De Wilton's History.

" Forget we that disastrous day,
 When senseless in the lists I lay.
 Thence dragg'd,—but how I cannot know,
 For sense and recollection fled,—
 I found me on a pallet low,
 Within my ancient beadsman's shed.
 Austin,—remember'st thou, my Clare,

How thou did'st blush, when the old man,
 When first our infant love began,
 Said we would make a matchless pair ?—
 Menials, and friends, and kinsmen fled
 From the degraded traitor's bed,—
 He only held my burning head,
 And tended me for many a day,
 While wounds and fever held their sway.
 But far more needful was his care,
 When sense return'd to wake despair ;
 For I did tear the closing wound,
 And dash me frantic on the ground.
 If e'er I heard the name of Clare.
 At length, to calmer reason brought,
 Much by his kind attendance wrought,
 With him I left my native strand,
 And, in a Palmer's weeds array'd,
 My hated name and form to shade,
 I journey'd many a land ;
 No more a lord of rank and birth,
 But mingled with the dregs of earth.
 Oft Austin for my reason fear'd,
 When I would sit, and deeply brood
 On dark revenge, and deeds of blood,
 Or wild mad schemes uprear'd.
 My friend at length fell sick, and said,
 God would remove him soon :
 And, while upon his dying bed,
 He begg'd of me a boon—
 If e'er my deadliest enemy
 Beneath my brand should conquer'd lie,
 Even then my mercy should awake,
 And spare his life for Austin's sake.

VII.

" Still restless as a second Cain,
 To Scotland next my route was ta'en,
 Full well the paths I knew.
 Fame of my fate made various sound,
 That death in pilgrimage I found,
 That I had perish'd of my wound,—
 None cared which tale was true :
 And living eye could never guess
 De Wilton in his Palmer's dress ;
 For, now that sable slough is shed,
 And trimm'd my shaggy beard and head,
 I scarcely know me in the glass.
 A chance most wondrous did provide,
 That I should be that Baron's guide—
 I will not name his name !—
 Vengeance to God alone belongs ;
 But, when I think on all my wrongs,
 My blood is liquid flame !
 And ne'er the time shall I forget,
 When, in a Scottish hostel set,

Dark looks we did exchange :
 What were his thoughts I cannot tell ;
 But in my bosom muster'd Hell
 Its plans of dark revenge.

VIII.

“ A word of vulgar augury,
 That broke from me, I scarce knew why,
 Brought on a village tale ;
 Which wrought upon his moody sprite,
 And sent him armed forth by night.

I borrow'd steed and mail,
 And weapons, from his sleeping band ;
 And, passing from a postern door,
 We met, and counter'd hand to hand,—
 He fell on Gifford moor.

For the death-stroke my brand I drew
 (O then my helmed head he knew,

The Palmer's cowl was gone,)
 Then had three inches of my blade
 The heavy debt of vengeance paid,—
 My hand the thought of Austin staid ;
 I left him there alone.—

O good old man ! even from the grave
 Thy spirit could thy master save :
 If I had slain my foeman, ne'er
 Had Whitby's Abbess, in her fear,
 Given to my hand this packet dear,
 Of power to clear my injured fame,
 And vindicate De Wilton's name.—
 Perchance you heard the Abbess tell
 Of the strange pageantry of Hell,

That broke our secret speech—
 It rose from the infernal shade,
 Or featly was some juggle play'd,

A tale of peace to teach.
 Appeal to Heaven I judged was best,
 When my name came among the rest.

IX.

“ Now here, within Tantallon Hold,
 To Douglas late my tale I told,
 To whom my house was known of old.
 Won by my proofs, his falchion bright
 This eve anew shall dub me knight.
 These were the arms that once did turn
 The tide of fight on Otterburne,
 And Harry Hotspur forced to yield,
 When the Dead Douglas won the field.
 These Angus gave—his armourer's care,
 Ere morn, shall every breach repair ;
 For nought, he said, was in his halls,
 But ancient armour on the walls,
 And aged chargers in the stalls,
 And women, priests, and grey-hair'd men ;
 The rest were all in Twisel glen.

And now I watch my armour here,
By law of arms, till midnight's near;
Then, once again a belted knight,
Seek Surrey's camp with dawn of light.

x.

" There soon again we meet, my Clare !
This Baron means to guide thee there :
Douglas reveres his King's command,
Else would he take thee from his band.
And there thy kinsman, Surrey, too,
Will give De Wilton justice due.
Now meeter far for martial broil,
Firmer my limbs, and strung by toil,
Once more"——" O Wilton! must we then
Risk new-found happiness again,

Trust fate of arms once more?
And is there not an humble glen,
Where we, content and poor,
Might build a cottage in the shade,
A shepherd thou, and I to aid
Thy task on dale and moor?——
That reddening brow!—too well I know,
Not even thy Clare can peace bestow,

While falsehood stains thy name.
Go then to fight! Clare bids thee go!
Clare can a warrior's feelings know,
And weep a warrior's shame;
Can Red Earl Gilbert's spirit feel,
Buckle the spurs upon thy heel,
And belt thee with thy brand of steel,
And send thee forth to fame!"

xi.

That night, upon the rocks and bay,
The midnight moonbeam slumbering lay,
And pour'd its silver light, and pure,
Through loop-hole, and through embrasure.

Upon Tantallon tower and hall;
But chief where arched windows wide
Illuminate the chapel's pride,
The sober glances fall.
Much was there need; though seam'd with scars,
Two veterans of the Douglas' wars,

Though two grey priests were there,
And each a blazing torch held high,
You could not by their blaze descrie
The chapel's carving fair.
Amid that dim and smoky light,
Chequering the silver moonshine bright,

A bishop by the altar stood,
A noble lord of Douglas' blood,
With mitre sheen, and rocquet white.
Yet show'd his meek and thoughtful eye
But little pride of prelacy:

More pleased that, in a barbarous age,
 He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page,
 Than that beneath his rule he held
 The bishopric of fair Dunkeld.
 Beside him ancient Angus stood,
 Doff'd his furr'd gown, and sable hood :
 O'er his huge form and visage pale,
 He wore a cap and shirt of mail ;
 And lean'd his large and wrinkled hand
 Upon the huge and sweeping brand
 Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
 His foemen's limbs to shred away,
 As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.
 He seem'd as, from the tombs around
 Rising at judgment-day,
 Some giant Douglas may be found
 In all his old array ;
 So pale his face, so huge his limb,
 So old his arms, his look so grim.

XII.

Then at the altar Wilton kneels,
 And Clare the spurs bound on his heels :
 And think what next he must have felt,
 At buckling of the falchion belt !
 And judge how Clara changed her hue
 While fastening to her lover's side
 A friend, which, though in danger tried,
 He once had found untrue !
 Then Douglas struck him with his blade :
 " Saint Michael and Saint Andrew aid.
 I dub thee knight.
 Arise, Sir Ralph, De Wilton's heir !
 For King, for Church, for Lady fair,
 See that thou fight."—
 And Bishop Gawain, as he rose,
 Said—" Wilton ! grieve not for thy woes,
 Disgrace, and trouble ;
 For He, who honour best bestows,
 May give thee double."—
 De Wilton sobb'd, for sob he must—
 " Where'er I meet a Douglas, trust
 That Douglas is my brother !"—
 " Nay, nay," old Angus said, " not so ;
 To Surrey's camp thou now must go,
 Thy wrongs no longer smother.
 I have two sons in yonder field ;
 And, if thou meet'st them under shield
 Upon them bravely—do thy worst ;
 And foul fall him that blanches first !"

XIII.

Not far advanced was morning day,
 When Marmion did his troop array,

To Surrey's camp to ride ;
 He had safe-conduct for his band,
 Beneath the royal seal and hand,
 And Douglas gave a guide :
 The ancient Earl, with stately grace,
 Would Clara on her palfrey place,
 And whisper'd in an under tone,
 " Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown."—
 The train from out the castle drew,
 But Marmion stopp'd to bid adieu :—
 " Though something I might plain," he said,
 " Of cold respect to stranger guest,
 Sent hither by your King's behest,
 While in Tantallon's towers I staid ;
 Part we in friendship from your land,
 And, noble Earl, receive my hand."—
 But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
 Folded his arms, and thus he spoke :—
 " My manors, halls, and bowers, shall still
 Be open, at my Sovereign's will,
 To each one whom he lists, how'er
 Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
 My castles are my King's alone,
 From turret to foundation-stone—
 The hand of Douglas is his own ;
 And never shall in friendly grasp
 The hand of such as Marmion clasp."—

XIV.

Burn'd Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire,
 And shook his very frame for ire,
 And—" This to me !" he said,—
 " An't were not for thy hoary beard,
 Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
 To cleave the Douglas' head !
 And, first, I tell thee, haughty Peer,
 He, who does England's message here,
 Although the meanest in her state,
 May well, proud Angus, be thy mate :
 And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
 Even in thy pitch of pride,
 Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,
 (Nay, never look upon your lord,
 And lay your hands upon your sword,)
 I tell thee thou'rt defied !
 And if thou said'st I am not peer
 To any lord in Scotland here,
 Lowland or Highland, far or near,
 Lord Angus, thou hast lied !"
 On the Earl's cheek the flush of rage
 O'ercame the ashen hue of age :
 Fierce he broke forth—" And darest thou then
 To beard the lion in his den,
 The Douglas in his hall ?

And hopest thou hence unscathed to go?—
 No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
 Up drawbridge, grooms!—what, Warder. ho!
 Let the portcullis fall.”—
 Lord Marmion turn'd,—well was his need,
 And dash'd the rowels in his steed,
 Like arrow through the archway sprung,
 The ponderous grate behind him rung:
 To pass there was such scanty room,
 The bars, descending, razed his plume.

XV.

The steed along the drawbridge flies,
 Just as it trembled on the rise;
 Nor lighter does the swallow skim
 Along the smooth lake's level brim:
 And when Lord Marmion reach'd his band,
 He halts, and turns with clenched hand,
 And shout of loud defiance pours,
 And shook his gauntlet at the towers,
 “Horse! horse!” the Douglas cried, and chase!”
 But soon he rein'd his fury's pace:
 “A royal messenger he came,
 Though most unworthy of the name.—
 A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
 Did ever knight so foul a deed!
 At first in heart it liked me ill,
 When the King praised his clerky skill.
 Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
 Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line:
 So swore I, and I swear it still,
 Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
 Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
 Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
 I thought to slay him where he stood.
 ‘Tis pity of him too,” he cried:
 “Bold can he speak, and fairly ride;
 I warrant him a warrior tried.”
 With this his mandate he recalls,
 And slowly seeks his castle halls.

XVI.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
 Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
 They cross'd the heights of Staurig-moor
 His troop more closely there he scann'd,
 And miss'd the Palmer from the band.—
 “Palmer or not,” young Blount did say,
 “He parted at the peep of day;
 Good sooth, it was in strange array.”—
 “In what array?” said Marmion, quick
 “My Lord, I ill can spell the trick;
 But all night long, with clink and bang,
 Close to my couch did hammers clang;
 At dawn the falling drawbridge rang.

And from a loop-hole while I peep,
 Old Bell-the-Cat came from the Keep,
 Wrapp'd in a gown of sables fair,
 As fearful of the morning air ;
 Beneath, when that was blown aside,
 A rusty shirt of mail I spied,
 By Archibald won in bloody work,
 Against the Saracen and Turk :
 Last night it hung not in the hall ;
 I thought some marvel would befall.
 And next I saw them saddled lead
 Old Cheviot forth, the Earl's best steed ;
 A matchless horse, though something old,
 Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
 I heard the Sheriff Sholto say,
 The Earl did much the Master pray
 To use him on the battle-day ;
 But he preferr'd "——" "Nay, Henry, cease !
 Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
 Eustace, thou bear'st a brain—I pray,
 What did Blount see at break of day ?"

XVII. —

"In brief, my lord, we both descried
 (For then I stood by Henry's side)
 The Palmer mount, and outwards ride,
 Upon the Earl's own favourite steed :
 All sheathed he was in armour bright,
 And much resembled that same knight,
 Subdued by you in Cotswold fight :
 Lord Angus wish'd him speed."—
 The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
 A sudden light on Marmion broke ;—
 "Ah, dastard fool, to reason lost !"
 He mutter'd ; "'Twas nor fay nor ghost
 I met upon the moonlight wold,
 But living man of earthly mould.—
 O dotage blind and gross !
 Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
 Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
 My path no more to cross.—
 How stand we now ?—he told his tale
 To Douglas ; and with some avail ;
 'Twas therefore gloom'd his rugged brow.—
 Will Surrey dare to entertain,
 'Gainst Marmion, charge disproved and vain ?
 Small risk of that, I trow.
 Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun ;
 Must separate Constance from the Nun—
 Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
 When first we practise to deceive !
 A Palmer too !—no wonder why
 I felt rebuked beneath his eye :
 I might have known there was but one,
 Whose look could quell Lord Marmion."

XVIII.

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
 His troop, and reach'd, at eve, the Tweed,
 Where Lennel's convent closed their march ;
 (There now is left but one frail arch,

Yet mourn thou not its cells ;
 Our time a fair exchange has made ;
 Hard by, in hospitable shade,
 A reverend pilgrim dwells,
 Well worth the whole Bernardine brood.
 That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.)
 Yet did Saint Bernard's Abbot there
 Give Marmion entertainment fair,
 And lodging for his train and Clare.
 Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower,
 To view afar the Scottish power,

Encamp'd on Flodden edge :
 The white pavilions made a show,
 Like remnants of the winter snow,
 Along the dusky ridge.
 Lord Marmion look'd :—at length his eye
 Unusual movement might descry

Amid the shifting lines :
 The Scottish host drawn out appears,
 For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
 The eastern sunbeam shines.
 Their front now deepening, now extending ;
 Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending.
 Now drawing back, and now descending.
 The skilful Marmion well could know,
 They watch'd the motions of some foe,
 Who traversed on the plain below.

XIX.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
 The Scots beheld the English host
 Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
 And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd
 The Till by Twisel Bridge.

High sight it is, and haughty, while
 They dive into the deep defile ;
 Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
 Beneath the castle's airy wall.
 By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
 Troop after troop are disappearing ;
 Troop after troop their banners rearing,
 Upon the eastern bank you see.
 Still pouring down the rocky den,
 Where flows the sullen Till,
 And rising from the dim-wood glen,
 Standards on standards, men on men,
 In slow succession still,
 And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,

And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
 To gain the opposing hill.
 That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
 Twisel ! thy rock's deep echo rang ;
 And many a chief of birth and rank,
 Saint Helen ! at thy fountain drank.
 Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
 In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
 Had then from many an axe its doom,
 To give the marching columns room.

XX.

And why stands Scotland idly now,
 Dark Flodden ! on thy airy brow,
 Since England gains the pass the while,
 And struggles through the deep defile ?
 What checks the fiery soul of James ?
 Why sits that champion of the dames
 Inactive on his steed,
 And sees, between him and his land,
 Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
 His host Lord Surrey lead ?
 What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand
 Oh, Douglas, for thy leading wand !
 Fierce Randolph, for thy speed !
 Oh for one hour of Wallace wight,
 Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
 And cry—"Saint Andrew and our right !"
 Another sight had seen that morn,
 From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
 And Flodden had been Bannockbourne !—
 The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
 And England's host has gain'd the plain ;
 Wheeling their march, and circling still,
 Around the base of Flodden hill.

XXI.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
 Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
 "Hark ! hark ! my lord, an English drum !
 And see ascending squadrons come
 Between Tweed's river and the hill,
 Foot, horse, and cannon :—hap what hap,
 My basnet to a prentice cap,
 Lord Surrey's o'er the Till !—
 Yet more ! yet more !—how far array'd
 They file from out the hawthorn shade,
 And sweep so gallant by !
 With all their banners bravely spread,
 And all their armour flashing high,
 Saint George might waken from the dead,
 To see fair England's standards fly."—
 "Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount, "thou'dst best
 And listen to our lor.'s behest."—

With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
 “This instant be our band array’d;
 The river must be quickly cross’d,
 That we may join Lord Surrey’s host.
 If fight King James,—as well I trust,
 That fight he will, and fight he must,—
 The Lady Clare behind our lines
 Shall tarry while the battle joins.”

XXII.

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
 Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu;
 Far less would listen to his prayer,
 To leave behind the helpless Clare.
 Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
 And mutter’d, as the flood they view,
 “The pheasant in the falcon’s claw,
 He scarce will yield to please a daw:
 Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
 So Clare shall bide with me.”
 Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
 Where to the Tweed Leat’s eddies creep,
 He ventured desperately:
 And not a moment will he bide,
 Till squire, or groom, before him ride;
 Headmost of all, he stems the tide,
 And stems it gallantly.
 Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
 Old Hubert led her rein,
 Stoutly they braved the current’s course,
 And, though far downward driven per force,
 The southern bank they gain;
 Behind them straggling, came to shore,
 As best they might, the train:
 Each o’er his head his yew-bow bore,
 A caution not in vain:
 Deep need that day, that every string,
 By wet unharm’d, should sharply ring.
 A moment then Lord Marmion stay’d,
 And breathed his steed, his men array’d,
 Then forward moved his band,
 Until, Lord Surrey’s rear-guard won,
 He halted by a Cross of Stone,
 That on a hillock standing lone,
 Did all the field command.

XXIII.

Hence might they see the full array
 Of either host, for deadly fray;
 Their marshall’d lines stretch’d east and west
 And fronted north and south,
 And distant salutation pass’d
 From the loud cannon mouth;
 Not in the close successive rattle,
 That breathes the voice of modern battle,

But slow and far between.—
 The hillock gain'd, Lord Marmion staid :
 " Here, by this Cross," he gently said,
 " You well may view the scene.
 Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare :
 Oh ! think of Marmion in thy prayer !—
 Thou wilt not ?—well,—no less my care
 Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
 You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
 With ten pick'd archers of my train ;
 With England if the day go hard,
 To Berwick speed amain.—
 But if we conquer, cruel maid,
 My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
 When here we meet again."
 He waited not for answer there,
 And would not mark the maid's despair,
 Nor heed the discontented look
 From either squire ; but spur'd amain.
 And, dashing through the battle plain,
 His way to Surrey took.

XXIV.

" — The good Lord Marmion, by my life
 Welcome to danger's hour !—
 Short greeting serves in time of strife :—
 Thus have I ranged my power :
 Myself will rule this central host,
 Stout Stanley fronts their right,
 My sons command the van-ward post,
 With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight ;
 Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
 Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
 And succour those that need it most.
 Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
 Would gladly to the van-guard go ;
 Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
 With thee their charge will blithely share ;
 There fight thine own retainers too,
 Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."—
 " Thanks, noble Surrey !" Marmion said,
 Nor farther greeting there he paid ;
 But parting like a thunderbolt,
 First in the van-guard made a halt,
 Where such a shout there rose
 Of " Marmion ! Marmion !" that the cry
 Up Flodden Mountain shrilling high,
 Startled the Scottish foes.

XXV.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
 With Lady Clare upon the hill !
 On which (for far the day was spent),
 The western sunbeams now were bent.

The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
 Could plain their distant comrades view:
 Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
 "Unworthy office here to stay!
 No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
 But see! look up!—on Flodden bent
 The Scottish foe has fired his tent."

And sudden, as he spoke,
 From the sharp ridges of the hill,
 All downward to the banks of Till,
 Was wreathed in sable smoke.
 Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
 The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
 As down the hill they broke;
 Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
 Announced their march; their tread aloud.
 At times one warning trumpet blown,

At times a stifled hum,
 Told England, from his mountain-throne
 King James did rushing come.—
 Scarce could they hear, or see their foes,
 Until at weapon-point they close.—
 They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
 With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;

And such a yell was there,
 Of sudden and portentous birth,
 As if men fought upon the earth,
 And fiends in upper air;
 Oh! life and death were in the shout,
 Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
 And triumph and despair.
 Long look'd the anxious squires; their eye
 Could in the darkness nought descry.

XXVI.

At length the freshening western blast
 Aside the shroud of battle cast;
 And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
 Above the brightening cloud appears;
 And in the smoke the pennons flew,
 As in the storm the white sea-mew.
 Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
 The broken billows of the war,
 And plumed crests of chieftains brave.
 Floating like foam upon the wave;
 But nought distinct they see:
 Wide raged the battle on the plain;
 Spears shook, and falchions flash'd amain
 Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
 Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
 Wild and disorderly.

Amid the scene of tumult, high
 They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
 And stainless Tunstall's banner white.

And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight :

Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly, and with Home.

xxvii.

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle ;
Though there the western mountaineer
Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied,
'Twas vain :—But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's fight.

Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell ;
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky !
A Home ! a Gordon ! was the cry :
Loud were the clanging blows ;
Advanced,—forced back,—now low, now high.

The pennon sunk and rose ;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It waver'd 'mid the foes.

No longer Blount the view could bear ;
" By Heaven and all its saints I swear,
I will not see it lost !

Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host."

And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large,—

The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,
It sunk among the foes.

Then Eustace mounted too :—yet staid,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,

When, fast as shaft can fly,
Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,

Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by ;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast,
To mark he would return in haste.
Then plunged into the fight.

XXVIII.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
 Left in that dreadful hour alone :
 Perchance her reason stoops or reels ;
 Perchance a courage, not her own,
 Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
 The scatter'd van of England wheels ;—
 She only said, as loud in air
 The tumult roar'd, " Is Wilton there ?"—
 They fly, or, madden'd by despair,
 Fight but to die,— " Is Wilton there ?"
 With that, straight up the hill there rode
 Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
 And in their arms, a helpless load,
 A wounded knight they bore.
 His hand still strain'd the broken brand ;
 His arms were smear'd with blood and sand :
 Dragg'd from among the horses' feet,
 With dinted shield, and helmet beat,
 The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
 Can that be haughty Marmion !
 Young Blount his armour did unlace,
 And, gazing on his ghastly face,
 Said—" By Saint George, he's gone !
 That spear-wound has our master sped,
 And see the deep cut on his head !
 Good-night to Marmion."—
 " Unnurtured Blount ! thy brawling cease :
 He opes his eyes," said Eustace ; " peace !"

XXIX.

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,
 Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare :—
 " Where's Harry Blount ? Fitz-Eustace where ?
 Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare !
 Redem my pennon,—charge again !
 Cry—' Marmion to the rescue !'—Vain !
 Last of my race, on battle-plain
 That shout shall ne'er be heard again !—
 Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
 To Dacre bear my signet-ring :
 Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
 Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie ;
 Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
 His life-blood stains the spotless shield :
 Edmund is down :—my life is left ;
 The Admiral alone is left.
 Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
 With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
 Full upon Scotland's central host,
 Or victory and England's lost.—
 Must I bid twice ?—hence, varlets ! fly !
 Leave Marmion here alone—to die."



She fill'd the helm, and lock she hid,
And with surprise and joy eyed,
A Monk supped at Marston's head—

Deep drank Lord Marston of the wine.

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They parted, and alone he lay ;
 Clare drew her from the sight away,
 Till pain rung forth a lowly moan,
 And half he murmur'd,—“ Is there none,
 Of all my halls have nurst,
 Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
 Of blessed water from the spring,
 To slake my dying thirst !”

XXX

O woman ! in our hours of ease,
 Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
 And variable as the shade
 By the light quivering aspen made ;
 When pain and anguish wring the brow,
 A ministering angel thou !—
 Scarce were the piteous accents said,
 When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
 To the nigh streamlet ran :
 Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears—
 The plaintive voice alone she hears,
 Sees but the dying man.
 She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
 But in abhorrence backward drew ;
 For, oozing from the mountain's side,
 Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
 Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
 Where shall she turn ?—behold her mark
 A little fountain cell,
 Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
 In a stone basin fell.
 Above, some half-worn letters say,
 Drink . weary . pilgrim . drink . and . pray .
 For . the . kind . soul . of . Sybil . Gray .
 Who . built . this . cross . and . well .
 She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
 And with surprise and joy espied
 A Monk supporting Marmion's head—
 A pious man, whom duty brought
 To dubious verge of battle fought,
 To shrieve the dying, bless the dead.

XXXI.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
 And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
 “ Is it the hand of Clare,” he said,
 “ Or injured Constance, bathes my head ?”
 Then, as remembrance rose, —
 “ Speak not to me of shrift or prayer !
 I must redress her woes.
 Short space, few words, are mine to spare ;
 Forgive and listen, gentle Clare !” —

" Alas ! " she said, " the while,—
 Oh, think of your immortal weal !
 In vain for Constance is your zeal ;
 She——died at Holy Isle."—
 Lord Marmion started from the ground.
 As light as if he felt no wound ;
 Though in the action burst the tide,
 In torrents, from his wounded side.
 " Then it was truth," he said—" I knew
 That the dark presage must be true.—
 I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
 The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
 Would spare me but a day !
 For wasting fire, and dying groan,
 And priests slain on the altar stone,
 Might bribe him for delay.
 It may not be !—this dizzy trance—
 Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
 And doubly cursed my failing brand !
 A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
 Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
 Supported by the trembling Monk.

XXXII.

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
 And strove to staunch the gushing wound :
 The Monk, with unavailing cares,
 Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
 Ever, he said, that, close and near,
 A lady's voice was in his ear,
 And that the priest he could not hear ;
 For that she ever sung,
 " *In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
 Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying !*"
 So the notes rung ;—
 " Avoid thee, Fiend !—with cruel hand,
 Shake not the dying sinner's sand !—
 O look, my son, upon yon sign
 Of the Redeemer's grace divine ;
 O think on faith and bliss !—
 By many a death-bed I have been,
 And many a sinner's parting seen,
 But never aught like this."—
 The war, that for a space did fail,
 Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
 And—STANLEY ! was the cry ;—
 A light on Marmion's visage spread,
 And fired his glazing eye :
 With dying hand, above his head,
 He shook the fragment of his blade,
 And shouted " Victory !—
 Charge, Chester, charge ! On, Stanley, on !"
 Were the last words of Marmion.

XXXIII.

By this, though deep the evening fell,
 Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
 For still the Scots, around their King,
 Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
 Where's now their victor van-ward wing,
 Where Huntly, and where Home?—
 O for a blast of that dread horn,
 On Fontarabian echoes borne,
 That to King Charles did come,
 When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
 And every paladin and peer,
 On Roncesvalles died!
 Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
 To quit the plunder of the slain,
 And turn the doubtful day again,
 While yet on Flodden side,
 Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
 And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
 Our Caledonian pride!
 In vain the wish—for far away,
 While spoil and havoc mark their way,
 Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
 "O Lady," cried the Monk, "away!"
 And placed her on her steed,
 And led her to the chapel fair,
 Of Tilmouth upon Tweed.
 There all the night they spent in prayer,
 And at the dawn of morning, there
 She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

XXXIV.

But as they left the dark'ning heath,
 More desperate grew the strife of death.
 The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
 In headlong charge their horse assail'd:
 Front flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep,
 To break the Scottish circle deep,
 That fought around their King.
 But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
 Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
 Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
 Unbroken was the ring;
 The stubborn spear-men still made good
 Their dark impenetrable wood,
 Each stepping where his comrade stood,
 The instant that he fell.
 No thought was there of dastard flight;
 Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
 Groom fought like noble, squire like knight
 As fearlessly and well;
 Till utter darkness closed her wing
 O'er their thin host and wounded King.
 Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
 Led back from strife his shatter'd hands,

And from the charge they drew,
 As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
 Sweep back to ocean blue.
 Then did their loss his foemen know ;
 Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
 They melted from the field, as snow,
 When streams are swoln and south winds blow
 Dissolves in silent dew.
 Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
 While many a broken band,
 Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
 To gain the Scottish land ;
 To town and tower, to down and dale,
 To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
 And raise the universal wail.
 Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
 Shall many an age that wail prolong :
 Still from the sire the son shall hear
 Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
 Of Flodden's fatal field,
 Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
 And broken was her shield !

XXXV.

Day dawns upon the mountain's side :—
 There, Scotland ! lay thy bravest pride,
 Chiefs, knights, and nobles, many a one :
 The sad survivors all are gone.—
 View not that corpse mistrustfully,
 Defaced and mangled though it be ;
 Nor to yon Border castle high
 Look northward with upbraiding eye ;
 Nor oherish hope in vain,
 That, journeying far on foreign strand,
 The Royal Pilgrim to his land
 May yet return again.
 He saw the wreck his rashness wrought ;
 Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
 And fell on Flodden plain :
 And well in death his trusty brand,
 Firm clench'd within his manly hand,
 Beseem'd the Monarch slain.
 But, O ! how changed since yon blithe night
 Gladly I turn me from the sight,
 Unto my tale again.

XXXVI.

Short is my tale :—Fitz-Eustace' care
 A pierced and mangled body bare
 To moated Lichfield's lofty pile ;
 And there, beneath the southern aisle,
 A tomb, with Gothic sculpture fair,
 Did long Lord Marmion's image bear,
 (Now vainly for its sight you look ;
 'Twas levell'd when fanatic Brook
 The fair cathedral storm'd and took ;

But, thanks to Heaven and good Saint Chad!
 A guerdon meet the spoiler had.)
 There erst was martial Marmion found,
 His feet upon a couchant hound,
 His hands to heaven upraised;
 And all around, on scutcheon rich,
 And tablet carved, and fretted niche,
 His arms and feats were blazed.
 And yet, though all was carved so fair,
 And priest for Marmion breathed the prayer.
 The last Lord Marmion lay not there.
 From Ettrick woods, a peasant swain
 Follow'd his lord to Flodden plain,—
 One of those flowers whom plaintive lay
 In Scotland mourns as "wede away:"
 Sore wounded, Sybil's Cross he spied,
 And dragg'd him to its foot, and died,
 Close by the noble Marmion's side.
 The spoilers stripp'd and gash'd the slain,
 And thus their corpses were mista'en;
 And thus, in the proud Baron's tomb,
 The lowly woodsman took the room.

XXXVII.

Less easy task it were, to show
 Lord Marmion's nameless grave, and low
 They dug his grave e'en where he lay.
 But every mark is gone;
 Time's wasting hand has done away
 The simple Cross of Sybil Gray,
 And broke her font of stone:
 But yet out from the little hill
 Oozes the slender sprinklet still.
 Oft halts the stranger there,
 For thence may best his curious eye
 The memorable field descry;
 And shepherd boys repair
 To seek the water-flag and rush,
 And rest them by the hazel bush,
 And plait their garlands fair;
 Nor dream they sit upon the grave
 That holds the bones of Marmion brave.
 When thou shalt find the little hill,
 With thy heart commune, and be still.
 If ever, in temptation strong,
 Thou left'st the right path for the wrong
 If every devious step, thus trod,
 Still led thee further from the road;
 Dread thou to speak presumptuous doom:
 On noble Marmion's lowly tomb;
 But say, "He died a gallant knight,
 With sword in hand, for England's right"

XXXVIII.

I do not rhyme to that dull elf,
 Who cannot image to himself.

That all through Flodden's dismal night,
 Wilton was foremost in the fight;
 That, when brave Surrey's steed was slain,
 'Twas Wilton mounted him again;
 'Twas Wilton's brand that deepest hew'd,
 Amid the spearmen's stubborn wood:
 Unnamed by Hollinshed or Hall,
 He was the living soul of all;
 That, after fight, his faith made plain,
 He won his rank and lands again;
 And charged his old paternal shield
 With bearings won on Flodden Field.
 Nor sing I to that simple maid,
 To whom it must in terms be said,
 That King and kinsmen did agree
 To bless fair Clara's constancy;
 Who cannot, unless I relate,
 Paint to her mind the bridal's state;
 That Wolsey's voice the blessing spoke,
 More, Sands, and Denny, pass'd the joke:
 That bluff King Hal the curtain drew,
 And Catherine's hand the stocking threw;
 And afterwards, for many a day,
 That it was held enough to say,
 In blessing to a wedded pair,
 "Love they like Wilton and like Clare!"

L'ENVOY.

TO THE READER.

WHY then a final note prolong,
 Or lengthen out a closing song,
 Unless to bid the gentles speed,
 Who long have listed to my rede?
 To Statesmen grave, if such may deign
 To read the Minstrel's idle strain,
 Sound head, clean hand, and piercing wit,
 And patriotic heart—as PITT!
 A garland for the hero's crest,
 And twined by her he loves the best;
 To every lovely lady bright,
 What can I wish but faithful knight?
 To every faithful lover too,
 What can I wish but lady true?
 And knowledge to the studious sage;
 And pillow to the head of age.
 To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
 Has cheated of thy hour of play,
 Light task, and merry holiday!
 To all, to each, a fair good night,
 And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!

THE
LADY OF THE LAKE.
A Poem.
IN SIX CANTOS.

TO
THE MOST NOBLE
JOHN JAMES, MARQUIS OF ABERCORN,
ETC. ETC. ETC.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED

BY
THE AUTHOR

ARGUMENT.

THE Scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the Vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

THE
LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

THE CHASE.

HARP of the North ! that mouldering long hast hung
On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring,
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung,
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string, —
O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep ?
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep ?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful, or subdued the proud.
At each according pause, was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high !
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bow'd ;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye
O wake once more ! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray ;
O wake once more ! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay :
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touch'd in vain,
Then silent be no more ! Enchantress, wake again !

L

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade ;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,
The deep-mouth'd bloodhound's heavy bay
Resounded up the rocky way,
And faint, from farther distance borne,
Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

II.

As Chief, who hears his Warder call,
 "To arms! the foemen storm the wall."
 The antler'd monarch of the waste
 Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
 But, ere his fleet career he took,
 The dew-drops from his flanks ho shook ;
 Like crested leader proud and high,
 Toes'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky ;
 A moment gazed adown the dale,
 A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
 A moment listen'd to the cry,
 That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh ;
 Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
 With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
 And, stretching forward free and far,
 Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yell'd on the view the opening pack ;
 Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them back ;
 To many a mingled sound at once
 The awaken'd mountain gave response.
 A hundred dogs bay'd deep and strong,
 Clatter'd a hundred steeds along,
 Their peal the merry horns rung out,
 A hundred voices join'd the shout ;
 With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
 No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
 Far from the tumult fled the roe,
 Close in her covert cower'd the doe ;
 The falcon, from her cairn on high,
 Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
 Till far beyond her piercing ken
 The hurricane had swept the glen.
 Faint, and more faint, its failing din
 Return'd from cavern, cliff, and linn,
 And silence settled, wide and still,
 On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

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

V.

The noble stag was pausing now
 Upon the mountain's southern brow,

Where broad extended, far beneath,
 The varied realms of fair Menteith.
 With anxious eye he wander'd o'er
 Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
 And ponder'd refuge from his toil,
 By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
 But nearer was the copsewood grey,
 That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue
 On the bold cliffs of Beuvenue.
 Fresh vigour with the hope return'd,
 With flying foot the heath he spurn'd,
 Held westward with unweari'd race,
 And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
 As swept the hunt through Cambus-more ;
 What reins were tighten'd in despair,
 When rose Benledi's ridge in air ;
 Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
 Who shunn'd to stem the flooded Teith,—
 For twice that day, from shore to shore,
 The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
 Few were the stragglers, following far,
 That reach'd the lake of Vennachar ;
 And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
 The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
 That horseman plied the scourge and steel ;
 For jaded now, and spent with toil,
 Emboss'd with foam, and dark with soil,
 While every gasp with sobs he drew,
 The labouring stag strain'd full in view.
 Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
 Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,
 Fast on his flying traces came,
 And all but won that desperate game ;
 For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
 Vindictive toil'd the bloodhounds stanch ;
 Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
 Nor farther might the quarry strain.
 Thus up the margin of the lake,
 Between the precipice and brake,
 O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII.

The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
 The lone lake's western boundary,
 And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
 Where that huge rampart barr'd the way ;
 Already glorying in the prize,
 Measured his antlers with his eyes ;

For the death-wound and death-haloo,
 Muster'd his breath, his whinyard drew ;—
 But thundering as he came prepared,
 With ready arm and weapon bared,
 The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
 And turn'd him from the opposing rock ;
 Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
 Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,
 In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
 His solitary refuge took.
 There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
 Cold dews and wild-flowers on his head,
 He heard the baffled dogs in vain
 Rave through the hollow pass amain,
 Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

IX.

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,
 To cheer them on the vanish'd game ;
 But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
 The gallant horse exhausted fell.
 The impatient rider strove in vain
 To rouse him with the spur and rein.
 For the good steed, his labours o'er,
 Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more ;
 Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
 He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.
 " I little thought, when first thy rein
 I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
 That Highland eagle e'er should feed
 On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed !
 Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
 That costs thy life, my gallant grey !"

X.

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
 From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
 Back limp'd, with slow and crippled pace,
 The sulky leaders of the chase ;
 Close to their master's side they press'd,
 With drooping tail and humbled crest ;
 But still the dingle's hollow throat
 Prolong'd the swelling bugle-note.
 The owlets started from their dream,
 The eagles answer'd with their scream,
 Round and around the sounds were cast,
 Till echo seem'd an answering blast ;
 And on the Hunter hied his way,
 To join some comrades of the day ;
 Yet often paused, so strange the road,
 So wondrous were the scenes it show'd.

XI.

The western waves of ebbing day
 Roll'd o'er the glen their level way ;

Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
 Was bathed in floods of living fire.
 But not a setting beam could glow
 Within the dark ravines below,
 Where twined the path in shadow hid,
 Round many a rocky pyramid,
 Shooting abruptly from the dell
 Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle ;
 Round many an insulated mass,
 The native bulwarks of the pass,
 Huge as the tower which builders vain
 Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.
 The rocky summits, split and rent,
 Form'd turret, dome, or battlement ;
 Or seem'd fantastically set
 With cupola or minaret,
 Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
 Or mosque of Eastern architect.
 Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
 Nor lack'd they many a banner fair ;
 For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
 Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
 All twinkling with the dewdrops sheen,
 The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
 And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
 Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

XII.

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild,
 Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
 Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
 Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
 The primrose pale and violet flower,
 Found in each cliff a narrow bower ;
 Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
 Emblems of punishment and pride,
 Group'd their dark hues with every stain
 The weather-beaten crags retain,
 With boughs that quaked at every breath.
 Grey birch and aspen wept beneath ;
 Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
 Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
 And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
 His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
 Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
 His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
 Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
 Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
 The wanderer's eye could barely view
 The summer heaven's delicious blue ;
 So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
 The scenery of a fairy dream.

XIII.

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
 A narrow inlet, still and deep.

Affording scarce such breadth of brim
 As served the wild-duck's brood to swim.
 Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
 But broader when again appearing,
 Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
 Could on the dark-blue mirror trace ;
 And farther as the Hunter stray'd,
 Still broader sweep its channels made.
 The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
 Emerging from entangled wood,
 But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
 Like castle girdled with its moat ;
 Yet broader floods extending still
 Divide them from their parent hill,
 Till each, retiring, claims to be
 An islet in an inland sea.

XIV.

And now, to issue from the glen,
 No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
 Unless he climb, with footing nice,
 A far projecting precipice.
 The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
 The hazel saplings lent their aid :
 And thus an airy point he won,
 Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
 One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
 Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
 In all her length far winding lay,
 With promontory, creek, and bay,
 And islands that, empurpled bright,
 Floated amid the livelier light,
 And mountains, that like giants stand,
 To sentinel enchanted land.
 High on the south, huge Benvenue
 Down on the lake in masses threw
 Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd,
 The fragments of an earlier world ;
 A wildering forest feather'd o'er
 His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
 While on the north, through middle air,
 Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XV.

From the steep promontory gazed
 The stranger, raptured and amazed.
 And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
 "For princely pomp, or churchman's pride !
 On this bold brow, a lordly tower ;
 In that soft vale, a lady's bower ;
 On yonder meadow, far away,
 The turrets of a cloister grey ;
 How blithely might the bugle-horn
 Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn !

How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
 Chime, when the groves were still and mute !
 And, when the midnight moon should lave
 Her forehead in the silver wave,
 How solemn on the ear would come
 The holy matins' distant hum,
 While the deep peal's commanding tone
 Should wake, in yonder islet lone,
 A sainted hermit from his cell,
 To drop a bead with every knell—
 And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
 Should each bewilder'd stranger call
 To friendly feast, and lighted hall.

XVI.

“ Blithe were it then to wander here !
 But now,—beshrew you nimble deer,—
 Like that same hermit's, thin and spare.
 The copse must give my evening fare ;
 Some mossy bank my couch must be,
 Some rustling oak my canopy.
 Yet pass we that ; the war and chase
 Give little choice of resting-place ;—
 A summer night, in greenwood spent,
 Were but to-morrow's merriment :
 But hosts may in these wilds abound,
 Such as are better miss'd than found ;
 To meet with Highland plunderers here
 Were worse than loss of steed or deer. —
 I am alone ;—my bugle strain
 May call some straggler of the train ;
 Or, fall the worst that may betide,
 Ere now this falchion has been tried.”

XVII.

But scarce again his horn he wound,
 When lo ! forth starting at the sound,
 From underneath an aged oak,
 That slanted from the islet rock,
 A damsel guider of its way,
 A little skiff shot to the bay,
 That round the promontory steep
 Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
 Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
 The weeping willow twig to lave,
 And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
 The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
 The boat had touch'd the silver strand,
 Just as the Hunter left his stand,
 And stood conceal'd amid the brake,
 To view this Lady of the Lake.
 The maiden paused, as if again
 She thought to catch the distant strain.
 With head up-raised, and look intent,
 And eye and ear attentive bent,

And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem'd to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.

XVIII.

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,
Of finer form, or lovelier face!
What though the sun, with ardent frown,
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown?—
The sportive toil, which, short and light,
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,
Served too in hastier swell to show
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:
What though no rule of courtly grace
To measured mood had train'd her pace?—
A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dash'd the dew.
E'en the slight harebell raised its head,
Elastic from her airy tread:
What though upon her speech there hung
The accents of the mountain tongue?—
Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear,
The listener held his breath to hear!

XIX.

A Chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid:
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid
Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye,
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,
Or filial love was glowing there,
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,
Or tale of injury called forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unreveal'd,
With maiden pride the maid conceal'd,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;—
Oh! need I tell that passion's name?

XX.

Impatient of the silent horn,
 Now on the gale her voice was borne :—
 " Father ! " she cried ; the rocks around
 Loved to prolong the gentle sound.
 A while she paused, no answer came,—
 " Malcolm, was thine the blast ? " the name
 Less resolutely utter'd fell,
 The echoes could not catch the swell.
 " A stranger I," the Huntsman said,
 Advancing from the hazel shade.
 The maid, alarm'd, with hasty oar,
 Push'd her light shallop from the shore,
 And when a space was gain'd between,
 Closer she drew her bosom's screen ;
 (So forth the startled swan would swing,
 So turn to prune his ruffled wing.)
 Then safe, though flutter'd and amazed,
 She paused, and on the stranger gazed.
 Not his the form, nor his the eye,
 That youthful maidens went to fly.

XXI.

On his bold visage middle age
 Had slightly press'd its signet sage,
 Yet had not quench'd the open truth
 And fiery vehemence of youth ;
 Forward and frolic glee was there,
 The will to do, the soul to dare,
 The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire,
 Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
 His limbs were cast in manly mould,
 For hardy sports or contest bold ;
 And though in peaceful garb array'd,
 And weaponless except his blade,
 His stately mien as well implied
 A high-born heart, a martial pride,
 As if a Baron's crest he wore,
 And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
 Slighting the petty need he show'd,
 He told of his benighted road ;
 His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
 In phrase of gentlest courtesy ;
 Yet seem'd that tone, and gesture bland,
 Less used to sue than to command.

XXII.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
 And, reassured, at length replied,
 That Highland halls were open still
 To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
 ' Nor think you unexpected come
 To yon lone isle, our desert home ;
 Before the heath had lost the dew,
 This morn, a couch was pull'd for you ;

On yonder mountain's purple head
 Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
 And our broad nets have swept the mere.
 To furnish forth your evening cheer."—
 "Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
 Your courtesy has err'd," he said ;
 "No right have I to claim, misplaced,
 The welcome of expected guest.
 A wanderer, here by fortune tost,
 My way, my friends, my courser lost,
 I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
 Have ever drawn your mountain air,
 Till on this lake's romantic strand,
 I found a fay in fairy land !"—

XXIII.

"I well believe," the maid replied,
 As her light skiff approach'd the side,—
 "I well believe, that ne'er before
 Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore ;
 But yet, as far as yesternight,
 Old Allan-Bane foretold your plight,—
 A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
 Was on the vision'd future bent.
 He saw your steed, a dappled grey,
 Lie dead beneath the birchen way ;
 Painted exact your form and mien,
 Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
 That tassell'd horn so gaily gilt,
 That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
 That cap with heron plumage trim,
 And yon two hounds so dark and grim.
 He bade that all should ready be,
 To grace a guest of fair degree ;
 But light I held his prophecy,
 And deem'd it was my father's horn,
 Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne."

XXIV.

The stranger smiled :—"Since to your home
 A destined errant-knight I come,
 Announced by prophet sooth and old,
 Doom'd, doubtless, for achievement bold,
 I'll lightly front each high emprise,
 For one kind glance of those bright eyes.
 Permit me, first, the task to guide
 Your fairy frigate o'er the tide."
 The maid, with smile suppress'd and sly,
 The toil unwonted saw him try ;
 For seldom sure, if e'er before,
 His noble hand had grasp'd an oar :
 Yet with main strength his strokes he drew
 And o'er the lake the shallop flew ;
 With heads erect, and whimpering cry,
 The hounds behind their passage ply.

Nor frequent does the bright oar break
 The darkening mirror of the lake,
 Until the rocky isle they reach,
 And moor their shallop on the beach.

XXV.

The stranger view'd the shore around ;
 'Twas all so close with copsewood bound,
 Nor track nor pathway might declare
 That human foot frequented there.
 Until the mountain-maiden show'd
 A clambering unsuspected road,
 That winded through the tangled screen,
 And open'd on a narrow green,
 Where weeping birch and willow round
 With their long fibres swept the ground.
 Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
 Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

XXVI.

It was a lodge of ample size,
 But strange of structure and device ;
 Of such materials, as around
 The workman's hand had readiest found.
 Lopp'd off their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,
 And by the hatchet rudely squared,
 To give the walls their destined height,
 The sturdy oak and ash unite ;
 While moss and clay and leaves combined
 To fence each crevice from the wind.
 The lighter pine-trees, overhead,
 Their slender length for rafters spread,
 And wither'd heath and rushes dry
 Supplied a russet canopy.
 Due westward, fronting to the green,
 A rural portico was seen,
 Aloft on native pillars borne,
 Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
 Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
 The ivy and Idæan vine,
 The clematis, the favour'd flower
 Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
 And every hardy plant could bear
 Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
 An instant in this porch she staid,
 And gaily to the stranger said,
 " On heaven and on thy lady call,
 And enter the enchanted hall ! "

XXVII.

" My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,
 My gentle guide, in following thee."
 He cross'd the threshold—and a clang
 Of angry steel that instant rang.
 To his bold brow his spirit rush'd,
 But soon for vain alarm he blush'd,

When on the floor he saw display'd,
Cause of the din, a naked blade
Dropp'd from the sheath, that careless flung
Upon a stag's huge antlers swung ;
For all around, the walls to grace,
Hung trophies of the fight or chase :
A target there, a bugle here,
A battle-axe, a hunting spear,
And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,
With the tusk'd trophies of the boar.
Here grins the wolf as when he died,
And there the wild-cat's brindled hide
The frontlet of the elk adorns,
Or mantles o'er the bison's horns ;
Pennons and flags defaced and stain'd,
That blackening streaks of blood retain'd,
And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,
With otter's fur and seal's unite,
In rude and uncouth tapestry all,
To garnish forth the silvan hall.

XXVIII.

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised :—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length,
And as the brand he poised and sway'd,
“ I never knew but one,” he said,
“ Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field.”
She sigh'd, then smiled and took the word :
“ You see the guardian champion's sword ;
As light it trembles in his hand,
As in my grasp a hazel wand ;
My sire's tall form might grace the part
Of Ferragus, or Ascabart ;
But in the absent giant's hold
Are women now, and menials old.”

XXIX.

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame ;
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid,
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unask'd his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestion'd turn, the banquet o'er.

At length his rank the stranger names,
 "The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
 Lord of a barren heritage,
 Which his brave sires, from age to age,
 By their good swords had held with toil;
 His sire had fall'n in such turmoil,
 And he, God wot, was forced to stand
 Oft for his right with blade in hand.
 This morning with Lord Moray's train
 He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
 Outstripp'd his comrades, miss'd the deer,
 Lost his good steed, and wander'd here."

xxx.

Fain would the Knight in turn require
 The name and state of Ellen's sire.
 Well show'd the elder lady's mien,
 That courts and cities she had seen;
 Ellen, though more her looks display'd
 The simple grace of silvan maid,
 In speech and gesture, form and face,
 Show'd she was come of gentle race.
 'Twere strange in ruder rank to find
 Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
 Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
 Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
 Or Ellen, innocently gay,
 Turn'd all inquiry light away:—
 "Weird women we! by dale and down
 We dwell, afar from tower and town.
 We stem the flood, we ride the blast,
 On wandering knights our spells we cast;
 While viewless minstrels touch the string,
 'Tis thus our charmed rhymes we sing."
 She sung, and still a harp unseen
 Fill'd up the symphony between.

xxxI.

Song.

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
 Dream of battled fields no more,
 Days of danger, nights of waking.
 In our isle's enchanted hall,
 Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
 Fairy strains of music fall,
 Every sense in slumber dewing.
 Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
 Dream of fighting fields no more:
 Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
 Morn of toil, nor night of waking.
 "No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
 Armour's clang, or war-steed champing,
 Trump nor pibroch summon here
 Mustering clan, or squadron tramping

Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
 At the day-break from the fallow,
 And the bittern sound his drum,
 Booming from the sedgy shallow.
 Ruder sounds shall none be near,
 Guards nor warders challenge here,
 Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
 Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

XXXII.

She paused—then, blushing, led the lay
 To grace the stranger of the day.
 Her mellow notes awhile prolong
 The cadence of the flowing song,
 Till to her lips in measured frame
 The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

Song continued.

"Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
 While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
 Dream not, with the rising sun,
 Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
 Sleep! the deer is in his den;
 Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;
 Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen,
 How thy gallant steed lay dying.
 Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done,
 Think not of the rising sun,
 For at dawning to assail ye,
 Here no bugles sound reveillé."

XXXIII.

The hall was clear'd—the stranger's bed
 Was there of mountain heather spread,
 Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
 And dream'd their forest sports again.
 But vainly did the heath-flower shed
 Its moorland fragrance round his head;
 Not Ellen's spell had lull'd to rest
 The fever of his troubled breast.
 In broken dreams the image rose
 Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
 His steed now flounders in the brake,
 Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
 Now leader of a broken host,
 His standard falls, his honour's lost.
 Then,—from my couch may heavenly might
 Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
 Again return'd the scenes of youth,
 Of confident undoubting truth;
 Again his soul he interchanged
 With friends whose hearts were long estranged.
 They come, in dim procession led,
 The cold, the faithless, and the dead;
 As warm each hand, each brow as gay,
 As if they parted yesterday.

And doubt distracts him at the view—
 Oh, were his senses false or true?
 Dream'd he of death, or broken vow,
 Or is it all a vision now?

XXXIV.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
 He seem'd to walk, and speak of love;
 She listen'd with a blush and sigh,
 His suit was warm, his hopes were high
 He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
 And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
 The phantom's sex was changed and gone
 Upon its head a helmet shone;
 Slowly enlarged to giant size,
 With darken'd cheek and threatening eyes
 The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
 To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
 He woke, and, panting with affright,
 Recall'd the vision of the night.
 The hearth's decaying brands were red,
 And deep and dusky lustre shed,
 Half showing, half concealing, all
 The uncouth trophies of the hall.
 Mid those the stranger fixed his eye,
 Where that huge falchion hung on high,
 And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
 Rush'd, chasing countless thoughts along,
 Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
 He rose, and sought the moonshine pure.

XXXV.

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom,
 Wasted around their rich perfume:
 The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm,
 The aspens slept beneath the calm;
 The silver light, with quivering glance,
 Play'd on the water's still expanse,—
 Wild were the heart whose passions' sway
 Could rage beneath the sober ray!
 He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
 While thus he commun'd with his breast:—
 "Why is it, at each turn I trace
 Some memory of that exiled race?
 Can I not mountain-maiden spy,
 But she must bear the Douglas eye?
 Can I not view a Highland brand,
 But it must match the Douglas hand?
 Can I not frame a fever'd dream,
 But still the Douglas is the theme?
 I'll dream no more—by manly mind
 Not even in sleep is will resign'd.
 My midnight orisons said o'er,
 I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."
 His midnight orisons he told,
 A prayer with every bead of gold

Consign'd to heaven his cares and woes,
 And sunk in undisturb'd repose ;
 Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
 And morning dawn'd on Benvenue.

CANTO SECOND.

THE ISLAND.

L

AT morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,
 'Tis morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,
 All Nature's children feel the matin spring
 Of life reviving, with reviving day ;
 And while yon little bark glides down the bay,
 Wafting the stranger on his way again,
 Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey,
 And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,
 Mix'd with the sounding harp, O white-hair'd Allan-Bane !

II

Song.

“ Not faster yonder rowers' might
 Flings from their oars the spray,
 Not faster yonder rippling bright,
 That tracks the shallop's course in light,
 Melts in the lake away,
 Than men from memory erase
 The benefits of former days ;
 Then, stranger, go ! good speed the while,
 Nor think again of the lonely isle.

“ High place to thee in royal court,
 High place in battle line,
 Good hawk and hound for silvan sport,
 Where beauty sees the brave resort,
 The honour'd meed be thine !
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear,
 And lost in love and friendship's smile
 Be memory of the lonely isle.

III

Song continued.

“ But if beneath yon southern sky
 A plaided stranger roam,
 Whose drooping crest and stifed sigh,
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye,
 Pine for his Highland home ;
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show
 The care that soothes a wanderer's woe ;
 Remember then thy hap ere while.
 A stranger in the lonely isle

“ Or if on life's uncertain main
 Mishap shall mar thy sail ;
 If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,
 Woe, want, and exile thou sustain
 Beneath the fickle gale ;
 Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,
 On thankless courts, or friends estranged,
 But come where kindred worth shall smile.
 To greet thee in the lonely isle.”

IV.

As died the sounds upon the tide,
 The shallop reach'd the mainland side,
 And ere his onward way he took,
 The stranger cast a lingering look,
 Where easily his eye might reach
 The Harper on the islet beach,
 Reclined against a blighted tree,
 As wasted, grey, and worn as he.
 To minstrel meditation given,
 His reverend brow was raised to heaven.
 As from the rising sun to claim
 A sparkle of inspiring flame.
 His hand, reclined upon the wire,
 Seem'd watching the awakening fire ;
 So still he sate, as those who wait
 Till judgment speak the doom of fate ;
 So still, as if no breeze might dare
 To lift one lock of hoary hair ;
 So still, as life itself were fled,
 In the last sound his harp had sped.

V.

Upon a rock with lichens wild,
 Beside him Ellen sat and smiled.—
 Smiled she to see the stately drake
 Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
 While her vex'd spaniel, from the beach,
 Bay'd at the prize beyond his reach ?
 Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows
 Why deepen'd on her cheek the rose ? -
 Forgive, forgive, Fidelity !
 Perchance the maiden smiled to see
 Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,
 And stop and turn to wave anew ;
 And, lovely ladies, ere your ire
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,
 Show me the fair would scorn to spy,
 And prize such conquest of her eye !

VI.

While yet he loiter'd on the spot,
 It seem'd as Ellen mark'd him not ;
 But when he turn'd him to the glade,
 One courtous parting sign she made ;

And after, oft the Knight would say,
 That not when prize of festal day
 Was dealt him by the brightest fair,
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,
 So highly did his bosom swell,
 As at that simple mute farewell.
 Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
 He parts—the maid, unconscious still,
 Watch'd him wind slowly round the hill ;
 But when his stately form was hid,
 The guardian in her bosom chid—
 “Thy Malcolm ! vain and selfish maid !”
 'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said,—
 “Not so had Malcolm idly hung
 On the smooth phrase of southern tongue ;
 Not so had Malcolm strain'd his eye,
 Another step than thine to spy.—
 Wake, Allan-Bane !” aloud she cried,
 To the old Minstrel by her side,—
 “Arouse thee from thy moody dream !
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
 And warm thee with a noble name ;
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme !”
 Scarce from her lip the word had rush'd,
 When deep the conscious maiden blush'd ;
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

VII.

The Minstrel waked his harp—three times
 Arose the well-known martial chimes,
 And thrice their high heroic pride
 In melancholy murmurs died.
 “Vainly thou bidd'st, O noble maid,”
 Clasping his wither'd hands, he said,—
 “Vainly thou bidd'st me wake the strain,
 Though all unwont to bid in vain.
 Alas ! than mine a mightier hand
 Has tuned my harp, my strings has spann'd !
 I touch the chords of joy, but low
 And mournful answer notes of woe ;
 And the proud march, which victors tread,
 Sinks in the wailing for the dead.
 O well for me, if mine alone
 That dirge's deep prophetic tone !
 If, as my tuneful fathers said,
 This harp, which erst Saint Modan sway'd,
 Can thus its master's fate foretell,
 Then welcome be the minstrel's knell.

VIII.

“But ah ! dear lady, thus it sigh'd
 The eve thy sainted mother died ;
 And such the sounds which, while I strove
 To wake a lay of war or love,

Came marring all the festal mirth,
 Appalling me who gave them birth,
 And disobedient to my call,
 Wail'd loud through Bothwell's banner'd hall,
 Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
 Were exiled from their native heaven.—
 Oh ! if yet worse mishap and woe,
 My master's house must undergo,
 Or aught but weal to Ellen fair,
 Brood in these accents of despair,
 No future bard, sad Harp ! shall fling
 Triumph or rapture from thy string ;
 One short, one final strain shall flow
 Fraught with unutterable woe,
 Then shiver'd shall thy fragments lie,
 Thy master cast him down and die !”

IX.

Soothing she answer'd him—“ Assuage,
 Mine honour'd friend, the fears of age ;
 All melodies to thee are known,
 That harp has rung, or pipe has blown,
 In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
 From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
 At times, unbidden notes should rise,
 Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
 Entangling, as they rush along,
 The war-march with the funeral song ?—
 Small ground is now for boding fear ;
 Obscure, but safe, we rest us here.
 My sire, in native virtue great,
 Resigning lordship, lands, and state,
 Not then to fortune more resign'd,
 Than yonder oak might give the wind ;
 The graceful foliage storms may reave,
 The noble stem they cannot grieve.
 For me,”—she stoop'd, and, looking round,
 Pluck'd a blue hare-bell from the ground,—
 “ For me, whose memory scarce conveys
 An image of more splendid days,
 This little flower, that loves the lea,
 May well my simple emblem be ;
 It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose
 That in the King's own garden grows ;
 And when I place it in my hair,
 Allan, a bard is bound to swear,
 He ne'er saw coronet so fair.”
 Then playfully the chaplet wild
 She wreathed in her dark locks, and smiled.

X.

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
 Wiled the old harper's mood away.
 With such a look as hermits throw,
 When angels stoop to soothe their woe.

He gazed, till fond regret and pride
 Thrill'd to a tear, then thus replied :—
 “ Loveliest and best ! thou little know'st
 The rank, the honours, thou hast lost !
 Oh, might I live to see thee grace,
 In Scotland's court, thy birth-right place,
 To see my favourite's step advance,
 The lightest in the courtly dance,
 The cause of every gallant's sigh,
 And leading star of every eye,
 And theme of every minstrel's art,
 The lady of the Bleeding Heart ! ”—

XI.

“ Fair dreams are these,” the maiden cried,
 (Light was her accent, yet she sigh'd ;)
 “ Yet is this mossy rock to me
 Worth splendid chair and canopy ;
 Nor would my footsteps spring more gay
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
 Nor half so pleas'd mine ear incline
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine.
 And then for suitors proud and high,
 To bend before my conquering eye,—
 Thou, flattering Bard ! thyself wilt say,
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's pride,
 The terror of Loch Lomond's side,
 Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay
 A Lennox foray—for a day.”—

XII.

The ancient Bard her glee repress'd :—
 “ Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest !
 For who, through all this western wild,
 Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled !
 In Holy-Rood a knight he slew ;
 I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
 Courtiers give place before the stride
 Of the undaunted homicide ;
 And since, though outlaw'd, hath his hand
 Full sternly kept his mountain land.
 Who else dared give—ah ! woe the day,
 That I such hated truth should say !—
 The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
 Disown'd by every noble peer,
 Even the rude refuge we have here ?
 Alas ! this wild marauding Chief
 Alone might hazard our relief,
 And, now thy maiden charms expand,
 Looks for his guerdon in thy hand ;
 Full soon may dispensation sought,
 To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
 Then, though an exile on the hill,
 Thy father, as the Douglas, still

Be held in reverence and fear ;
 And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear,
 That thou might'st guide with silken thread,
 Slave of thy will, this Chieftain dread ;
 Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain !
 Thy hand is on a lion's mane."—

XIII.

"Minstrel," the maid replied,—and high
 Her father's soul glanced from her eye,—
 "My debts to Roderick's house I know :
 All that a mother could bestow,
 To Lady Margaret's care I owe,
 Since first an orphan in the wild
 She sorrow'd o'er her sister's child ;
 To her brave chieftain son, from ire
 Of Scotland's King who shrouds my sire,
 A deeper, holier debt is owed ;
 And, could I pay it with my blood,
 Allan ! Sir Roderick should command
 My blood, my life,—but not my hand.
 Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell
 A votaress in Maronnan's cell ;
 Rather through realms beyond the sea,
 Seeking the world's cold charity,
 Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,
 And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,
 An outcast pilgrim will she rove,
 Than wed the man she cannot love.

XIV.

"Thou shakest, good friend, thy tresses gray,
 That pleading look, what can it say
 But what I own ?—I grant him brave,
 But wild as Bracklinn's thundering wave ;
 And generous—save vindictive mood,
 Or jealous transport, chafe his blood :
 I grant him true to friendly band,
 As his claymore is to his hand ;
 But oh ! that very blade of steel
 More mercy for a foe would feel :
 I grant him liberal, to fling
 Among his clan the wealth they bring,
 When back by lake and glen they wind,
 And in the Lowland leave behind,
 Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,
 A mass of ashes slaked with blood.
 The hand that for my father fought,
 I honour, as his daughter ought ;
 But can I clasp it reeking red,
 From peasants slaughter'd in their shed ?
 No ! wildly while his virtues gleam,
 They make his passions darker seem,
 And flash along his spirit high,
 Like lightning o'er the midnight sky.

While yet a child,—and children know,
 Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—
 I shudder'd at his brow of gloom,
 His shadowy plaid, and sable plume;
 A maiden gown, I ill could bear
 His haughty mien and lordly air:
 But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,
 In serious mood, to Roderick's name,
 I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er
 A Douglas knew the word, with fear.
 To change such odious theme were best,—
 What think'st thou of our stranger guest?—

XV.

“What think I of him?—woe the while
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
 For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,
 His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
 Did, self-unscabbarded, foreshow
 The footstep of a secret foe.
 If courtly spy hath harbour'd here,
 What may we for the Douglas fear?
 What for this island, deem'd of old
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray
 What yet may jealous Roderick say?
 —Nay, wave not thy disdainful head,
 Bethink thee of the discord dread,
 That kindled when at Beltane game
 Thou ledd'st the dance with Malcolm Græme;
 Still, though thy sire the peace renew'd,
 Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud.
 Beware!—But hark, what sounds are these?
 My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
 No weeping birch, nor aspens wake,
 Nor breath is dimpling in the lake,
 Still is the canna's * hoary beard,
 Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
 And hark again! some pipe of war
 Sends the bold pibroch from afar.”

XVI.

Far up the lengthen'd lake were spied
 Four darkening specks upon the tide,
 That, slow enlarging on the view,
 Four mann'd and masted barges grew,
 And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,
 Steer'd full upon the lonely isle;
 The point of Brianchoil they pass'd,
 And, to the windward as they cast,
 Against the sun they gave to shine
 The bold Sir Roderick's banner'd Pine.

* The cotton-grass.

Nearer and nearer as they bear,
 Spear, pikes, and axes flash in air.
 Now might you see the tartans brave,
 And plaids and plumage dance and wave :
 Now see the bonnets sink and rise,
 As his tough oar the rower plies ;
 See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,
 The wave ascending into smoke ;
 See the proud pipers on the bow,
 And mark the gaudy streamers flow
 From their loud chanters down, and sweep
 The furrow'd bosom of the deep,
 As, rushing through the lake amain,
 They plied the ancient Highland strain.

XVII.

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
 And louder rung the pibroch proud.
 At first the sound, by distance tame,
 Mellow'd along the waters came,
 And, lingering long by cape and bay,
 Wail'd every harsher note away ;
 Then bursting bolder on the ear,
 The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear ;
 Those thrilling sounds, that call the might
 Of Old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
 Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
 The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
 And, hurrying at the signal dread,
 The batter'd earth returns their tread.
 Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
 Express'd their merry marching on.
 Ere peal of closing battle rose,
 With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows ;
 And mimic din of stroke and ward,
 As broadsword upon target jarr'd ;
 And groaning pause, ere yet again
 Condensed, the battle yell'd amain ;
 The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
 Retreat borne headlong into rout ;
 And bursts of triumph, to declare
 Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
 Nor ended thus the strain ; but slow
 Sunk in a moan prolong'd and low,
 And changed the conquering clarion swell
 For wild lament o'er those that fell.

XVIII.

The war-pipes ceased ; but lake and hill
 Were busy with their echoes still ;
 And, when they slept, a vocal strain
 Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,
 While loud a hundred clansmen raise
 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise.

Each boatman, bending to his oar,
 With measured sweep the burden bore,
 In such wild cadence, as the breeze
 Makes through December's leafless trees.
 The chorus first could Allan know,
 "Roderick Vich Alpine, ho! iro!"
 And near, and nearer as they row'd,
 Distinct the martial ditty flow'd.

XIX.

Boat Song.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
 Honour'd and bless'd be the ever-green Pine!
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth lend it sap anew,
 Gayly to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
 While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back agen,
 "Roderigh * Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"
 Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
 When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moor'd in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praise agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

XX.

Proudly our pibroch has thrill'd in Glen Fruin,
 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied;
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.
 Widow and Saxon maid
 Long shall lament our raid,
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe;
 Lennox and Leven-glen
 Shake when they hear agen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"
 Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
 Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green Pine!
 O that the rose-bud that graces yon islands,
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
 O that some seedling gem,
 Worthy such noble stem,
 Honour'd and bless'd in their shadow might grow!
 Loud should Clan-Alpine then
 Ring from the deepest glen,
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

* Black Mountain, the dependant of Alpine

XXI.

With all her joyful female band,
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,
And high their snowy arms they threw,
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name ;
While, prompt to please, with mother's art,
The darling passion of his heart,
The Dame call'd Ellen to the strand,
To greet her kinsman ere he land :
" Come, loiterer, come ! a Douglas thou,
And shun to wreath a victor's brow ?"
Reluctantly and slow, the maid
The unwelcome summoning obey'd,
And, when a distant bugle rung,
In the mid-path aside she sprung :—
" List, Allan-Bane ! From mainland east
I hear my father's signal blast.
Be ours," she cried, " the skiff to guide,
And waft him from the mountain-side."
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,
She darted to her shallop light,
And, eagerly while Roderick scann'd,
For her dear form, his mother's band,
The islet far behind her lay,
And she had landed in the bay.

XXII.

Some feelings are to mortals given,
With less of earth in them than heaven :
And if there be a human tear
From passion's dross refined and clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's cheek,
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head !
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely press'd,
Such holy drops her tresses steep'd,
Though 'twas a hero's eye that weep'd.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Mark'd she, that fear (affection's proof)
Still held a graceful youth aloof ;
No ! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

XXIII.

Allan, with wistful look the while,
Mark'd Roderick landing on the isle ;
His master piteously he eyed,
Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,
Then dash'd, with hasty hand, away
From his dimm'd eye the gathering spray ;

And Douglas, as his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said,
 "Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy
 In my poor follower's glistening eye?
 I'll tell thee :—he recalls the day
 When in my praise he led the lay
 O'er the arch'd gate of Bothwell proud,
 While many a minstrel answer'd loud,
 When Percy's Norman pennon, won
 In bloody field, before me shone,
 And twice ten knights, the least a name
 As mighty as yon Chief may claim,
 Gracing my pomp, behind me came.
 Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud
 Was I of all that marshall'd crowd,
 Though the waned crescent own'd my might,
 And in my train troop'd lord and knight,
 Though Blantyre hymn'd her holiest lays,
 And Bothwell's bard flung back my praise,
 As when this old man's silent tear,
 And this poor maid's affection dear,
 A welcome give more kind and true,
 Than aught my better fortunes knew.
 Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,
 Oh ! it out-beggars all I lost !"

XXIV.

Delightful praise !—Like summer rose,
 That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
 The bashful maiden's cheek appear'd,
 For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
 The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
 The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide ;
 The loved caresses of the maid
 The dogs with crouch and whimper paid ;
 And, at her whistle, on her hand
 The falcon took his favourite stand,
 Closed his dark wing, relax'd his eye,
 Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.
 And, trust, while in such guise she stood,
 Like fabled Goddess of the wood,
 That if a father's partial thought
 O'erweigh'd her worth and beauty aught,
 Well might the lover's judgment fail
 To balance with a juster scale ;
 For with each secret glance he stole,
 The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

XXV.

Of stature tall, and slender frame,
 But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
 The belted plaid and tartan hose
 Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose ;
 His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
 Curl'd closely round his bonnet blue.

Train'd to the chase, his eagle eye
 The ptarmigan in snow could spy :
 Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
 He knew, through Lennox and Menteith ;
 Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe.
 When Malcolm bent his sounding bow ;
 And scarce that doe, though wing'd with fear,
 Outstripp'd in speed the mountaineer :
 Right up Ben-Lomond could he press,
 And not a sob his toil confess.
 His form accorded with a mind
 Lively and ardent, frank and kind ;
 A blither heart, till Ellen came,
 Did never love nor sorrow tame ;
 It danced as lightsome in his breast,
 As play'd the feather on his crest.
 Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,
 His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,
 And bards, who saw his features bold,
 When kindled by the tales of old,
 Said, were that youth to manhood grown,
 Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown
 Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,
 But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

XXVI.

Now back they wend their watery way,
 And, " O my sire ! " did Ellen say,
 " Why urge thy chase so far astray ?
 And why so late return'd ?—And why "—
 The rest was in her speaking eye.—
 " My child, the chase I follow far,
 'Tis mimicry of noble war ;
 And with that gallant pastime reft
 Were all of Douglas I have left.
 I met young Malcolm as I stray'd
 Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' shade,
 Nor stray'd I safe ; for, all around,
 Hunters and horsemen scour'd the ground
 This youth, though still a royal ward,
 Risk'd life and land to be my guard,
 And through the passes of the wood
 Guided my steps, not unpursued ;
 And Roderick shall his welcome make,
 Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.
 Then must he seek Strath-Endrick glen,
 Nor peril aught for me agen."

XXVII.

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
 Redden'd at sight of Malcolm Græme,
 Yet, not in action, word, or eye,
 Fail'd aught in hospitality.
 In talk and sport they whiled away
 The morning of that summer day ;

But at high noon a courier light
 Held secret parley with the Knight,
 Whose moody aspect soon declared,
 That evil were the news he heard.
 Deep thought seem'd toiling in his head ;
 Yet was the evening banquet made,
 Ere he assembled round the flame,
 His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,
 And Ellen, too ; then cast around
 His eyes, then fix'd them on the ground,
 As studying phrase that might avail
 Best to convey unpleasant tale.
 Long with his dagger's hilt he play'd,
 Then raised his haughty brow, and said :—

XXVIII.

“ Short be my speech ;—nor time affords,
 Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
 Kinsman and father,—if such name
 Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim ;
 Mine honour'd mother :—Ellen—why,
 My cousin, turn away thine eye ?—
 And Græme, in whom I hope to know
 Full soon a noble friend or foe,
 When age shall give thee thy command,
 And leading in thy native land,—
 List all !—The King's vindictive pride
 Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
 Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
 To share their monarch's silvan game,
 Themselves in bloody toils were snared ;
 And when the banquet they prepared,
 And wide their loyal portals hung,
 O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
 Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
 From Yarrow braes, and banks of Tweed,
 Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
 And from the silver Teviot's side ;
 The dales, where martial clans did ride,
 Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
 This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
 So faithless and so ruthless known,
 Now hither comes ; his end the same,
 The same pretext of silvan game.
 What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
 By fate of Border chivalry.
 Yet more ; amid Glenfinlas green,
 Douglas, thy stately form was seen—
 This by espial sure I know
 Your counsel in the streight I show ”

XXIX.

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
 Sought comfort in each other's eye,
 Then turn'd their ghastly look each one,
 This to her sire—that to her son?

The hasty colour went and came
 In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme;
 But from his glance it well appear'd,
 'Twas but for Ellen that he fear'd;
 While, sorrowful, but undismay'd,
 The Douglas thus his counsel said :—
 “ Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
 It may but thunder, and pass o'er;
 Nor will I here remain an hour,
 To draw the lightning on thy bower;
 For well thou know'st, at this grey head
 The royal bolt were fiercest sped.
 For thee, who, at thy King's command,
 Canst aid him with a gallant band,
 Submission, homage, humbled pride,
 Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
 Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
 Ellen and I will seek, apart,
 The refuge of some forest cell,
 There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
 Till on the mountain and the moor,
 The stern pursuit be pass'd and o'er.”—

XXX.

“ No, by mine honour,” Roderick said,
 “ So help me, Heaven, and my good blade!
 No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
 My father's ancient crest and mine,
 If from its shade in danger part
 The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
 Hear my blunt speech: Grant me this maid
 To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
 To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
 Will friends and allies flock enow;
 Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
 Will bind to us each Western Chief.
 When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
 The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
 The guards shall start in Stirling porch;
 And, when I light the nuptial torch,
 A thousand villages in flames
 Shall scare the slumbers of King James!
 —Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
 And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
 I meant not all my heart might say.
 Small need of inroad, or of fight,
 When the sage Douglas may unite
 Each mountain clan in friendly band,
 To guard the passes of their land,
 Till the foil'd King, from pathless glen,
 Shall bootless turn him home agen.”

XXXI.

There are who have, at midnight hour,
 In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,

And, on the verge that beetled o'er
 The ocean-tide's incessant roar,
 Dream'd calmly out their dangerous dream,
 Till waken'd by the morning beam;
 When, dazzled by the eastern glow,
 Such startler cast his glance below,
 And saw unmeasured depth around,
 And heard unintermitted sound,
 And thought the battled fence so frail,
 It waved like cobweb in the gale;—
 Amid his senses' giddy wheel,
 Did he not desperate impulse feel,
 Headlong to plunge himself below,
 And meet the worst his fears foreshow?—
 Thus, Ellen, dizzy and astound,
 As sudden ruin yawn'd around,
 By crossing terrors wildly toss'd,
 Still for the Douglas fearing most,
 Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,
 To buy his safety with her hand.

XXXII.

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
 In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
 And eager rose to speak—but ere
 His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
 Had Douglas mark'd the hectic strife,
 Where death seem'd combating with life;
 For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
 One instant rush'd the throbbing blood,
 Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
 Left its domain as wan as clay.
 "Roderick, enough! enough!" he cried,
 "My daughter cannot be thy bride;
 Not that the blush to wooer dear,
 Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
 It may not be—forgive her, Chief,
 Nor hazard aught for our relief.
 Against his sovereign, Douglas ne'er
 Will level a rebellious spear.
 'Twas I that taught his youthful hand
 To rein a steed and wield a brand;
 I see him yet, the princely boy!
 Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
 I love him still, despite my wrongs,
 By hasty wrath, and slanderous tongues.
 O seek the grace you well may find,
 Without a cause to mine combined."

XXXIII.

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode
 The waving of his tartans broad,
 And darken'd brow, where wounded pride
 With ire and disappointment vied,

Seem'd, by the torch's gloomy light,
 Like the ill Demon of the night,
 Stooping his pinions' shadowy sway
 Upon the nighted pilgrim's way :
 But, unrequited Love ! thy dart
 Plunged deepest its envenom'd smart,
 And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
 At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
 While eyes, that mock'd at tears before,
 With bitter drops were running o'er.
 The death-pangs of long-cherish'd hope
 Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
 But, struggling with his spirit proud,
 Convulsive heaved its chequer'd shroud,
 While every sob—so mute were all—
 Was heard distinctly through the hall.
 The son's despair, the mother's look,
 Ill might the gentle Ellen brook ;
 She rose, and to her side there came,
 To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

XXXIV.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
 As flashes flame through sable smoke,
 Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,
 To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,
 So the deep anguish of despair
 Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.
 With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
 On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid :
 " Back, beardless boy ! " he sternly said,
 " Back, minion ! hold'st thou thus at nought
 The lesson I so lately taught ?
 This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
 Thank thou for punishment delay'd."
 Eager as greyhound on his game,
 Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.
 " Perish my name, if aught afford
 Its Chieftain safety save his sword !"
 Thus as they strove, their desperate hand
 Gripped to the dagger or the brand,
 And death had been—but Douglas rose,
 And thrust between the struggling foes
 His giant strength :—" Chieftains, forego !
 I hold the first who strikes, my foe.—
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar !
 What ! is the Douglas fall'n so far,
 His daughter's hand is doom'd the spoil
 Of such dishonourable broil !"
 Sullen and slowly, they unclasp,
 As struck with shame, their desperate grasp
 And each upon his rival glared,
 With foot advanced, and blade half bared.

XXXV.

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
 Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
 And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,
 As falter'd through terrific dream.
 Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,
 And veil'd his wrath in scornful word:
 "Rest safe till morning; pity 'twere
 Such cheek should feel the midnight air!
 Then may'st thou to James Stuart tell,
 Roderick will keep the lake and fell,
 Nor lackey, with his freeborn clan,
 The pageant pomp of earthly man.
 More would he of Clan-Alpine know,
 Thou canst our strength and passes show.—
 Malise, what ho!"—his henchman came;
 "Give our safe-conduct to the Græme."
 Young Malcolm answer'd, calm and bold,
 "Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;
 The spot an angel deign'd to grace,
 Is bless'd, though robbers haunt the place.
 Thy churlish courtesy for those
 Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.
 As safe to me the mountain way
 At midnight as in blaze of day,
 Though with his boldest at his back,
 Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.—
 Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay,
 Nought here of parting will I say.
 Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
 So secret, but we meet agen.—
 Chieftain! we too shall find an hour."—
 He said, and left the silvan bower.

XXXVI.

Old Allan follow'd to the strand,
 (Such was the Douglas's command,
 And anxious told, how, on the morn,
 The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn,
 The Fiery Cross should circle o'er
 Dale, glen, and valley, down, and moor.
 Much were the peril to the Græme,
 From those who to the signal came;
 Far up the lake 'twere safest land,
 Himself would row him to the strand.
 He gave his counsel to the wind,
 While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,
 Round dirk and pouch and broadsword roll'd,
 His ample plaid in tighten'd fold,
 And stripp'd his limbs to such array,
 As best might suit the watery way,—

XXXVII.

Then spoke abrupt: "Farewell to thee.
 Pattern of old fidelity!"

The Minstrel's hand he kindly press'd,—
 "Oh! could I point a place of rest!
 My sovereign holds in ward my land,
 My uncle leads my vassal band;
 To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
 Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
 Yet, if there be one faithful Græme,
 Who loves the Chieftain of his name,
 Not long shall honour'd Douglas dwell,
 Like hunted stag, in mountain cell;
 Nor, ere you pride-swoll'n robber dare,—
 I may not give the rest to air!
 Tell Roderick Dhu, I owed him nought,
 Not the poor service of a boat,
 To waft me to yon mountain-side."
 Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
 Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
 And stoutly steer'd him from the shore;
 And Allan strain'd his anxious eye,
 Far 'mid the lake his form to spy.
 Darkening across each puny wave,
 To which the moon her silver gave,
 Fast as the cormorant could skim,
 The swimmer plied each active limb;
 Then landing in the moonlight dell,
 Loud shouted of his weal to tell.
 The Minstrel hard the far halloo,
 And joyful from the shore withdrew.

CANTO THIRD.

THE GATHERING.

I.

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,
 Who danced our infancy upon their knee,
 And told our marvelling boyhood legends store,
 Of their strange ventures happ'd by land or sea,
 How are they blotted from the things that be!
 How few, all weak and wither'd of their force,
 Wait on the verge of dark eternity,
 Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,
 To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless course
 Yet live there still who can remember well,
 How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,
 Both field and forest, dingle, cliff, and dell,
 And solitary heath, the signal knew;

And fast the faithful clan around him drew,
 What time the warning note was keenly wound,
 What time aloft their kindred banner flew,
 While clamorous war-pipes yell'd the gathering sound,
 And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.

II.

- X The summer dawn's reflected hue
 To purple changed Loch Katrine blue ;
 Mildly and soft the western breeze
 Just kiss'd the lake, just stirr'd the trees ;
 And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,
 Trembled but dimpled not for joy ;
 The mountain-shadows on her breast
 Were neither broken nor at rest ;
 In bright uncertainty they lie,
 Like future joys to Fancy's eye.
 The water-lily to the light
 Her chalice rear'd of silver bright ;
 The doe awoke, and to the lawn,
 Begemm'd with dew-drops, led her fawn :
 The grey mist left the mountain side,
 The torrent show'd its glistening pride ;
 Invisible in flecked sky,
 The lark sent down her revelry ;
 The blackbird and the speckled thrush
 Good-morrow gave from brake and bush ;
 In answer coo'd the cushat dove
- X Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.

III.

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,
 Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.
 With sheathed broadsword in his hand,
 Abrupt he paced the islet strand,
 And eyed the rising sun, and laid
 His hand on his impatient blade.
 Beneath a rock, his vassals' care
 Was prompt the ritual to prepare,
 With deep and deathful meaning fraught ;
 For such Antiquity had taught
 Was preface meet, ere yet abroad
 The Cross of Fire should take its road.
 The shrinking band stood oft aghast
 At the impatient glance he cast ;—
 Such glance the mountain eagle threw,
 As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,
 She spread her dark sails on the wind,
 And, high in middle heaven, reclined,
 With her broad shadow on the lake,
 Silenced the warblers of the brake.

IV.

A heap of wither'd boughs was piled,
 Of juniper and rowan wild,
 Mingled with shivers from the oak,
 Bent by the lightning's recent stroke.

Brian, the Hermit, by it stood,
 Barefooted, in his frock and hood.
 His grised beard and matted hair
 Obscured a visage of despair ;
 His naked arms and legs, seam'd o'er,
 The scars of frantic penance bore.
 That monk, of savage form and face
 The impending danger of his race
 Had drawn from deepest solitude,
 Far in Benharrow's bosom rude.
 Not his the mien of Christian priest,
 But Druid's, from the grave released,
 Whose harden'd heart and eye might brook
 On human sacrifice to look ;
 And much, 'twas said, of heathen lore
 Mix'd in the charms he mutter'd o'er.
 The hallow'd creed gave only worse
 And deadlier emphasis of curse ;
 No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,
 His cave the pilgrim shunn'd with care,
 The eager huntsman knew his bound,
 And in mid chase call'd off his hound ;
 Or if, in lonely glen or strath,
 The desert-dweller met his path,
 He pray'd, and sign'd the cross between,
 While terror took devotion's mien.

v.

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.
 His mother watch'd a midnight fold,
 Built deep within a dreary glen,
 Where scatter'd lay the bones of men,
 In some forgotten battle slain,
 And bleach'd by drifting wind and rain.
 It might have tamed a warrior's heart,
 To view such mockery of his art !
 The knot-grass fetter'd there the hand,
 Which once could burst an iron band ;
 Beneath the broad and ample bone,
 That buckler'd heart to fear unknown,
 A feeble and a timorous guest,
 The field-fare framed her lowly nest ;
 There the slow blind-worm left his slime
 On the fleet limbs that mock'd at time ;
 And there, too, lay the leader's skull,
 Still wreathed with chaplet, flush'd and full,
 For heath-bell with her purple bloom,
 Supplied the bonnet and the plume.
 All night, in this sad glen, the maid
 Sate, shrouded in her mantle's shade :
 —She said, no shepherd sought her side,
 No hunter's hand her snood untied,
 Yet ne'er again, to braid her hair,
 The virgin snood did Alice wear ;

Gone was her maiden glee and sport,
 Her maiden girdle all too short ;
 Nor sought she, from that fatal night,
 Or holy church, or blessed rite,
 But lock'd her secret in her breast,
 And died in travail, unconfess'd.

VI.

Alone, among his young compeers,
 Was Brian from his infant years ;
 A moody and heart-broken boy,
 Estranged from sympathy and joy,
 Bearing each taunt which careless tongue
 On his mysterious lineage flung.
 Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,
 To wood and stream his hap to wail,
 Till, frantic, he as truth received
 What of his birth the crowd believed,
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire !
 In vain, to soothe his wayward fate,
 The cloister oped her pitying gate ;
 In vain, the learning of the age
 Unclasp'd the sable-letter'd page ;
 Even in its treasures he could find
 Food for the fever of his mind.
 Eager he read whatever tells
 Of magic, cabala, and spells,
 And every dark pursuit allied
 To curious and presumptuous pride ;
 Till, with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung,
 And heart with mystic horrors wrung,
 Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,
 And hid him from the haunts of men.

VII.

The desert gave him visions wild,
 Such as might suit the spectre's child.
 Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,
 He watch'd the wheeling eddies boil,
 Till, from their foam, his dazzled eyes
 Beheld the River Demon rise ;
 The mountain mist took form and limb,
 Of noontide hag, or goblin grim ;
 The midnight wind came wild and dread,
 Swell'd with the voices of the dead ;
 Far on the future battle-heath
 His eye beheld the ranks of death :
 Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurl'd,
 Shaped forth a disembodied world.
 One lingering sympathy of mind
 Still bound him to the mortal kind ;
 The only parent he could claim
 Of ancient Alpine's lineage came

Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,
 The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream ;
 Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast
 Of charging steeds, careering fast
 Along Benharrow's shingly side,
 Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride ;
 The thunderbolt had split the pine,—
 All augur'd ill to Alpine's line.
 He girt his loins, and came to show
 The signals of impending woe,
 And now stood prompt to bless or ban,
 As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

VIII.

'Twas all prepared ;—and from the rock,
 A goat, the patriarch of the flock,
 Before the kindling pile was laid,
 And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.
 Patient the sickening victim eyed
 The life-blood ebb in crimson tide,
 Down his clogg'd beard and shaggy limb,
 Till darkness glazed his eye-balls dim.
 The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,
 A slender crosslet form'd with care,
 A cubit length in measure due ;
 The shaft and limbs were rods of yew,
 Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach wave
 Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,
 And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,
 Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.
 The Cross, thus form'd, he held on high,
 With wasted hand, and haggard eye,
 And strange and mingled feelings woke,
 While his anathema he spoke :

IX.

“ Woe to the clansman, who shall view
 This symbol of sepulchral yew,
 Forgetful that its branches grew
 Where weep the heavens their holiest dew
 On Alpine's dwelling low !
 Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,
 He ne'er shall mingle with their dust,
 But, from his sires and kindred thrust,
 Each clansman's execration just
 Shall doom him wrath and woe.”
 He paused ;—the word the vassals took,
 With forward step and fiery look,
 On high their naked brands they shook.
 Their clattering targets wildly strook ;
 And first in murmur low,
 Then, like the billow in his course,
 That far to seaward finds his source,
 And flings to shore his muster'd force,
 Burst, with loud roar, their answer hoarse,
 “ Woe to the traitor, woe !”

Ben-an's grey scalp the accents knew,
 The joyous wolf from covert drew,
 The exulting eagle scream'd afar,—
 They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

x.

The shout was hush'd on lake and fell,
 The Monk resumed his mutter'd spell:
 Dismal and low its accents came,
 The while he scathed the Cross with flame:
 And the few words that reach'd the air,
 Although the holiest name was there,
 Had more of blasphemy than prayer.
 But when he shook above the crowd
 Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—
 "Woe to the wretch who fails to rear
 At this dread sign the ready spear!
 For, as the flames this symbol sear,
 His home, the refuge of his fear,
 A kindred fate shall know;
 Far o'er its roof the volumed flame
 Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,
 While maids and matrons on his name
 Shall call down wretchedness and shame,
 And infamy and woe."

Then rose the cry of females, shrill
 As goss-hawk's whistle on the hill,
 Denouncing misery and ill,
 Mingled with childhood's babbling trill
 Of curses stammer'd slow;
 Answering, with imprecation dread,
 "Sunk be his home in embers red!
 And cursed be the meanest shed
 That e'er shall hide the houseless head,
 We doom to want and woe!"
 A sharp and shrieking echo gave,
 Coir-Uriskin, thy goblin-cave!
 And the grey pass where birches wave,
 On Beala-nam-bo.

xi.

Then deeper paused the priest anew,
 And hard his labouring breath he drew,
 While, with set teeth and clenched hand,
 And eyes that glow'd like fiery brand,
 He meditated curse more dread,
 And deadlier, on the clansman's head,
 Who, summon'd to his Chieftain's aid,
 The signal saw and disobey'd.
 The crosslet's points of sparkling wood,
 He quench'd among the bubbling blood,
 And, as again the sign he rear'd,
 Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:
 "When fits this Cross from man to man,
 Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan.

Burst be the ear that fails to heed !
 Palsied the foot that shuns to speed !
 May ravens tear the careless eyes,
 Wolves make the coward heart their prize !
 As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,
 So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth !
 As dies in hissing gore the spark,
 Quench thou his light, Destruction dark,
 And be the grace to him denied,
 Bought by this sign to all beside !"
 He ceased ; no echo gave agen
 The murmur of the deep Amen.

XII.

Then Roderick, with impatient look,
 From Brian's hand the symbol took :
 "Speed, Malise, speed !" he said, and gave
 The crosslet to his henchman brave.
 "The muster-place be Lanrick mead—
 Instant the time—speed, Malise, speed !"
 Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,
 A barge across Loch Katrine flew ;
 High stood the henchman on the prow ;
 So rapidly the barge-men row,
 The bubbles, where they launch'd the boat,
 Were all unbroken and afloat,
 Dancing in foam and ripple still,
 When it had near'd the mainland hill ;
 And from the silver beach's side
 Still was the prow three fathom wide,
 When lightly bounded to the land
 The messenger of blood and brand.

XIII.

Speed, Malise, speed ! the dun deer's hide
 On fleeter foot was never tied.
 Speed, Malise, speed ! such cause of haste
 Thine active sinews never braced.
 Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,
 Burst down like torrent from its crest ;
 With short and springing footstep pass
 The trembling bog and false morass ;
 Across the brook like roebuck bound,
 And thread the brake like questing hound ;
 The crag is high, the scaur is deep,
 Yet shrink not from the desperate leap :
 Parch'd are thy burning lips and brow,
 Yet by the fountain pause not now ;
 Herald of battle, fate, and fear,
 Stretch onward in thy fleet career !
 The wounded hind thou track'st not now,
 Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough.
 Nor pliest thou now thy flying pacc,
 With rivals in the mountain race :

But danger, death, and warrior deed,
Are in thy course—speed, Malise, speed !

XIV.

- X Fast as the fatal symbol flies,
In arms the huts and hamlets rise ;
From winding glen, from upland brown,
They pour'd each hardy tenant down.
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace ;
He show'd the sign, he named the place,
And, pressing forward like the wind,
Left clamour and surprise behind.
The fisherman forsook the strand,
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand ;
With changed cheer, the mower blithe
Left in the half-cut swathe the scythe ;
The herds without a keeper stray'd,
The plough was in mid-furrow stay'd,
The falconer toss'd his hawk away,
The hunter left the stag at bay ;
Prompt at the signal of alarms,
Each son of Alpine rush'd to arms ;
So swept the tumult and affray
- X Along the margin of Achray.
Alas, thou lovely lake ! that e'er
Thy banks should echo sounds of fear !
The rocks, the bosky thickets, sleep
So stilly on thy bosom deep,
The lark's blithe carol, from the cloud,
Seems for the scene too gaily loud.

XV.

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

XVI.

Coronach.

He is gone on the mountain,
 He is lost to the forest,
 Like a summer-dried fountain,
 When our need was the sorest.
 The font reappearing,
 From the rain-drops shall borrow,
 But to us comes no cheering,
 To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper
 Takes the ears that are hoary,
 But the voice of the weeper
 Wails manhood in glory.
 The autumn winds rushing
 Waft the leaves that are searest,
 But our flower was in flushing,
 When blighting was nearest.

Fleet foot on the correi,
 Sage counsel in cumber,
 Red hand in the foray,
 How sound is thy slumber!
 Like the dew on the mountain,
 Like the foam on the river,
 Like the bubble on the fountain,
 Thou art gone, and for ever!

XVII.

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

XVIII.

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line,
 Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.
 In haste the stripling to his side
 His father's dirk and broadsword tied;
 But when he saw his mother's eye
 Watch him in speechless agony,

* *Fall-fal*, the name of a dog

Back to her open'd arms he flew,
 Press'd on her lips a fond adieu—
 " Alas ! " she sobb'd,—" and yet, be gone,
 And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son ! "
 One look he cast upon the bier,
 Dash'd from his eye the gathering tear,
 Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast,
 And toss'd aloft his bonnet crest ;
 Then, like the high-bred colt, when, freed,
 First he essays his fire and speed,
 He vanish'd, and o'er moor and moss
 Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.
 Suspended was the widow's tear,
 While yet his footsteps she could hear ;
 And when she mark'd the henchman's eye
 Wet with unwonted sympathy,
 " Kinsman," she said, " his race is run
 That should have sped thine errand on ;
 The oak has fall'n,—the sapling bough
 Is all Duncraggan's shelter now.
 Yet trust I well, his duty done,
 The orphan's God will guard my son.—
 And you, in many a danger true,
 At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,
 To arms, and guard that orphan's head !
 Let babes and women wail the dead."
 Then weapon-clang, and martial call,
 Resounded through the funeral hall,
 While from the walls the attendant band
 Snatch'd sword and targe, with hurried band ;
 And short and fitting energy
 Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,
 As if the sounds to warrior dear,
 Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.
 But faded soon that borrow'd force ;
 Grief claim'd his right, and tears their course.

XIX.

Benledi saw the Cross of Fire,
 It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.
 O'er dale and hill the summons flew,
 Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew ;
 The tear that gather'd in his eye
 He left the mountain-breeze to dry ;
 Until, where Teith's young waters roll,
 Betwixt him and a wooded knoll,
 That graced the sable strath with green,
 The chapel of Saint Bride was seen.
 Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,
 But Angus paused not on the edge ;
 ' Though the dark waves danced dizzily,
 Though reel'd his sympathetic eye,
 He dash'd amid the torrent's roar :
 His right hand high the crosslet bore,



His left the pole-axe grasp'd, to guide
 And stay his footing in the tide.
 He stumbled twice—the foam splash'd high,
 With hoarser swell the stream raced by ;
 And had he fall'n,—for ever there,
 Farewell Duncraggan's orphan heir !
 But still, as if in parting life,
 Firmer he grasp'd the Cross of strife,
 Until the opposing bank he gain'd,
 And up the chapel pathway strain'd.

XX.

A blithesome rout, that morning tide,
 Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride.
 Her troth Tombea's Mary gave
 To Norman, heir of Armandave.
 And, issuing from the Gothic arch,
 The bridal now resumed their march.
 In rude, but glad procession, came
 Bonneted sire and coif-clad dame ;
 And plaided youth, with jest and jeer,
 Which snooded maiden would not hear ;
 And children, that, unwitting why,
 Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry ;
 And minstrels, that in measures vied
 Before the young and bonny bride,
 Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose
 The tear and blush of morning rose.
 With virgin step, and bashful hand,
 She held the 'kerchief's snowy band ;
 The gallant bridegroom by her side,
 Beheld his prize with victor's pride,
 And the glad mother in her ear
 Was closely whispering word of cheer.

XXI.

Who meets them at the churchyard gate ?
 The messenger of fear and fate !
 Haste in his hurried accent lics,
 And grief is swimming in his eyes.
 All dripping from the recent flood,
 Panting and travel-soil'd he stood,
 The fatal sign of fire and sword
 Held forth, and spoke the appointed word :
 " The muster-place is Lanrick mead—
 Speed forth the signal ! Norman, speed !"
 And must he change so soon the hand,
 Just link'd to his by holy band,
 For the fell Cross of blood and brand ?
 And must the day, so blithe that rose,
 And promised rapture in the close,
 Before its setting hour, divide
 The bridegroom from the plighted bride ?
 O fatal doom !—it must ! it must !
 Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,

Her summons dread, brook no delay,
Stretch to the race—away! away!

XXII.

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,
And, lingering, eyed his lovely bride,
Until he saw the starting tear
Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;
Then, trusting not a second look,
In haste he sped him up the brook,
Nor backward glanced, till on the heath
Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.
—What in the racer's bosom stirr'd?
The sickening pang of hope deferr'd,
And memory, with a torturing train
Of all his morning visions vain.
Mingled with love's impatience, came
The manly thirst for martial fame;
The stormy joy of mountaineers,
Ere yet they rush upon the spears;
And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,
And hope, from well-fought field returning,
With war's red honours on his crest,
To clasp his Mary to his breast.
Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,
Like fire from flint he glanced away,
While high resolve, and feeling strong,
Burst into voluntary song.

XXIII.

Song.

The heath this night must be my bed,
The bracken curtain for my head,
My lullaby the warder's tread,
Far, far from love and thee, Mary;
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,
My couch may be my bloody plaid,
My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid!
It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow;
I dare not think upon thy vow,
And all it promised me, Mary!
No fond regret must Norman know;
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,
His heart must be like bended bow,
His foot like arrow free, Mary.

A time will come with feeling fraught,
For, if I fall in battle fought,
Thy hapless lover's dying thought
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.
And if return'd from conquer'd foes,
How blithely will the evening close,
How sweet the linnet sing repose,
To my young bride and me, Mary!

XXIV.

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,
Balquhiddy, speeds the midnight blaze,
Rushing, in conflagration strong,
Thy deep ravines and dells along,
Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,
And reddening the dark lakes below;
Nor faster speeds it, nor so far,
As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.
The signal roused to martial coil
The sullen margin of Loch Voil,
Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source
Alarm'd, Balvaig, thy swampy course;
Thence southward turn'd its rapid road
Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,
Till rose in arms each man might claim
A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,
From the grey sire, whose trembling hand
Could hardly buckle on his brand,
To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow
Were yet scarce terror to the crow.
Each valley, each sequester'd glen,
Muster'd its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood;
Each train'd to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath, but by his Chieftain's hand,
No law, but Roderick Dhu's command.

XXV.

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

And in a deep sequester'd dell
 Had sought a low and lonely cell.
 By many a bard, in Celtic tongue,
 Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;
 A softer name the Saxons gave,
 And call'd the grot the Goblin-cave.

XXVI.

It was a wild and strange retreat,
 As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.
 The dell, upon the mountain's crest,
 Yawn'd like a gash on warrior's breast;
 Its trench had staid full many a rock,
 Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock
 From Benvenue's grey summit wild,
 And here, in random ruin piled,
 They frown'd incumbent o'er the spot,
 And form'd the rugged silvan grot.
 The oak and birch, with mingled shade,
 At noontide there a twilight made,
 Unless when short and sudden shone
 Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,
 With such a glimpse as prophet's eye
 Gains on thy depth, Futurity.
 No murmur waked the solemn still,
 Save tinkling of a fountain rill;
 But when the wind chafed with the lake,
 A sullen sound would upward break,
 With dashing hollow voice, that spoke
 The incessant war of wave and rock.
 Suspended cliffs, with hideous sway,
 Seem'd nodding o'er the cavern grey.
 From such a den the wolf had sprung,
 In such the wild-cat leaves her young;
 Yet Douglas and his daughter fair
 Sought for a space their safety there.
 Grey Superstition's whisper dread
 Debarr'd the spot to vulgar tread;
 For there, she said, did fays resort,
 And satyrs hold their silvan court,
 By moonlight tread their mystic maze,
 And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

XXVII.

Now eve, with western shadows long,
 Floated on Katrine bright and strong,
 When Roderick, with a chosen few,
 Repass'd the heights of Benvenue.
 Above the Goblin-cave they go,
 Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo:
 The prompt retainers speed before,
 To launch the shallop from the shore
 For cross Loch Katrine lies his way
 To view the passes of Achray,
 And place his clansmen in array.

Yet lags the chief in musing mind,
 Unwonted sight, his men behind.
 A single page, to bear his sword,
 Alone attended on his lord;
 The rest their way through thickets break,
 And soon await him by the lake.
 It was a fair and gallant sight,
 To view them from the neighbouring height.
 By the low-levell'd sunbeam's light!
 For strength and stature, from the clan
 Each warrior was a chosen man,
 As even afar might well be seen,
 By their proud step and martial mien.
 Their feathers dance, their tartans float,
 Their targets gleam, as by the boat
 A wild and warlike group they stand,
 That well became such mountain-strand.

XXVIII.

Their Chief, with step reluctant, still
 Was lingering on the craggy hill,
 Hard by where turn'd apart the road
 To Douglas's obscure abode.
 It was but with that dawning morn,
 That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn
 To drown his love in war's wild roar,
 Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;
 But he who stems a stream with sand,
 And fetters flame with flaxen band,
 Has yet a harder task to prove—
 By firm resolve to conquer love!
 Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,
 Still hovering near his treasure lost:
 For though his haughty heart deny
 A parting meeting to his eye,
 Still fondly strains his anxious ear.
 The accents of her voice to hear,
 And inly did he curse the breeze
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.
 But hark! what mingles in the strain?
 It is the harp of Allan-Bane,
 That wakes its measure slow and high,
 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy.
 What melting voice attends the strings?
 'Tis Ellen, or an angel, sings.

XXIX

Hymn to the Virgin.

Ave Maria! maiden mild!
 Listen to a maiden's prayer!
 Thou canst hear though from the wild,
 Thou canst save amid despair.
 Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
 Though banish'd, outcast, and reviled—

Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer!
 Mother, hear a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share
 Shall seem with down of eider piled,
 If thy protection hover there.
 The murky cavern's heavy air
 Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;
 Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer!
 Mother, list a suppliant child!

Ave Maria!

Ave Maria! stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air,
 From this their wonted haunt exiled,
 Shall flee before thy presence fair.
 We bow us to our lot of care,
 Beneath thy guidance reconciled;
 Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer!
 And for a father hear a child!

Ave Maria!

XXX.

Died on the harp the closing hymn—
 Unmoved in attitude and limb,
 As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord
 Stood leaning on his heavy sword,
 Until the page, with humble sign,
 Twice pointed to the sun's decline.
 Then while his plaid he round him cast,
 "It is the last time—'tis the last,"
 He mutter'd thrice,—“the last time e'er
 That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!”
 It was a goading thought—his stride
 Hied hastier down the mountain-side;
 Sullen he flung him in the boat,
 And instant 'cross the lake it shot.
 They landed in that silvery bay,
 And eastward held their hasty way,
 Till, with the latest beams of light,
 The band arrived on Lanrick height,
 Where muster'd, in the vale below,
 Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

XXXI.

A various scene the clansmen made;
 Some sate, some stood, some slowly stray'd.
 But most, with mantles folded round,
 Were couch'd to rest upon the ground,
 Scarce to be known by curious eye,
 From the deep heather where they lie,
 So well was match'd the tartan screen
 With heath-bell dark and brackens green;

Unless where, here and there, a blade,
 Or lance's point, a glimmer made,
 Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.
 But when, advancing through the gloom,
 They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume,
 Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,
 Shook the steep mountain's steady side.
 Thrice it arose, and lake and fell
 Three times return'd the martial yell ;
 It died upon Bochastle's plain,
 And Silence claim'd her evening reign.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE PROPHECY.

I.

“ THE rose is fairest when 'tis budding new,
 And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears ;
 The rose is sweetest wash'd with morning dew,
 And love is loveliest when embalm'd in tears.
 O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears,
 I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,
 Emblem of hope and love through future years !”—
 Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,
 What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

II.

Such fond conceit, half said, half sung,
 Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.
 All while he stripp'd the wild-rose spray,
 His axe and bow beside him lay,
 For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood,
 A wakeful sentinel he stood.
 Hark ! on the rock a footstep rung,
 And instant to his arms he sprung.
 “ Stand, or thou diest !—What, Malise ←—soon
 Art thou return'd from Braes of Doune.
 By thy keen step and glance I know,
 Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe.”—
 (For while the Fiery Cross hied on,
 On distant scout had Malise gone.)
 “ Where sleeps the Chief ?” the henchman said.—
 “ Apart, in yonder misty glade ;
 To his lone couch I'll be your guide.”—
 Then call'd a slumberer by his side,
 And stirr'd him with his slacken'd bow—
 “ Up, up, Glentarkin ! rouse thee, ho !
 We seek the Chieftain ; on the track,
 Keep eagle watch till I come back.”

III.

Together up the pass they sped :
 "What of the foeman?" Norman said.—
 "Varying reports from near and far ;
 This certain,—that a band of war
 Has for two days been ready boune,
 At prompt command, to march from Doune
 King James, the while, with princely powers,
 Holds revelry in Stirling towers.
 Soon will this dark and gathering cloud
 Speak on our glens in thunder loud.
 Inured to bide such bitter bout,
 The warrior's plaid may bear it out ;
 But, Norman, how wilt thou provide
 A shelter for thy bonny bride?"—
 "What ! know ye not that Roderick's care
 To the lone isle hath caused repair
 Each maid and matron of the clan,
 And every child and aged man
 Unfit for arms ; and given his charge,
 Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,
 Upon these lakes shall float at large,
 But all beside the islet moor,
 That such dear pledge may rest secure?"—

IV.

"'Tis well advised—the Chieftain's plan
 Bespeaks the father of his clan.
 But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu
 Apart from all his followers true?"—
 "It is, because last evening-tide
 Brian an augury hath tried,
 Of that dread kind which must not be
 Unless in dread extremity,
 The Taghairm call'd ; by which, afar,
 Our sires foresaw the events of war.
 Duneraggan's milk-white bull they slew."

Malise.

"Ah ! well the gallant brute I knew !
 The choicest of the prey we had,
 When swept our merry-men Gallangad.
 His hide was snow, his horns were dark,
 His red eye glow'd like fiery spark ;
 So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,
 Sore did he cumber our retreat,
 And kept our stoutest kernes in awe,
 Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.
 But steep and flinty was the road,
 And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,
 And when we came to Dinnan's Row,
 A child might scatheless stroke his brow."—

v.

Norman.

“That bull was slain : his reeking hide
 They stretch'd the cataract beside,
 Whose waters their wild tumult toss
 Adown the black and craggy boss
 Of that huge cliff, whose ample verge
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.
 Couch'd on a shelve beneath its brink,
 Close where the thundering torrents sink,
 Rocking beneath their headlong sway,
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,
 Midst groan of rock, and roar of stream,
 The wizard waits prophetic dream.
 Nor distant rests the Chief;—but hush !
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,
 The hermit gains yon rock, and stands
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost,
 That hovers o'er a slaughter'd host ?
 Or raven on the blasted oak,
 That, watching while the deer is broke,
 His morsel claims with sullen croak ?”

Malise.

—“Peace ! peace ! to other than to me,
 Thy words were evil augury ;
 But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade
 (Glan Alpine's omen and her aid,
 Not aught that, glean'd from heaven or hell,
 Yon fiend-begot ten Monk can tell.
 The Chieftain joins him, see— and now,
 Together they descend the brow.”

VI.

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord
 The Hermit Monk held solemn word :—
 “Roderick ! it is a fearful strife,
 For man endow'd with mortal life,
 Whose shroud of sentient clay can still
 Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,
 Whose eye can stare in stony trance,
 Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—
 'Tis hard for such to view, unfurl'd
 The curtain of the future world.
 Yet, witness every quaking limb,
 My sunken pulse, my eyeballs dim,
 My soul with harrowing anguish torn,—
 This for my Chieftain have I borne!—
 The shapes that sought my fearful couch,
 A human tongue may ne'er avouch ;
 No mortal man,—save he, who, bred
 Between the living and the dead,
 Is gifted beyond nature's law,—
 Had e'er survived to say he saw.

At length the fatal answer came,
 In characters of living flame!
 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,
 But borne and branded on my soul;—
 WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,
 THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE!"—

VII.

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!
 Good is thine augury, and fair.
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood,
 But first our broadswords tasted blood.
 A surer victim still I know,
 Self-offer'd to the auspicious blow:
 A spy has sought my land this morn,—
 No eve shall witness his return!
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,
 To east, to westward, and to south;
 Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,
 Has charge to lead his steps aside,
 Till, in deep path or dingle brown,
 He light on those shall bring him down.
 —But see, who comes his news to show!
 Malise! what tidings of the foe?"—

VIII.

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.
 I saw the Moray's silver star,
 And mark'd the sable pale of Mar."—
 "By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
 I love to hear of worthy foes.
 When move they on?"—"To-morrow's noon
 Will see them here for battle boune."—
 "Then shall it see a meeting stern!—
 But, for the place—say, couldst thou learn
 Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
 Strengthen'd by them, we well might bide
 The battle on Benledi's side.
 Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine's men
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
 Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
 All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
 Each for his hearth and household fire,
 Father for child, and son for sire,—
 Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
 Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
 Or dost thou come, ill-omen'd tear!
 A messenger of doubt or fear?
 No! sooner may the Saxon lance
 Unfix Benledi from his stance,
 Than doubt or terror can pierce through
 The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
 'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.—
 Each to his post—all know their charge."

The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
 The broadswords gleam, the banners dance.
 Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.
 —I turn me from the martial roar,
 And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX.

Where is the Douglas?—he is gone ;
 And Ellen sits on the grey stone
 Fast by the cave, and makes her moan ;
 While vainly Allan's words of cheer
 Are pour'd on her unheeding ear. —
 " He will return—dear lady, trust !—
 With joy return ;—he will—he must.
 Well was it time to seek, afar,
 Some refuge from impending war, .
 When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
 Are cow'd by the approaching storm.
 I saw their boats, with many a light,
 Floating the livelong yesternight,
 Shifting like flashes darted forth
 By the red streamers of the north ;
 I mark'd at morn how close they ride,
 Thick moor'd by the lone islet's side,
 Like wild ducks couching in the fen,
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.
 Since this rude race dare not abide
 The peril on the mainland side,
 Shall not thy noble father's care
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare ?"—

X.

Ellen.

" No, Allan, no ! pretext so kind
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,
 Douglas a parting blessing gave,
 The tear that glisten'd in his eye
 Drown'd not his purpose fix'd on high.
 My soul, though feminine and weak,
 Can image his ; e'en as the lake,
 Itself disturb'd by slightest stroke,
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.
 He hears report of battle rife,
 He deems himself the cause of strife.
 I saw him redden, when the theme
 Turn'd, Allan, on thine idle dream
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
 Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
 Think'st thou he trow'd thine omen aught ?
 Oh no ! 'twas apprehensive thought,
 For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
 (Let me be just) that friend so true ;
 In danger both, and in our cause !
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.

Why else that solemn warning given,
 ' If not on earth, we meet in heaven !'
 Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
 If eve return him not again,
 Am I to hie, and make me known ?
 Alas ! he goes to Scotland's throne,
 Buys his friend's safety with his own ;—
 He goes to do—what I had done,
 Had Douglas' daughter been his son !"—

XI.

" Nay, lovely Ellen !—dearest, nay !
 If aught should his return delay,
 He only named yon holy fane
 As fitting place to meet again.
 Be sure he's safe ; and for the Græme,—
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name !—
 My vision'd sight may yet prove true,
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.
 When did my gifted dream beguile ?
 Think of the stranger at the isle,
 And think upon the harpings slow,
 That presaged this approaching woe !
 Sooth was my prophecy of fear ;
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.
 Would we had left this dismal spot !
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
 Of such a wondrous tale I know—
 Dear lady, change that look of woe,
 My harp was wont thy grief to cheer."—

Ellen.

" Well, be it as thou wilt ; I hear,
 But cannot stop the bursting tear."
 The Minstrel tried his simple art,
 But distant far was Ellen's heart.

XII.

BALLAD.

Alice Brand.

Merry it is in the good greenwood,
 When the mavis* and merle† are singing,
 When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
 And the hunter's horn is ringing.

" O Alice Brand, my native land
 Is lost for love of you ;
 And we must hold by wood and wold,
 As outlaws wont to do.

" O Alice, 'twas all for thy locks so bright.
 And 'twas all for thine eyes so blue,
 That on the night of our luckless flight,
 Thy brother bold I slew.

* Thrush.

† Blackbird.

“ Now must I teach to hew the beech
The hand that held the glaive,
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,
And stakes to fence our cave.

“ And for vest of pall, thy fingers small,
That went on harp to stray,
A cloak must sheer from the slaughter'd deer,
To keep the cold away.”—

“ O Richard ! if my brother died,
'T was but a fatal chance ;
For darkling was the battle tried,
And fortune sped the lance.”

“ If pall and vair no more I wear,
Nor thou the crimson sheen,
As warm, we'll say, is the russet grey,
As gay the forest-green.

“ And, Richard, if our lot be hard,
And lost thy native land,
Still Alice has her own Richard,
And he his Alice Brand.”

XIII.

Ballad continued.

'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in good greenwood,
So blithe Lady Alice is singing ;
On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,
Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,
Who won'd within the hill,—
Like wind in the porch of a ruin'd church,
His voice was ghostly shrill.

“ Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,
Our moonlight circle's screen ?
Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen ?
Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green !

“ Up, Urgan, up ! to you mortal hie,
For thou wert christen'd man ;
For cross or sign thou wilt not fly,
For mutter'd word or ban.

“ Lay on him the curse of the wither'd heart,
The curse of the sleepless eye ;
Till he wish and pray that his life would part,
Nor yet find leave to die.”

XIV.

Ballad continued.

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

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,
 Before Lord Richard stands,
 And, as he cross'd and bless'd himself,
 "I fear not sign," quoth the grisly elf,
 "That is made with bloody hands."

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,
 That woman void of fear,—
 "And if there's blood upon his hand,
 'Tis but the blood of deer."—
 "Now loud thou liest, thou bold of mood!
 It cleaves unto his hand,
 The stain of thine own kindly blood,
 The blood of Ethert Brand."

Then forward stepp'd she, Alice Brand,
 And made the holy sign,—
 "And if there's blood on Richard's hand,
 A spotless hand is mine.

"And I conjure thee, Demon elf,
 By him whom Demons fear,
 To show us whence thou art thyself,
 And what thine errand here!"

xv.

Ballad continued.

"'Tis merry, 'tis merry, in Fairy-land,
 When fairy birds are singing,
 When the court doth ride by their Monarch's side,
 With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gaily shines the Fairy-land—
 But all is glistening show,
 Like the idle gleam that December's beam
 Can dart on ice and snow.

"And fading, like that varied gleam,
 Is our inconstant shape,
 Who now like knight and lady seem,
 And now like dwarf and ape.

"It was between the night and day,
 When the Fairy King has power,
 That I sunk down in a sinful fray,
 And, 'twixt life and death, was snatch'd away
 To the joyless Elfin bower.

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

She cross'd him once—she cross'd him twice—
 That lady was so brave;
 The fouler grew his goblin hue,
 The darker grew the cave.

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

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

XVI.

Just as the minstrel sounds were stay'd,
 A stranger climb'd the steepy glade ;
 His martial step, his stately mien,
 His hunting suit of Lincoln green,
 His eagle glance, remembrance claims—
 'Tis Snowdoun's Knight, 'tis James Fitz-James
 Ellen beheld as in a dream,
 Then, starting, scarce suppress'd a scream :
 " O stranger ! in such hour of fear,
 What evil hap has brought thee here ?"—
 " An evil hap how can it be,
 That bids me look again on thee ?
 By promise bound, my former guide
 Met me betimes this morning tide,
 And marshall'd, over bank and bourne,
 The happy path of my return."—
 " The happy path !—what ! said he nought
 Of war, of battle to be fought,
 Of guarded pass ?"—" No, by my faith !
 Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."—
 " O haste thee, Allan, to the kern,
 —Yonder his tartans I discern ;
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure
 That he will guide the stranger sure !—
 What prompted thee, unhappy man ?
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan
 Had not been bribed by love or fear,
 Unknown to him to guide thee here."—

XVII.

" Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,
 Since it is worthy care from thee ;
 Yet life I hold but idle breath,
 When love or honour's weigh'd with death
 Then let me profit by my chance,
 And speak my purpose bold at once.
 I come to bear thee from a wild,
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled ;
 By this soft hand to lead thee far
 From frantic scenes of feud and war.
 Near Bochastle my horses wait ;
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower"—

" O ! hush, Sir Knight ! 'twere female art,
 To say I do not read thy heart ;
 Too much, before, my selfish ear
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,
 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track ;
 And how, O how, can I atone
 The wreck my vanity brought on !—
 One way remains—I'll tell him all—
 Yes ! struggling bosom, forth it shall !
 Thou, whose light folly bears the blame,
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame !
 But first,—my father is a man
 Outlaw'd and exiled, under ban ;
 The price of blood is on his head,
 With me 'twere infamy to wed.—
 Still would'st thou speak ?—then hear the truth !
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth,—
 If yet he is !—exposed for me
 And mine to dread extremity—
 Thou hast the secret of my heart ;
 Forgive, be generous, and depart ! "

XVIII.

Fitz-James knew every wily train
 A lady's fickle heart to gain ;
 But here he knew and felt them vain.
 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
 To give her steadfast speech the lie ;
 In maiden confidence she stood,
 Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
 And told her love with such a sigh
 Of deep and hopeless agony,
 As death had seal'd her Malcolm's doom,
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
 Hope vanish'd from Fitz-James's eye,
 But not with hope fled sympathy.
 He proffer'd to attend her side,
 As brother would a sister guide.—
 " O ! little know'st thou Roderick's heart !
 Safer for both we go apart.
 O haste thee, and from Allan learn,
 If thou may'st trust yon wily kern."
 With hand upon his forehead laid,
 The conflict of his mind to shade,
 A parting step or two he made ;
 Then, as some thought had cross'd his brain,
 He paused, and turn'd, and came again.

XIX.

" Hear, lady, yet, a parting word !—
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
 This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
 And bade, when I had boon to crave,

To bring it back, and boldly claim
 The recompence that I would name,
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
 But one who lives by lance and sword,
 Whose castle is his helm and shield,
 His lordship the embattled field.
 What from a prince can I demand,
 Who neither reck of state nor land ?
 Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine ;
 Each guard and usher knows the sign
 Seek thou the King without delay ;
 This signet shall secure thy way ;
 And claim thy suit, what'er it be.
 As ransom of his pledge to me.”
 He placed the golden circlet on,
 Paused—kiss'd her hand—and then was gone.
 The aged Minstrel stood aghast,
 So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
 He join'd his guide, and wending down
 The ridges of the mountain brown,
 Across the stream they took their way,
 That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

xx.

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,
 Noontide was sleeping on the hill :
 Sudden his guide whoop'd loud and high—
 “ Murdoch ! was that a signal cry ? ”—
 He stammer'd forth—“ I shout to scare
 You raven from his dainty fare.”
 He look'd—he knew the raven's prey,
 His own brave steed :—“ Ah ! gallant grey !
 For thee—for me, perchance—'twere well !
 We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.—
 Murdoch, move first—but silently ;
 Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die ! ”
 Jealous and sullen, on they fared,
 Each silent, each upon his guard.

xxi.

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge
 Around a precipice's edge,
 When lo ! a wasted female form,
 Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,
 In tatter'd weeds and wild array,
 Stood on a cliff beside the way,
 And glancing round her restless eye,
 Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,
 Seem'd nought to mark, yet all to spy.
 Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom,
 With gesture wild she waved a plume
 Of feathers, which the eagles fling
 To crag and cliff from dusky wing ;
 Such spoils her desperate step had sought,
 Where scarce was footing for the goat.

The tartan plaid she first descried,
 And shriek'd till all the rocks replied ;
 As loud she laugh'd when near they drew.
 For then the Lowland garb she knew ;
 And then her hands she wildly rung,
 And then she wept, and then she sung—
 She sung !—the voice, in better time,
 Perchance to harp or lute might chime ;
 And now, though strain'd and roughen'd, still
 Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

XXII.

Song.

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,
 They say my brain is warp'd and rung—
 I cannot sleep on Highland brae,
 I cannot pray in Highland tongue.
 But were I now where Allan glides,
 Or heard my native Devan's tides,
 So sweetly would I rest, and pray
 That Heaven would close my wintry day !
 'Twas thus my hair they bade me braid,
 They made me to the church repair ;
 It was my bridal morn, they said,
 And my true love would meet me there.
 But woe betide the cruel guile,
 That drown'd in blood the morning smile !
 And woe betide the fairy dream !
 I only waked to sob and scream.

XXIII.

“ Who is this maid ? what means her lay ?
 She hovers o'er the hollow way,
 And flutters wide her mantle grey,
 As the lone heron spreads his wing,
 By twilight, o'er a haunted spring.”—
 “ 'Tis Blanche of Devan,” Murdoch said,
 “ A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
 Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
 When Roderick foray'd Devan-side ;
 The gay bridegroom resistance made,
 And felt our Chief's unconquer'd blade.
 I marvel she is now at large,
 But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—
 Hence, brain-sick fool !”—He raised his bow :—
 “ Now, if thou strikest her but one blow,
 I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
 As ever peasant pitch'd a bar !”—
 “ Thanks, champion, thanks !” the Maniac cried.
 And press'd her to Fitz-James's side.
 “ See the grey pennons I prepare,
 To seek my true-love through the air !
 I will not lend that savage groom,
 To break his fall, one downy plume !

No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid air staid,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry.”—

XXIV.

“ Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still ! ”—
“ O ! thou look’st kindly, and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green ;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

“ For O, my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche’s heart away !
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trill’d the Lowland lay !

“ It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wise, and guessest well.”
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman, fearfully,
She fix’d her apprehensive eye ;
Then turn’d it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o’er the glen.

XXV.

“ The toils are pitch’d, and the stakes are set,
Ever sing merrily, merrily ;
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,
Hunters live so cheerily.

“ It was a stag, a stag of ten,*
Bearing its branches sturdily ;
He came stately down the glen,
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

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

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

XXVI.

Fitz-James’s mind was passion-toss’d,
When Ellen’s hints and fears were lost ;
But Murdoch’s shout suspicion wrought,
And Blanche’s song conviction brought.—

* Having ten branches on his antlers.

Not like a stag that spies the snare,
 But lion of the hunt aware,
 He waved at once his blade on high,—
 “Disclose thy treachery, or die!”
 Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,
 But in his race his bow he drew.
 The shaft just grazed Fitz-James’s crest,
 And thrill’d in Blanche’s faded breast.—
 Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,
 For ne’er had Alpine’s son such need!
 With heart of fire, and foot of wind,
 The fierce avenger is behind!
 Fate judges of the rapid strife—
 The forfeit death—the prize is life!
 Thy kindred ambush lies before,
 Close couch’d upon the heathery moor;
 Them couldst thou reach!—it may not be—
 Thine ambush’d kin thou ne’er shalt see,
 The fiery Saxon gains on thee!
 —Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,
 As lightning strikes the pine to dust;
 With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain
 Ere he can win his blade again.
 Bent o’er the fall’n, with falcon eye,
 He grimly smiled to see him die;
 Then slower wended back his way,
 Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

XXVII.

She sate beneath the birchen-tree,
 Her elbow resting on her knee;
 She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
 And gazed on it, and feebly laugh’d;
 Her wreath of broom and feathers grey,
 Daggled with blood, beside her lay.
 The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried, —
 “Stranger, it is in vain!” she cried.
 “This hour of death has given me more
 Of reason’s power than years before;
 For, as these ebbing veins decay,
 My frenzied visions fade away.
 A helpless injured wretch I die,
 And something tells me in thine eye,
 That thou wert mine avenger born.—
 Seest thou this tress?—O! still I’ve worn
 This little tress of yellow hair,
 Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
 It once was bright and clear as thine,
 But blood and tears have dimm’d its shine
 I will not tell thee when ’twas shred,
 Nor from what guiltless victim’s head—
 My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
 Like plumage on thy helmet brave.

Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
 And thou wilt bring it me again.—
 I waver still.—O God! more bright
 Let reason beam her parting light!—
 O! by thy knighthood's honour'd sign,
 And for thy life preserved by mine,
 When thou shalt see a darksome man,
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,
 With tartans broad, and shadowy plume,
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
 And wreak poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!
 They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
 Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell."

XXVIII.

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James:
 Fast pour'd his eyes at pity's claims,
 And now with mingled grief and ire,
 He saw the murder'd maid expire.
 "God, in my need, be my relief,
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!"
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed.
 And placed it on his bonnet-side:
 "By Him whose word is truth! I swear,
 No other favour will I wear,
 Till this sad token I imbrue
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu.
 —But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
 The chase is up,—but they shall know,
 The stag at bay 's a dangerous foe."
 Barr'd from the known but guarded way,
 Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,
 And oft must change his desperate track,
 By stream and precipice turn'd back.
 Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
 From lack of food and loss of strength,
 He couch'd him in a thicket hoar,
 And thought his toils and perils o'er:—
 "Of all my rash adventures past,
 This frantic feat must prove the last!
 Who e'er so mad but might have guess'd,
 That all this Highland hornet's nest
 Would muster up in swarms so soon
 As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?
 Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
 Hark to the whistle and the shout!—
 If further through the wilds I go,
 I only fall upon the foe:
 I'll couch me here till evening grey,
 Then darkling try my dangerous way."

XXIX.

The shades of eve come slowly down,
 The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,
 The owl awakens from her dell,
 The fox is heard upon the fell;
 Enough remains of glimmering light
 To guide the wanderer's steps aright,
 Yet not enough from far to show
 His figure to the watchful foe.
 With cautious step and ear awake,
 He climbs the crag and threads the brake;
 And not the summer solstice, there,
 Temper'd the midnight mountain air,
 But every breeze that swept the wold
 Benumb'd his drenched limbs with cold.
 In dread, in danger, and alone,
 Famish'd and chill'd, through ways unknown,
 Tangled and steep, he journey'd on;
 Till, as a rock's huge point he turn'd,
 A watch-fire close before him burn'd.

XXX

Beside its embers red and clear,
 Bask'd, in his plaid, a mountaineer;
 And up he sprung with sword in hand,—
 "Thy name and purpose? Saxon, stand!"—
 "A stranger."—"What dost thou require?"—
 "Rest and a guide, and food and fire,
 My life's beset, my path is lost,
 The gale has chill'd my limbs with frost."—
 "Art thou a friend to Roderick?"—"No."—
 "Thou darest not call thyself a foe?"—
 "I dare! to him and all the band
 He brings to aid his murderous hand."—
 "Bold words!—but, though the beast of game
 The privilege of chase may claim,
 Though space and law the stag we lend,
 Ere hound we slip, or bow we bend,
 Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
 The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain?
 Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie,
 Who say thou camest a secret spy!"—
 "They do, by heaven!—Come Roderick Dhu,
 And of his clan the boldest two,
 And let me but till morning rest,
 I write the falsehood on their crest."—
 "If by the blaze I mark aright,
 Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight."—
 "Then by these tokens may'st thou know
 Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."—
 "Enough, enough;—sit down, and share
 A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

XXXI.

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
 The harden'd flesh of mountain deer ;
 Dry fuel on the fire he laid,
 And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
 He tended him like welcome guest,
 Then thus his farther speech address'd : —
 " Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
 A clansman born, a kinsman true ;
 Each word against his honour spoke,
 Demands of me avenging stroke ;
 Yet more, upon thy fate, 'tis said,
 A mighty augury is laid.
 It rests with me to wind my horn, —
 Thou art with numbers overborne ;
 It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
 Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand :
 But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
 Will I depart from honour's laws ;
 To assail a wearied man were shame,
 And stranger is a holy name ;
 Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
 In vain he never must require.
 Then rest thee here till dawn of day ;
 Myself will guide thee on the way,
 O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
 Till past Clan-Alpine's utmost guard,
 As far as Coilantogle's ford ;
 From thence thy warrant is thy sword." —
 " I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
 As freely as 'tis nobly given ! " —
 " Well, rest thee ; for the bittern's cry
 Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
 With that he shook the gather'd heath,
 And spread his plaid upon the wreath ;
 And the brave foemen, side by side,
 Lay peaceful down, like brothers tried,
 And slept until the dawning beam
 Purpled the mountain and the stream.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE COMBAT.

L

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,
 When first, by the bewilder'd pilgrim spied,
 It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,
 And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,

And lights the fearful path on mountain side ;—
 Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,
 Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,
 Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,
 Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of War

II.

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
 Was twinkling through the hazel screen.
 When, rousing at its glimmer red,
 The warriors left their lowly bed,
 Look'd out upon the dappled sky,
 Mutter'd their soldier matins by,
 And then awak'd their fire, to steal,
 As short and rude, their soldier meal.
 That o'er, the Gael around him threw
 His graceful plaid of varied hue,
 And, true to promise, led the way,
 By thicket green and mountain grey.
 A wildering path !—they winded now
 Along the precipice's brow,
 Commanding the rich scenes beneath,
 The windings of the Forth and Teith,
 And all the vales beneath that lie,
 Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky ;
 Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance
 Gain'd not the length of horseman's lance.
 'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
 Assistance from the hand to gain ;
 So tangled oft, that, bursting through,
 Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew, —
 That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
 It rivals all but Beauty's tear !

III.

At length they came where, stern and steep,
 The hill sinks down upon the deep.
 Here Vennachar in silver flows,
 There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose ;
 Ever the holly path twined on,
 Beneath steep bank and threatening stone ;
 An hundred men might hold the post
 With hardihood against a host.
 The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
 Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
 With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
 And patches bright of bracken green,
 And heather black, that waved so high,
 It held the copse in rivalry.
 But where the lake swept deep and still,
 Dank osiers fringed the swamp and hill ;
 And oft both path and hill were torn,
 Where wintry torrents down had borne,
 And heap'd upon the cumber'd land
 Its wreck of gravel, rocks, and sand.

So toilsome was the road to trace,
 The guide, abating of his pace,
 Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
 And ask'd Fitz-James, by what strange cause
 He sought these wilds! traversed by few,
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

IV.

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

" Thy secret keep, I urge thee not ;—
 Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,
 Say, heard ye nought of Lowland war,
 Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar ?"
 —" No, by my word ;—of hands prepared
 To guard King James's sports I heard ;
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear
 This muster of the mountaineer,
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung."—
 " Free be they flung !—for we were loth
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.
 Free be they flung !—as free shall wave
 Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.
 But, Stranger, peaceful since you came,
 Bewilder'd in the mountain game,
 Whence the bold boast by which you show
 Vich-Alpine's vow'd and mortal foe ?"—
 " Warrior, but yester-morn, I knew
 Nought of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu.

Save as an outlaw'd desperate man,
 The chief of a rebellious clan,
 Who, in the Regent's court and sight,
 With ruffian dagger stabb'd a knight:
 Yet this alone might from his part
 Sever each true and loyal heart."

VI.

Wrothful at such arraignment foul,
 Dark lower'd the clansman's sable scowl
 A space he paused, then sternly said,—
 "And heard'st thou why he drew his blade
 Heard'st thou, that shameful word and blow
 Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
 What reck'd the Chieftain if he stood
 On Highland heath, or Holy-Rood?
 He rights such wrong where it is given,
 If it were in the court of heaven."—
 "Still was it outrage;—yet, 'tis true,
 Not then claim'd sovereignty his due;
 While Albany, with feeble hand,
 Held borrow'd truncheon of command,
 The young King, mew'd in Stirling tower,
 Was stranger to respect and power,
 But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
 Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
 Wrenching from ruin'd Lowland swain
 His herds and harvest rear'd in vain.—
 Methinks a soul, like thine, should scorn
 The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII.

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
 And answer'd with disdainful smile,—
 "Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
 I mark'd thee send delighted eye,
 Far to the south and east, where lay,
 Extended in succession gay,
 Deep waving fields and pastures green,
 With gentle slopes and groves between:—
 These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
 Were once the birthright of the Gael;
 The stranger came with iron hand,
 And from our fathers reft the land.
 Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
 Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.
 Ask we this savage hill we tread,
 For fatten'd steer or household bread,
 Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
 And well the mountain might reply,—
 'To you, as to your sires of yore,
 Belong the target and claymore!
 I give you shelter in my breast,
 Your own good blades must win the rest

Pent in this fortress of the North,
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,
 And from the robber rend the prey?
 Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain;
 While, of ten thousand herds, there strays
 But one along yon river's maze,—
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,
 Shall, with strong hand, redeem his share.
 Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold,
 That plundering Lowland field and fold
 Is aught but retribution true?—
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu.”—

VIII.

Answer'd Fitz-James,—“ And, if I sought,
 Think'st thou no other could be brought?
 What deem ye of my path waylaid?
 My life given o'er to ambuscade?”—
 “ As of a need to rashness due :
 Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,—
 I seek my hound, or falcon stray'd,
 I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—
 Free hadst thou been to come and go ;
 But secret path marks secret foe.
 Nor yet, for this, even as a spy,
 Hadst thou, unheard, been doom'd to die,
 Save to fulfil an augury.”—
 “ Well, let it pass ; nor will I now
 Fresh cause of enmity avow,
 To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
 Enough, I am by promise tied
 To match me with this man of pride :
 Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen
 In peace ; but when I come again,
 I come with banner, brand, and bow,
 As leader seeks his mortal foe.
 For love-lorn swain, in lady's bower,
 Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
 As I, until before me stand
 This rebel Chieftain and his band !”—

IX.

(“ Have, then, thy wish !” —He whistled shrill)
 And he was answer'd from the hill ;
 Wild as the scream of the curlew,
 From crag to crag the signal flew.
 Instant, through copse and heath, arose
 Bonnets and spears and bended bows ;
 On right, on left, above, below,
 Sprung up at once the lurking foe ;
 From shingles grey their lances start,
 The bracken-bush sends forth the dart.

The rushes and the willow-wand
 Are bristling into axe and brand,
 And every tuft of broom gives life
 To plaided warrior arm'd for strife.
 That whistle garrison'd the glen
 At once with full five hundred men,
 As if the yawning hill to heaven
 A subterranean host had given.
 Watching their leader's beck and will,
 All silent there they stood, and still.
 Like the loose crags, whose threatening mass
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
 As if an infant's touch could urge
 Their headlong passage down the verge,
 With step and weapon forward flung,
 Upon the mountain-side they hung.
 The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
 Along Benledi's living side,
 Then fix'd his eye and sable brow
 Full on Fitz-James—"How say'st thou now?
 These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
 And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"

X.

Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart
 The life-blood thrill'd with sudden start,
 He mann'd himself with dauntless air,
 Return'd the Chief his haughty stare,
 His back against a rock he bore,
 And firmly placed his foot before:—
 "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
 From its firm base as soon as I."
 Sir Roderick mark'd—and in his eyes
 Respect was mingled with surprise,
 And the stern joy which warriors feel
 In foemen worthy of their steel.
 Short space he stood—then waved his hand:
 Down sunk the disappearing band;
 Each warrior vanish'd where he stood,
 In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
 Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
 In osiers pale and copses low;
 It seem'd as if their mother Earth
 Had swallow'd up her warlike birth.
 The wind's last breath had toss'd in air,
 Pennon, and plaid, and plumage fair,—
 The next but swept a lone hill-side,
 Where heath and fern were waving wide:
 The sun's last glance was glinted back,
 From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
 The next, all unreflected, shone
 On bracken green, and cold grey stone.

XI.

Fitz-James look'd round—yet scarce believed
 The witness that his sight received:

Such apparition well might seem
 Delusion of a dreadful dream.
 Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
 And to his look the Chief replied,—
 “ Fear nought—nay, that I need not say—
 But—doubt not aught from mine array.
 Thou art my guest ;—I pledged my word
 As far as Coilantogle ford :
 Nor would I call a clansman’s brand
 For aid against one valiant hand,
 Though on our strife lay every vale
 Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
 So move we on ;—I only meant
 To show the reed on which you leant,
 Deeming this path you might pursue
 Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.”
 They moved :—I said Fitz-James was brave,
 As ever knight that belted glaive ;
 Yet dare not say, that now his blood
 Kept on its wont and temper’d flood,
 As, following Roderick’s stride, he drew
 That seeming lonesome pathway through,
 Which yet, by fearful proof, was rife
 With lances, that, to take his life,
 Waited but signal from a guide
 So late dishonour’d and defied.
 Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round
 The vanish’d guardians of the ground,
 And still, from copse and heather deep,
 Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,
 And in the plover’s shrilly strain,
 The signal whistle heard again.
 Nor breathed he free till far behind
 The pass was left ; for then they wind
 Along a wide and level green,
 Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,
 Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,
 To hide a bonnet or a spear.

XII.

The Chief in silence strode before,
 And reach’d that torrent’s sounding shore,
 Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
 From Vennachar in silver breaks,
 Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
 On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
 Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
 Of yore her eagle wings unfurl’d.
 And here his course the Chieftain staid,
 Threw down his target and his plaid,
 And to the Lowland warrior said—
 “ Bold Saxon ! to his promise just,
 Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
 This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
 This head of a rebellious clan.

Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
 Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
 Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
 A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
 See here, all vantageless I stand,
 Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand:
 For this is Coilantogle ford,
 And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

XIII.

The Saxon paused:—"I ne'er delay'd,
 When foeman bade me draw my blade;
 Nay, more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death
 Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
 And my deep debt for life preserved,
 A better meed have well deserved:
 Can nought but blood our feud atone?
 Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!
 And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
 The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
 For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
 Between the living and the dead:
 'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
 His party conquers in the strife.'"
 "Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
 "The riddle is already read.
 Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
 There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
 Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
 Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
 To James, at Stirling, let us go,
 When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
 Or if the King shall not agree
 To grant thee grace and favour free,
 I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
 That, to thy native strengths restored,
 With each advantage shalt thou stand,
 That aids thee now to guard thy land."

XIV.

Dark lightning flash'd from Roderick's eye—
 "Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
 Because a wretched kern ye slew,
 Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
 He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
 Thou add'st but fuel to my hate:—
 My clansman's blood demands revenge.
 Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
 My thought, and hold thy valour light
 As that of some vain carpet knight,
 Who ill deserved my courteous care,
 And whose best boast is but to wear
 A braid of his fair lady's hair."—
 "I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
 It nerves my heart, it steels my sword:

For I have sworn this braid to stain
 In the best blood that warms thy vein.
 Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth, begone!—
 Yet think not that by thee alone,
 Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;—
 Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
 Start at my whistle clansmen stern,
 Of this small horn one feeble blast
 Would fearful odds against thee cast.
 But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
 We try this quarrel hilt to hilt.”—
 Then each at once his falchion drew,
 Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
 Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain.
 As what they ne'er might see again;
 Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
 In dubious strife they darkly closed.

XV.

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
 That on the field his targe he threw,
 Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
 Had death so often dash'd aside;
 For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
 Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.
 He practised every pass and ward,
 To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
 While less expert, though stronger far,
 The Gael maintain'd unequal war.
 Three times in closing strife they stood,
 And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
 No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
 The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
 Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
 And shower'd his blows like wintry rain;
 And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
 Against the winter shower is proof,
 The foe, invulnerable still,
 Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill;
 Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
 Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
 And backward borne upon the lea,
 Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

XVI.

“Now, yield thee, or by Him who made
 The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!”
 “Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
 Let recreant yield, who fears to die.”
 —Like adder darting from his coil,
 Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
 Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
 Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
 Received, but reck'd not of a wound,
 And lock'd his arms his foeman round.—

Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own !
 No maiden's hand is round thee thrown !
 That desperate grasp thy frame might feel,
 Through bars of brass and triple steel !—
 They tug, they strain ! down, down they go,
 The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
 The Chieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
 His knee was planted on his breast ;
 His clotted locks he backward threw,
 Across his brow his hand he drew,
 From blood and mist to clear his sight,
 Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright !—
 —But hate and fury ill supplied
 The stream of life's exhausted tide,
 And all too late the advantage came,
 To turn the odds of deadly game ;
 For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
 Reel'd soul and sense, reel'd brain and eye.
 Down came the blow ! but in the heath
 The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
 The struggling foe may now unclasp
 The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp ;
 Unwounded from the dreadful close,
 But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII.

He falter'd thanks to Heaven for life,
 Redeem'd, unhop'd, from desperate strife,
 Next on his foe his look he cast,
 Whose every gasp appear'd his last ;
 In Roderick's gore he dipp'd the braid,—
 “ Poor Blanche ! thy wrongs are dearly paid
 Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
 The praise that faith and valour give.”
 With that he blew a bugle note,
 Undid the collar from his throat,
 Unbounneted, and by the wave
 Sate down his brow and hands to lave.
 Then faint afar are heard the feet
 Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet ;
 The sounds increase, and now are seen
 Four mounted squires in Lincoln green ;
 Two who bear lance, and two who lead,
 By loosen'd rein, a saddled steed ;
 Each onward held his headlong course,
 And by Fitz-James rein'd up his horse,—
 With wonder view'd the bloody spot—
 “ Exclaim not, gallants ! question not.—
 You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
 And bind the wounds of yonder knight :
 Let the grey palfrey bear his weight,
 We destined for a fairer freight,
 And bring him on to Stirling straight ;
 I will before at better speed,
 To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.

The sun rides high ;—I must be boune,
 To see the archer game at noon ;
 But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
 De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

XVIII.

“Stand, Bayard, stand !”—the steed obey'd,
 With arching neck and bended head,
 And glancing eye and quivering ear,
 As if he loved his lord to hear.
 No foot Fitz-James in stirrup staid,
 No grasp upon the saddle laid,
 But wreathed his left hand in the mane,
 And lightly bounded from the plain,
 Turn'd on the horse his armed heel,
 And stirr'd his courage with the steel.
 Bounded the fiery steed in air,
 The rider sate erect and fair,
 Then like a bolt from steel crossbow
 Forth launch'd, along the plain they go.
 They dash'd that rapid torrent through,
 And up Carbonie's hill they flew ;
 Still at the gallop prick'd the Knight,
 His merry-men follow'd as they might.
 Along thy banks, swift Teith ! they ride,
 And in the race they mock thy tide ;
 Torry and Lendrick now are past,
 And Deanstown lies behind them cast ;
 They rise, the banner'd towers of Doune,
 They sink in distant woodland soon ;
 Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,
 They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre ;
 They mark just glance and disappear
 The lofty brow of ancient Kier ;
 They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,
 Dark Forth ! amid thy sluggish tides,
 And on the opposing shore take ground,
 With plash, with scramble, and with bound.
 Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth !
 And soon the bulwark of the North,
 Grey Stirling, with her towers and town,
 Upon their fleet career look'd down.

XIX.

As up the flinty path they strain'd,
 Sudden his steed the leader rein'd ;
 A signal to his squire he flung,
 Who instant to his stirrup sprung :—
 “Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman grey
 Who town-warld holds the rocky way,
 Of stature tall and poor array ?
 Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,
 With which he scales the mountain-side ?
 Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom ?”
 “No, by my word ;—a burly groom

He seems, who in the field or chase
 A baron's train would nobly grace."—
 "Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,
 And jealousy, no sharper eye?
 Afar, ere to the hill he drew,
 That stately form and step I knew;
 Like form in Scotland is not seen,
 Treads not such step on Scottish green.
 'Tis James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!
 The uncle of the banish'd Earl.
 Away, away, to court, to show
 The near approach of dreaded foe:
 The King must stand upon his guard,
 Douglas and he must meet prepared."
 Then right-hand wheel'd their steeds, and straight
 They won the Castle's postern gate.

XX.

The Douglas, who had bent his way
 From Cambus-Kenneth's abbey grey,
 Now, as he climb'd the rocky shelf,
 Held sad communion with himself:—
 "Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
 A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel
 The vengeance of the royal steel.
 I, only I, can ward their fate,—
 God grant the ransom come not late!
 The Abbess hath her promise given,
 My child shall be the bride of heaven;—
 Be pardon'd one repining tear!
 For He, who gave her, knows how dear,
 How excellent!—but that is by,
 And now my business is—to die.
 —Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
 A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
 And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
 That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
 As on the noblest of the land
 Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
 The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
 Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
 —But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
 Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
 And see! upon the crowded street
 In motley groups what masquers meet!
 Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
 And merry morrice-dancers come.
 I guess, by all this quaint array,
 The burghers hold their sports to-day.
 James will be there; he loves such show
 Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
 And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
 As well as where, in proud career,
 The high-born tilter shivers spear

I'll follow to the Castle-park,
 And play my prize ;—King James shall mark,
 If age has tamed these sinews stark,
 Whose force so oft, in happier days,
 His boyish wonder loved to praise."

XXI.

The Castle gates were open flung,
 The quivering drawbridge rock'd and rung,
 And echo'd loud the flinty street
 Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
 As slowly down the deep descent
 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
 While all along the crowded way
 Was jubilee and loud huzza.
 And ever James was bending low,
 To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
 Doffing his cap to city dame,
 Who smiled and blush'd for pride and shame.
 And well the simperer might be vain—
 He chose the fairest of the train.
 Gravely he greets each city sire,
 Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
 Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
 And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
 Who rend the heavens with their acclaims—
 "Long live the Commons' King, King James!"
 Behind the King throng'd peer and knight,
 And noble dame and damsel bright,
 Whose fiery steeds ill brook'd the stay
 Of the steep street and crowded way.
 —But in the train you might discern
 Dark lowering brow and visage stern :
 There nobles mourn'd their pride restrain'd,
 And the mean burgher's joys disdain'd ;
 And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
 Were each from home a banish'd man,
 There thought upon their own grey tower,
 Their waving woods, their fendal power,
 And deem'd themselves a shameful part
 Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXII.

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
 Their chequer'd bands the joyous route.
 There morricers, with bell at heel,
 And blade in hand, their mazes wheel ;
 But chief, beside the butts, there stand
 Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
 Friar Tuck with quaterstaff and cowl,
 Old Scathelock with his surly scowl,
 Maid Marion, fair as ivory bone,
 Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John ;
 Their bugles challenge all that will,
 In archery to prove their skill.

The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
 His first shaft centred in the white,
 And when in turn he shot again,
 His second split the first in twain.
 From the King's hand must Douglas take
 A silver dart, the archer's stake ;
 Fondly he watch'd, with watery eye,
 Some answering glance of sympathy,—
 No kind emotion made reply !
 Indifferent as to archer wight,
 The Monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXIII.

Now, clear the ring ! for, hand to hand,
 The manly wrestlers take their stand.
 Two o'er the rest superior rose,
 And proud demanded mightier foes,
 Nor call'd in vain ; for Douglas came.
 —For life is Hugh of Larbert lame ;
 Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,
 Whom senseless home his comrades bare.
 Prize of the wrestling match, the King
 To Douglas gave a golden ring,
 While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
 As frozen drop of wintry dew.
 Douglas would speak, but in his breast
 His struggling soul his words suppress'd ;
 Indignant then he turn'd him where
 Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
 To hurl the massive bar in air.
 When each his utmost strength had shown,
 The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
 From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
 And sent the fragment through the sky,
 A rood beyond the farthest mark ;
 And still in Stirling's royal park,
 The grey-hair'd sires, who know the past,
 To strangers point the Douglas cast,
 And moralize on the decay
 Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIV.

The vale with loud applauses rang,
 The Ladies' Rock sent back the clang.
 The King, with look unmoved, bestow'd
 A purse well fill'd with pieces broad.
 Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
 And threw the gold among the crowd,
 Who now, with anxious wonder, scan,
 And sharper glance, the dark grey man ;
 Till whispers rose among the throng,
 That heart so free, and hand so strong,
 Must to the Douglas blood belong ;
 The old men mark'd, and shook the head,
 To see his hair with silver spread,

And wink'd aside, and told each son,
 Of feats upon the English done,
 Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand
 Was exiled from his native land.
 The women praised his stately form,
 Though wreck'd by many a winter's storm ;
 The youth with awe and wonder saw
 His strength surpassing Nature's law.
 Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd.
 Till murmur rose to clamours loud.
 But not a glance from that proud ring
 Of peers who circled round the King,
 With Douglas held communion kind,
 Or call'd the banish'd man to mind ;
 No, not from those who, at the chase,
 Once held his side the honour'd place,
 Begirt his board, and, in the field,
 Found safety underneath his shield ;
 For he, whom royal eyes disown,
 When was his form to courtiers known !

XIV.

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
 And bade let loose a gallant stag,
 Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
 Two favourite greyhounds should pull down
 That venison free, and Bourdeaux wine,
 Might serve the archery to dine.
 But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side
 Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,
 The fleetest hound in all the North,—
 Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
 She left the royal hounds mid-way,
 And dashing on the antler'd prey,
 Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
 And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
 The King's stout huntsman saw the sport
 By strange intruder broken short,
 Came up, and with the leash unbound,
 In anger struck the noble hound.
 —The Douglas had endured, that morn,
 The King's cold look, the nobles' scorn,
 And last, and worst to spirit proud,
 Had borne the pity of the crowd ;
 But Lufra had been fondly bred,
 To share his board, to watch his bed,
 And oft would Ellen Lufra's neck
 In maiden glee with garlands deck ;
 They were such playmates, that with name
 Of Lufra, Ellen's image came.
 His stifled wrath is brimming high,
 In darken'd brow and flashing eye ;
 As waves before the bark divide,
 The crowd gave way before his stride ;

Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.

XXVI.

Then clamour'd loud the royal train,
And brandish'd swords and staves amain.
But stern the Baron's warning—"Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! the Douglas, doom'd of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."
"Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!" the Monarch said:
"Of thy mis-proud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know:
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow, and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break off the sports!"—for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows,—
"Break off the sports!" he said, and frown'd.
"And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

XXVII.

Then uproar wild and misarray
Marr'd the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen prick'd among the crowd,
Repell'd by threats and insult loud:
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with baz,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
At once round Douglas darkly sweep
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep;
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disorder'd roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said,—
"Sir John of Hyndford! 'twas my blade
That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed, permit me then
A word with these misguided men.—

XXVIII.

"Hear, gentle friends! ere yet for me
Ye break the bands of fealty,

My life, my honour, and my cause,
 I tender free to Scotland's laws.
 Are these so weak as must require
 The aid of your misguided ire?
 Or, if I suffer causeless wrong,
 Is then my selfish rage so strong,
 My sense of public weal so low,
 That, for mean vengeance on a foe,
 Those cords of love I should unbind,
 Which knit my country and my kind?
 Oh, no! Believe, in yonder tower
 It will not soothe my captive hour,
 To know those spears our foes should dread
 For me in kindred gore are red;
 To know, in fruitless brawl begun,
 For me that mother wails her son;
 For me, that widow's mate expires;
 For me, that orphans weep their sires;
 That patriots mourn insulted laws,
 And curse the Douglas for the cause.
 Oh, let your patience ward such ill,
 And keep your right to love me still!"

XXIX.

The crowd's wild fury sunk again
 In tears, as tempests melt in rain.
 With lifted hands and eyes, they pray'd
 For blessings on his generous head,
 Who for his country felt alone,
 And prized her blood beyond his own.
 Old men, upon the verge of life,
 Bless'd him who stay'd the civil strife;
 And mothers held their babes on high,
 The self-devoted Chief to spy,
 Triumphant over wrongs and ire,
 To whom the prattlers owed a sire:
 Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;
 As if behind some bier beloved,
 With trailing arms and drooping head,
 The Douglas up the hill he led,
 And at the Castle's battled verge,
 With sighs resign'd his honour'd charge.

XXX.

The offended Monarch rode apart,
 With bitter thought and swelling heart,
 And would not now vouchsafe again
 Through Stirling streets to lead his train.-
 "O Lennox, who would wish to rule
 This changeling crowd, this common fool?
 Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim,
 With which they shout the Douglas name!
 With like acclaim, the vulgar throat
 Strain'd for King James their morning note;

With like acclaim they hail'd the day
 When first I broke the Douglas' sway ;
 And like acclaim would Douglas greet,
 If he could hurl me from my seat.
 Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
 Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain !
 Vain as the leaf upon the stream,
 And fickle as a changeful dream ;
 Fantastic as a woman's mood,
 And fierce as Frenzy's fever'd blood,
 Thou many-headed monster-thing,
 Oh, who would wish to be thy king !

XXXI.

“ But soft ! what messenger of speed
 Spurs hitherward his panting steed ?
 I guess his cognizance afar—
 What from our cousin, John of Mar ? ”—
 “ He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound
 Within the safe and guarded ground :
 For some foul purpose yet unknown,—
 Most sure for evil to the throne,—
 The outlaw'd Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,
 Has summon'd his rebellious crew ;
 'Tis said, in James of Bothwell's aid
 These loose banditti stand array'd.
 The Earl of Mar, this morn, from Doune,
 To break their muster march'd, and soon
 Your grace will hear of battle fought ;
 But earnestly the Earl besought,
 Till for such danger he provide,
 With scanty train you will not ride.”

XXXII.

“ Thou warn'st me I have done amiss—
 I should have earlier look'd to this :
 I lost it in this bustling day.
 —Retrace with speed thy former way ;
 Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
 The best of mine shall be thy meed.
 Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
 We do forbid the intended war :
 Roderick, this morn, in single fight,
 Was made our prisoner by a knight ;
 And Douglas hath himself and cause
 Submitted to our kingdom's laws.
 The tidings of their leaders lost
 Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
 Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
 For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
 Bear Mar our message, Braco : fly ! ”—
 He turn'd his steed,—“ My liege, I hie,—
 Yet, ere I cross this lily lawn,
 I fear the broadswords will be drawn.”

The turf the flying courser spurn'd,
And to his towers the King return'd.

XXXIII.

Ill with King James's mood that day,
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay ;
Soon were dismiss'd the courtly throng,
And soon cut short the festal song.
Nor less upon the sadden'd town
The evening sunk in sorrow down.
The burghers spoke of civil jar,
Of rumour'd feuds and mountain war,
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,
All up in arms :—the Douglas too,
They mourn'd him pent within the hold,
“ Where stout Earl William was of old ”—
And there his word the speaker staid,
And finger on his lip he laid,
Or pointed to his dagger blade.
But jaded horsemen, from the west,
At evening to the Castle press'd ;
And busy talkers said they bore
Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore ;
At noon the deadly fray begun,
And lasted till the set of sun.
Thus giddy rumour shook the town,
Till closed the Night her pennons brown

CANTO SIXTH.

THE GUARD-ROOM.

I.

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

What various scenes, and, oh ! what scenes of woe,
Are witness'd by that red and struggling beam !
The fever'd patient, from his pallet low,
Through crowded hospital beholds its stream,
The ruin'd maiden trembles at its gleam,
The debtor wakes to thought of gyve and jail,
The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream ;

The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,
Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail.

II.

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang
With soldier-step and weapon-clang,
While drums, with rolling note, foretell
Relief to weary sentinel.
Through narrow loop and casement barr'd,
The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,
And, struggling with the smoky air,
Deaden'd the torches' yellow glare.
In comfortless alliance shone
The lights through arch of blacken'd stone,
And show'd wild shapes in garb of war,
Faces deform'd with beard and scar,
All haggard from the midnight watch,
And fever'd with the stern debauch ;
For the oak table's massive board,
Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,
And beakers drain'd, and cups o'er-thrown,
Show'd in what sport the night had flown.
Some, weary, snored on floor and bench ;
Some labour'd still their thirst to quench ;
Some, chill'd with watching, spread their hands
O'er the huge chimney's dying brands,
While round them, or beside them flung,
At every step their harness rung.

III.

These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord,
Nor own'd the patriarchal claim
Of Chieftain in their leader's name ;
Adventurers they, from far who roved,
To live by battle which they loved.
There the Italian's clouded face,
The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace ;
The mountain-loving Switzer there
More freely breathed in mountain-air ;
The Fleming there despised the soil,
That paid so ill the labourer's toil ;
Their rolls show'd French and German name
And merry England's exiles came,
To share, with ill-conceal'd disdain,
Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.
All brave in arms, well train'd to wield
The heavy halberd, brand, and shield ;
In camps licentious, wild, and bold ;
In pillage fierce and uncontroll'd ;
And now, by holytide and feast,
From rules of discipline released.

IV.

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

Fierce was their speech, and, 'mid their words,
 Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
 Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
 Of wounded comrades groaning near,
 Whose mangled limbs, and bodies gored,
 Bore token of the mountain sword,
 Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,
 Their prayers and feverish wails were heard;
 Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
 And savage oath by fury spoke!—
 At length up-started John of Brent,
 A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
 A stranger to respect or fear,
 In peace a chaser of the deer,
 In host a hardy mutineer,
 But still the boldest of the crew,
 When deed of danger was to do.
 He grieved, that day, their games cut short,
 And marr'd the dicer's brawling sport,
 And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
 And, while a merry catch I troll,
 Let each the buxom chorus bear,
 Like brethren of the brand and spear."

v.

Soldier's Song.

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bouny brown bowi,
 That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,
 And the seven deadly sins in a flagon of sack;
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,
 Drink upsees out, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,
 Says, that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,
 And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker,
 Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

Our vicar thus preaches—and why should he not?
 For the dues of his cure are the placket and pot;
 And 'tis right of his office poor laymen to lurch,
 Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church.
 Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,
 Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

vi.

The warder's challenge, heard without,
 Stay'd in mid-roar the merry shout.
 A soldier to the portal went,—
 "Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;
 And,—beat for jubilee the drum!
 A maid and minstrel with him come."
 Bertram, a Fleming, grey and scarr'd,
 Was entering now the Court of Guard.

A harper with him, and in plaid
 All muffled close, a mountain maid,
 Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view
 Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.
 "What news?" they roar'd:—"I only know,
 From noon till eve we fought with foe,
 As wild and as untameable
 As the rude mountains where they dwell;
 On both sides store of blood is lost,
 Nor much success can either boast."—
 "But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil
 As theirs must needs reward thy toil.
 Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;
 Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!
 Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
 The leader of a juggler band."—

VII.

"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
 After the fight, these sought our line,
 That aged harper and the girl,
 And, having audience of the Earl,
 Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
 And bring them hitherward with speed.
 Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
 For none shall do them shame or harm."—
 "Hear ye his boast?" cried John of Brent,
 Ever to strife and jangling bent;
 "Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
 And yet the jealous niggard grudge
 To pay the forester his fee?
 I'll have my share howe'er it be,
 Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
 Bertram his forward step withstood;
 And, burning in his vengeful mood,
 Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
 Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
 But Ellen boldly stepp'd between,
 And dropp'd at once the tartan screen:—
 So, from his mourning cloud, appears
 The sun of May, through summer tears.
 The savage soldiery, amazed,
 As on descended angel gazed;
 Even hardy Brent, abash'd and tamed,
 Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

VIII.

Boldly she spoke,— "Soldiers, attend!
 My father was the soldier's friend;
 Cheer'd him in camps, in marches led,
 And with him in the battle bled.
 Not from the valiant, or the strong,
 Should exile's daughter suffer wrong."—
 Answer'd De Brent, most forward still

In every feat or good or ill,—
 “ I shame me of the part I play’d ;
 And thou an outlaw’s child, poor maid !
 An outlaw I by forest laws,
 And merry Needwood knows the cause.
 Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,”—
 He wiped his iron eye and brow,—
 “ Must bear such age, I think, as thou.—
 Hear ye, my mates ;—I go to call
 The Captain of our watch to hall :
 There lies my halberd on the floor ;
 And he that steps my halberd o’er,
 To do the maid injurious part,
 My shaft shall quiver in his heart !—
 Beware loose speech, or jesting rough :
 Ye all know John de Brent. Enough.”

IX.

Their Captain came, a gallant young.—
 (Of Tullibardine’s house he sprung,)
 Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight ;
 Gay was his mien, his humour light,
 And, though by courtesy controll’d,
 Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
 The high-born maiden ill could brook
 The scanning of his curious look
 And dauntless eye :—and yet, in sooth,
 Young Lewis was a generous youth ;
 But Ellen’s lovely face and mien,
 Ill suited to the garb and scene,
 Might lightly bear construction strange,
 And give loose fancy scope to range.
 “ Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid !
 Come ye to seek a champion’s aid,
 On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
 Like errant damosel of yore ?
 Does thy high quest a knight require,
 Or may the venture suit a squire ?”
 Her dark eye flash’d ;—she paused and sigh’d.
 “ Oh, what have I to do with pride !—
 Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
 A suppliant for a father’s life,
 I crave an audience of the King.
 Behold, to back my suit, a ring,
 The royal pledge of grateful claims,
 Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James.”

X.

The signet-ring young Lewis took,
 With deep respect and alter’d look ;
 And said,—“ This ring our duties own ;
 And pardon, if to worth unknown,
 In semblance mean obscurely veil’d.
 Lady, in aught my folly fail’d.

Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
 The King shall know what suitor waits.
 Please you, meanwhile, in fitting bower
 Repose you till his waking hour ;
 Female attendance shall obey
 Your hest, for service or array.
 Permit I marshall you the way."
 But, ere she follow'd, with the grace
 And open bounty of her race,
 She bade her slender purse be shared
 Among the soldiers of the guard.
 The rest with thanks their guerdon took ;
 But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
 On the reluctant maiden's hold
 Forced bluntly back the proffer'd gold ;—
 " Forgive a haughty English heart,
 And oh, forget its ruder part !
 The vacant purse shall be my share,
 Which in my barret-cap I'll bear,
 Perchance in jeopardy of war,
 Where gayer crests may keep afar."
 With thanks—'twas all she could—the maid
 His rugged courtesy repaid.

XI.

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
 Allan made suit to John of Brent :—
 " My lady safe, O let your grace
 Give me to see my master's face.
 His minstrel I,—to share his doom
 Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
 Tenth in descent, since first my sires
 Waked for his noble house their lyres,
 Nor one of all the race was known
 But prized its weal above their own.
 With the Chief's birth begins our care ;
 Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
 Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
 His earliest feat of field or chase ;
 In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
 We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
 Nor leave him till we pour our verse—
 A doleful tribute !—o'er his hearse.
 Then let me share his captive lot ;
 It is my right—deny it not !"—
 " Little we reck," said John of Brent,
 " We Southern men, of long descent ;
 Nor wot we how a name—a word—
 Makes clansmen vassals to a lord :
 Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
 God bless the house of Beaudesert !
 And, but I loved to drive the deer,
 More than to guide the labouring steer,
 I had not dwelt an outcast here.

Come, good old Minstrel, follow me ;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

XII.

Then, from a rusted iron hook,
A bunch of ponderous keys he took,
Lighted a torch, and Allan led
Through grated arch and passage dread.
Portals they pass'd, where, deep within,
Spoke prisoner's moan, and fetters' din ;
Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,
Lay wheel, and axe, and headsman's sword,
And many a hideous engine grim,
For wrenching joint, and crushing limb,
By artists form'd who deem'd it shame
And sin to give their work a name.
They halted at a low-brow'd porch,
And Brent to Allan gave the torch,
While bolt and chain he backward roll'd,
And made the bar unhasp its hold.
They enter'd :—'twas a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon ; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Deck'd the sad walls and oaken floor ;
Such as the rugged days of old
Deem'd fit for captive noble's hold.
"Here," said De Brent, "thou may'st remain
Till the Leech visit him again.
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then, the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growl'd anew.
Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head ;
The wondering Minstrel look'd, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu !
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deem'd the Chief he sought.

XIII.

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore
Shall never stem the billows more,
Deserted by her gallant band,
Amid the breakers lies astrand,—
So, on his couch, lay Roderick Dhu !
And oft his fever'd limbs he threw
In toss abrupt, as when her sides
Lie rocking in the advancing tides,
That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,
Yet cannot heave her from the seat ;—
Oh ! how unlike her course at sea !
Or his free step on hill and lea !—

Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,
 "What of thy lady?—of my clan?—
 My mother?—Douglas?—tell me all!
 Have they been ruin'd in my fall?
 Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?
 Yet speak,—speak boldly,—do not fear."—
 (For Allan, who his mood well knew,
 Was choked with grief and terror too.)
 "Who fought?—who fled?—Old man, be brief;—
 Some might—for they had lost their Chief.
 Who basely live?—who bravely died?"—
 "Oh, calm thee, Chief!" the Minstrel cried;
 "Ellen is safe;"—"For that, thank Heaven!"—
 "And hopes are for the Douglas given;—
 The Lady Margaret, too, is well;
 And, for thy clan,—on field or fell,
 Has never harp of minstrel told
 Of combat fought so true and bold.
 Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,
 Though many a goodly bow is rent."

XIV

The Chieftain rear'd his form on high,
 And fever's fire was in his eye;
 But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
 Chequer'd his swarthy brow and cheeks.
 —"Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
 With measure bold on festal day,
 In yon lone isle, . . . again where ne'er
 Shall harper play, or warrior hear! . . .
 That stirring air that peals on high,
 O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
 Strike it!—and then (for well thou canst),
 Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
 Fling me the picture of the fight,
 When met my clan the Saxon might.
 I'll listen, till my fancy hears
 The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
 These grates, these walls, shall vanish then.
 For the fair field of fighting men,
 And my free spirit burst away,
 As if it soar'd from battle fray."
 The trembling Bard with awe obey'd,—
 Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
 But soon remembrance of the sight
 He witness'd from the mountain's height,
 With what old Bertram told at night,
 Awaken'd the full power of song,
 And bore him in career along;—
 As shallop launch'd on river's tide,
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,
 But, when it feels the middle stream,
 Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

XV.

Battle of Beal an Duine.

"The Minstrel came once more to view
 The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
 For ere he parted, he would say
 Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand !
 There is no breeze upon the fern,
 Nor ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyry nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake ;
 The small birds will not sing aloud,
 The springing trout lies still,
 So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
 Benledi's distant hill.
 Is it the thunder's solemn sound
 That mutters deep and dread,
 Or echoes from the groaning ground
 The warrior's measured tread ?
 Is it the lightning's quivering glance
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams ?
 I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
 I see the Moray's silver star,
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
 That up the lake comes winding far !
 To hero bound for battle-strife,
 Or bard of martial lay,
 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
 One glance at their array !

XVI.

"Their light-arm'd archers far and near
 Survey'd the tangled ground ;
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear.
 A twilight forest frown'd ;
 Their barbed horsemen, in the rear,
 The stern battalia crown'd.
 No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
 Still were the pipe and drum ;
 Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
 The sullen march was dumb.
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
 Or wave their flags abroad ;
 Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
 That shadow'd o'er their road.
 Their vanward scouts no tidings bring,
 Can rouse no lurking foe,
 Nor spy a trace of living thing,
 Save when they stirr'd the roe ;
 The host moves like a deep-sea wave,

Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
 High-swelling, dark, and slow.
 The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
 A narrow and a broken plain,
 Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws ;
 And here the horse and spearmen pause,
 While, to explore the dangerous glen,
 Dive through the pass the archer-men.

XVII.

“ At once there rose so wild a yell
 Within that dark and narrow dell,
 As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
 Had peal'd the banner-cry of hell !
 Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
 The archery appear ;
 For life ! for life ! their plight they ply—
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
 And plaids and bonnets waving high,
 And broadswords flashing to the sky,
 Are maddening in the rear.
 Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
 Pursuers and pursued ;
 Before that tide of flight and chase,
 How shall it keep its rooted place,
 The spearmen's twilight wood !—
 ‘ Down, down,’ cried Mar, ‘ your lances down’
 Bear back both friend and foe !’—
 Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
 That serried grove of lances brown
 At once lay levell'd low ;
 And closely shouldering side to side,
 The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
 ‘ We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
 As their Tinchel cows the game !
 They come as fleet as forest deer,
 We'll drive them back as tame.’—

XVIII.

“ Bearing before them, in their course,
 The relics of the archer force,
 Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
 Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
 Above the tide, each broadsword bright
 Was brandishing like beam of light,
 Each targe was dark below ;
 And with the ocean's mighty swing,
 When heaving to the tempest's wing,
 They hurl'd them on the foe.
 I heard the lance's shivering crash,
 As when the whirlwind rends the ash ;
 I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
 As if an hundred anvils rang !
 But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
 Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank.

—' My banner-man, advance!
 I see,' he cried, ' their column shake.—
 Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
 Upon them with the lance!'—
 The horsemen dash'd among the rout,
 As deer break through the broom;
 Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
 They soon make lightsome room.
 Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
 Where, where was Roderick then?
 One blast upon his bugle-horn
 Were worth a thousand men!
 And reflux through the pass of fear
 The battle's tide was pour'd;
 Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling spear.
 Vanish'd the mountain-sword.
 As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
 Receives her roaring linn,
 As the dark caverns of the deep
 Suck the wild whirlpool in,
 So did the deep and darksome pass
 Devour the battle's mingled mass:
 None linger now upon the plain,
 Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

LIX.

“ Now westward rolls the battle's din,
 That deep and doubling pass within,
 —Minstrel, away! the work of fate
 Is bearing on: its issue wait,
 Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile
 Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.
 Grey Benvenue I soon repass'd,
 Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.
 The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
 The lowering scowl of heaven
 An inky hue of vivid blue
 To the deep lake has given;
 Strange gusts of wind from mountain-glen
 Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
 I heeded not the eddying surge,
 Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge,
 Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
 Which like an earthquake shook the ground,
 And spoke the stern and desperate strife
 That parts not but with parting life,
 Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll
 The dirge of many a passing soul.
 Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
 The martial flood disgorged agen,
 But not in mingled tide:
 The plaided warriors of the North
 High on the mountain thunder forth
 And overhang its side:

While by the lake below appears
 The dark ning cloud of Saxon spears.
 At weary bay each shatter'd band,
 Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand ;
 Their banners stream like tatter'd sail
 That flings its fragments to the gale,
 And broken arms and disarray
 Mark'd the fell havoc of the day.

XL

“ Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
 The Saxon stood in sullen trance,
 Till Moray pointed with his lance,
 And cried—‘ Behold yon isle !—
 See ! none are left to guard its strand,
 But women weak, that wring the hand :
 'Tis there of yore the robber band
 Their booty wont to pile ;—
 My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
 To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
 And loose a shallop from the shore.
 Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
 Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.’—
 Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
 On earth his casque and corslet rung,
 He plunged him in the wave :—
 All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
 And to their clamours Benvenue
 A mingled echo gave ;
 The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,
 The helpless females scream for fear,
 And yells for rage the mountaineer.
 'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
 Pour'd down at once the lowering heaven ;
 A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,
 Her billows rear'd their snowy crest.
 Well for the swimmer swell'd they high,
 To mar the Highland marksman's eye ;
 For round him shower'd, 'mid rain and hail,
 The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
 In vain—he nears the isle—and lo !
 His hand is on a shallop's bow.
 —Just then a flash of lightning came,
 It tinged the waves and strand with flame :
 I mark'd Duncraggan's widow'd dame—
 Behind an oak I saw her stand,
 A naked dirk gleam'd in her hand .
 It darken'd,—but, amid the moan
 Of waves, I heard a dying groan ;
 Another flash !—the spearman floats
 A weltering corse beside the boats,
 And the stern matron o'er him stood,
 Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

XXI.

" 'Revenge ! revenge !' the Saxons cried—
 The Gael's exulting shout replied.
 Despite the elemental rage,
 Again they hurried to engage ;
 But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
 Bloody with spurring came a knight,
 Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
 Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.
 Clarion and trumpet by his side
 Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
 While, in the Monarch's name, afar
 An herald's voice forbade the war,
 For Bothwell's lord, and Roderick bold,
 Were both, he said, in captive hold."—
 —But here the lay made sudden stand !—
 The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand !
 Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
 How Roderick brook'd his minstrelsy :
 At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
 With lifted hand, kept feeble time ;
 That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
 Varied his look as changed the song ;
 At length, no more his deafen'd ear
 The minstrel melody can hear ;
 His face grows sharp,—his hands are clench'd,
 As if some pang his heart-strings wrench'd ;
 Set are his teeth, his fading eye
 Is sternly fix'd on vacancy ;
 Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
 His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu !—
 Old Allan-Bane look'd on aghast,
 While grim and still his spirit pass'd :
 But when he saw that life was fled,
 He pour'd his wailing o'er the dead.

XXII.

Lament.

" And art thou cold and lowly laid,
 Thy foemen's dread, thy people's aid,
 Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade,
 For thee shall none a requiem say ?
 —For thee,—who loved the minstrel's lay,
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,
 The shelter of her exiled line,
 E'en in this prison house of thine,
 I'll wail for Alpine's honour'd Pine !
 " What groans shall yonder valleys fill !
 What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill !
 What tears of burning rage shall thrill,
 When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,
 Thy fall before the race was won,
 Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun !

There breathes not clansman of thy line,
But would have given his life for thine.—
Oh, woe for Alpine's honour'd Pine!

“Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!—
The captive thrush may brook the cage,
The prison'd eagle dies for rage.
Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!
And, when its notes awake again,
Even she, so long beloved in vain,
Shall with my harp her voice combine,
And mix her woe and tears with mine,
To wail Clan-Alpine's honour'd Pine.”—

XXIII.

Ellen, the while, with bursting heart,
Remain'd in lordly bower apart,
Where play'd with many-colour'd gleams.
Through storied pane, the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lighten'd up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or, if she look'd, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawn'd the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claim'd with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betray'd.—
Those who such simple joys have known,
Are taught to prize them when they're gone
But sudden, see, she lifts her head!
The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woeful hour!
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

XXIV.

Lay of the Imprisoned Huntsman.

“My hawk is tired of perch and hood,
My idle greyhound loathes his food.
My horse is weary of his stall,
And I am sick of captive thrall.
I wish I were, as I have been,
Hunting the hart in forest green,

With bended bow and bloodhound free,
 For that's the life is meet for me.
 I hate to learn the ebb of time,
 From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,
 Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl,
 Inch after inch, along the wall.
 The lark was wont my matins ring,
 The sable rook my vespers sing;
 These towers, although a king's they be,
 Have not a hall of joy for me.
 No more at dawning morn I rise,
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,
 And homeward wend with evening dew.
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet,
 And lay my trophies at her feet,
 While fled the eve on wing of glee,—
 That life is lost to love and me!"

XXV.

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,
 The list'ner had not turn'd her head,
 It trickled still, the starting tear,
 When light a footstep struck her ear,
 And Snowdown's graceful Knight was near:
 She turn'd the hastier, lest again
 The prisoner should renew his strain.—
 "O welcome, brave Fitzjames!" she said;
 "How may an almost orphan maid
 Pay the deep debt"—"O say not so!
 To me no gratitude you owe.
 Not mine, alas! the boon to give,
 And bid thy noble father live;
 I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,
 With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.
 No tyrant he, though ire and pride
 May lay his better mood aside.
 Come, Ellen, come! 'tis more than time—
 He holds his court at morning prime."
 With beating heart, and bosom wrung,
 As to a brother's arm she clung:
 Gently he dried the falling tear,
 And gently whisper'd hope and cheer;
 Her faltering steps half led, half staid,
 Through gallery fair, and high arcade,
 Till, at his touch, its wings of pride
 A portal arch unfolded wide.

XXVI.

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
 A thronging scene of figures bright;
 It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
 As when the setting sun has given
 Ten thousand hues to summer even.

And from their tissue, fancy frames
 Aërial knights and fairy dames.
 Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
 A few faint steps she forward made,
 Then slow her drooping head she raised,
 And fearful round the presence gazed;
 For him she sought, who own'd this state,
 The dreaded Prince, whose will was fate.
 She gazed on many a princely port,
 Might well have ruled a royal court;
 On many a splendid garb she gazed,
 Then turn'd bewilderd and amazed,
 For all stood bare; and, in the room,
 Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
 To him each lady's look was lent;
 On him each courtier's eye was bent;
 Midst furs, and silks, and jewels sheen,
 He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
 The centre of the glittering ring,—
 And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King!

XXVII.

As wreath of snow, on mountain-breast,
 Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
 Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
 And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
 No word her choking voice commands,—
 She show'd the ring—she clasp'd her hands.
 Oh! not a moment could he brook,
 The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
 Gently he raised her; and, the while,
 Check'd with a glance the circle's smile
 Graceful, but grave, her brow he kiss'd,
 And bade her terrors be dismiss'd:—
 “Yes, Fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
 The fealty of Scotland claims.
 To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
 He will redeem his signet ring.
 Ask nought for Douglas; yester even,
 His Prince and he have much forgiven:
 Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue—
 I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
 We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
 Yield what they craved with clamour loud;
 Calmly we heard and judg'd his cause,
 Our council aided, and our laws.
 I stanch'd thy father's death-feud stern
 With stout De Vaux and Grey Glencairn;
 And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
 The friend and bulwark of our Throne.—
 But, lovely infidel, how now?
 What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
 Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
 Thou must confirm this doubting maid.

XXVIII.

(Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
 And on his neck his daughter hung.
 The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
 The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
 When it can say, with godlike voice,
 Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice !
 Yet would not James the general eye
 On Nature's raptures long should pry ;
 He stepp'd between—" Nay, Douglas, nay
 Steal not my proselyte away !
 The riddle 'tis my right to read,
 That brought this happy chance to speed.
 Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
 In life's more low but happier way,
 'Tis under name which veils my power ;
 Nor falsely veils—for Stirling's tower
 Of yore the name of Snowdown claims,
 (And Normans call me James Fitz-James)
 Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
 Thus learn to right the injured cause."—
 Then, in a tone apart and low,—
 " Ah, little traitress ! none must know
 What idle dream, what lighter thought,
 What vanity full dearly bought,
 Join'd to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
 My spell-bound steps to Benvenue,
 In dangerous hour, and all but gave
 Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive !"—
 Aloud he spoke—" Thou still dost hold
 That little talisman of gold,
 Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring—
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King !"

XXIX.

Full well the conscious maiden guess'd
 He probed the weakness of her breast ;
 But, with that consciousness, there came
 A lightening of her fears for Græme.
 And more she deem'd the Monarch's ire
 Kindled 'gainst him, who for her sire,
 Rebellious broadsword boldly drew ;
 And, to her generous feeling true,
 She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
 " Forbear thy suit :—the King of kings
 Alone can stay life's parting wings :
 I know his heart, I know his hand,
 Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand—
 My fairest earldom would I give
 To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live !—
 Hast thou no other boon to crave ?
 No other captive friend to save ?"
 Blushing, she turn'd her from the King,
 And to the Douglas gave the ring,

As if she wish'd her sire to speak
 The suit that stain'd her glowing cheek.—
 "Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
 And stubborn justice holds her course.—
 Malcolm, come forth!"—and, at the word,
 Down kneel'd the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
 "For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
 From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
 Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
 Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
 And sought, amid thy faithful clan,
 A refuge for an outlaw'd man,
 Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—
 Fetters and warder for the Græme!"—
 His chain of gold the King unstrung,
 The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,
 Then gently drew the glittering band,
 And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,
 On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
 In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
 The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
 Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,
 And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;
 Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
 With distant echo from the fold and lea,
 And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel harp!
 Yet, once again, forgive my feeble gway!
 And little reck I of the censure sharp
 May idly cavil at an idle lay.
 Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way,
 Through secret woes the world has never known,
 When on the weary night dawn'd wearier day,
 And bitterer was the grief devour'd alone.
 That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
 Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!
 'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire—
 'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing;—
 Receding now, the dying numbers ring
 Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell—
 And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
 A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
 And now, 'tis silent all!—Enchantress, fare thee well!

THE
VISION OF DON RODERICK

Quid dignum memorare tuis, Hispania, terris
Vox humana valet!-----

CLAUDIAN



PREFACE

TO

THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

THE following Poem is founded upon a Spanish Tradition, bearing, in general, that Don Roderick, the last Gothic King of Spain, when the Invasion of the Moors was impending, had the temerity to descend into an ancient vault, near Toledo, the opening of which had been denounced as fatal to the Spanish Monarchy. The legend adds, that his rash curiosity was mortified by an emblematical representation of those Saracens who, in the year 714, defeated him in battle, and reduced Spain under their dominion. I have presumed to prolong the Vision of the Revolutions of Spain down to the present eventful crisis of the Peninsula; and to divide it, by a supposed change of scene, into THREE PERIODS. The FIRST of these represents the Invasion of the Moors, the Defeat and Death of Roderick, and closes with the peaceful occupation of the country by the Victors. The SECOND PERIOD embraces the state of the Peninsula, when the conquests of the Spaniards and Portuguese in the East and West Indies had raised to the highest pitch the renown of their arms; sullied, however, by superstition and cruelty. An allusion to the inhumanities of the Inquisition terminates this picture. The LAST PART of the Poem opens with the state of Spain previous to the unparalleled treachery of BUONAPARTE; gives a sketch of the usurpation attempted upon that unsuspecting and friendly kingdom, and terminates with the arrival of the British succours. It may be further proper to mention, that the object of the Poem is less to commemorate or detail particular incidents, than to exhibit a general and impressive picture of the several periods brought upon the stage.

I am too sensible of the respect due to the Public, especially

by one who has already experienced more than ordinary indulgence, to offer any apology for the inferiority of the poetry to the subject it is chiefly designed to commemorate. Yet I think it proper to mention, that while I was hastily executing a work, written for a temporary purpose, and on passing events, the task was most cruelly interrupted by the successive deaths of LORD PRESIDENT BLAIR and LORD VISCOUNT MELVILLE. In those distinguished characters, I had not only to regret persons whose lives were most important to Scotland, but also whose notice and patronage honoured my entrance upon active life; and, I may add, with melancholy pride, who permitted my more advanced age to claim no common share in their friendship. Under such interruptions, the following verses, which my best and happiest efforts must have left far unworthy of their theme, have, I am myself sensible, an appearance of negligence and incoherence, which, in other circumstances, I might have been able to remove

EDINBURGH. *June* 24. 1811

THE
VISION OF DON RODERICK.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

LIVES there a strain, whose sounds of mounting fire
May rise distinguish'd o'er the din of war ;
Or died it with yon Master of the Lyre,
Who sung beleaguer'd Ilion's evil star ?
Such, WELLINGTON, might reach thee from afar,
Wafting its descant wide o'er Ocean's range ;
Nor shouts, nor clashing arms, its mood could mar,
All as it swell'd 'twixt each loud trumpet-change,
That clangs to Britain victory, to Portugal revenge !

II.

Yes ! such a strain, with all-o'erpouring measure,
Might melodize with each tumultuous sound,
Each voice of fear or triumph, woe or pleasure,
That rings Mondego's ravaged shores around ;
The thundering cry of hosts with conquest crown'd,
The female shriek, the ruin'd peasant's moan,
The shout of captives from their chains unbound,
The foil'd oppressor's deep and sullen groan,
A Nation's choral hymn for tyranny o'erthrown.

III.

But we, weak minstrels of a laggard day,
Skill'd but to imitate an elder page,
Timid and raptureless, can we repay
The debt thou claim'st in this exhausted age ?
Thou givest our lyres a theme, that might engage
Those that could send thy name o'er sea and land,
While sea and land shall last ; for Homer's rage
A theme ; a theme for Milton's mighty hand—
How much unmeet for us, a faint degenerate band !

IV.

Ye mountains stern ! within whose rugged breast
The friends of Scottish freedom found repose ;
Ye torrents ! whose hoarse sounds have soothed their rest,
Returning from the field of vanquish'd foes ;
Say, have ye lost each wild majestic close,
That erst the choir of Bards or Druids flung,
What time their hymn of victory arose,
And Cattræth's glens with voice of triumph rung,
And mystic Merlin harp'd, and grey-hair'd Llywarch sung !

Oh ! if your wilds such minstrelsy retain,
 As sure your changeful gales seem oft to say,
 When sweeping wild, and sinking soft again,
 Like trumpet-jubilee, or harp's wild sway ;
 If ye can echo such triumphant lay,
 Then lend the note to him has loved you long !
 Who pious gather'd each tradition grey,
 That floats your solitary wastes along,
 And with affection vain gave them new voice in song.

VI.

For not till now, how oft so'er the task
 Of truant verse hath lighten'd graver care,
 From Muse or Sylvan was he wont to ask,
 In phrase poetic, inspiration fair ;
 Careless he gave his numbers to the air,
 They came unsought for, if applauses came ;
 Nor for himself prefers he now the prayer ;
 Let but his verse besit a hero's fame,
 Immortal be the verse !—forgot the poet's name !

VII.

Hark, from yon misty cairn their answer tost :
 “ Minstrel ! the fame of whose romantic lyre,
 Capricious-swelling now, may soon be lost,
 Like the light flickering of a cottage fire ;
 If to such task presumptuous thou aspire,
 Seek not from us the meed to warrior due :
 Age after age has gather'd son to sire,
 Since our grey cliffs the din of conflict knew,
 Or, pealing through our vales, victorious bugles blew.

VIII.

“ Decay'd our old traditionary lore,
 Save where the lingering fays renew their ring,
 By milk-maid seen beneath the hawthorn hoar,
 Or round the marge of Minchmore's haunted spring :
 Save where their legends grey-hair'd shepherds sing,
 That now scarce win a listening ear but thine,
 Of feuds obscure, and Border ravaging,
 And rugged deeds recount in rugged line,
 Of moonlight foray made on Teviot, Tweed, or Tyne.

IX.

“ No ! search romantic lands, where the near Sun
 Gives with unstinted boon ethereal flame,
 Where the rude villager, his labour done,
 In verse spontaneous chants some favour'd name ;
 Whether Olalia's charms his tribute claim,
 Her eye of diamond, and her locks of jet ;
 Or whether, kindling at the deeds of Græme,
 He sing, to wild Morisco measure set,
 Old Albin's red claymore, green Erin's bayonet !

X.

“ Explore those regions, where the flinty crest
Of wild Nevada ever gleams with snows,
Where in the proud Alhambra's ruin'd breast
Barbaric monuments of pomp repose ;
Or where the banners of more ruthless foes
Than the fierce Moor, float o'er Toledo's fane,
From whose tall towers even now the patriot throws
An anxious glance, to spy upon the plain
The blended ranks of England, Portugal, and Spain.

XI.

“ There, of Numantian fire a swarthy spark
Still lightens in the sun-burnt native's eye ;
The stately port, slow step, and visage dark,
Still mark enduring pride and constancy.
And, if the glow of feudal chivalry
Beam not, as once, thy nobles dearest pride,
Iberia ! oft thy crestless peasantry
Have seen the plumed Hidalgo quit their side,
Have seen, yet dauntless stood—'gainst fortune fought and died

XII.

“ And cherish'd still by that unchanging race,
Are themes for minstrelsy more high than thine ;
Of strange tradition many a mystic trace,
Legend and vision, prophecy and sign ;
Where wonders wild of Arabesque combine
With Gothic imagery of darker shade,
Forming a model meet for minstrel line.—
Go, seek such theme !”—The Mountain Spirit said :
With filial awe I heard—I heard, and I obey'd.

THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

I.

BEARING their crests amid the cloudless skies,
And darkly clustering in the pale moonlight,
Toledo's holy towers and spires arise,
As from a trembling lake of silver white;
Their mingled shadows intercept the sight
Of the broad burial-ground outstretch'd below,
And nought disturbs the silence of the night;
All sleeps in sullen shade, or silver glow,
All save the heavy swell of Teio's ceaseless flow.

II.

All save the rushing swell of Teio's tide,
Or, distant heard, a courser's neigh or tramp;
Their changing rounds as watchful horsemen ride,
To guard the limits of King Roderick's camp:
For, through the river's night-fog rolling damp,
Was many a proud pavilion dimly seen,
Which glimmer'd back, against the moon's fair lamp,
Tissues of silk and silver twisted sheen,
And standards proudly pitch'd, and warders arm'd between

III.

But of their Monarch's person keeping ward,
Since last the deep-mouth'd bell of vespers toll'd,
The chosen soldiers of the royal guard
The post beneath the proud Cathedral hold:
A band unlike their Gothic sires of old,
Who, for the cap of steel and iron mace,
Bear slender darts, and casques bedeck'd with gold,
While silver-studded belts their shoulders grace,
Where ivory quivers ring in the broad falchion's place.

IV.

In the light language of an idle court,
They murmur'd at their master's long delay,
And held his lengthen'd orisons in sport:—
“What! will Don Roderick here till morning stay
To wear in shrift and prayer the night away?
And are his hours in such dull penance past,
For fair Florinda's plunder'd charms to pay?”—
Then to the east their weary eyes they cast,
And wish'd the lingering dawn would glimmer forth at last

V.

But, far within, Toledo's Prelate lent
 An ear of fearful wonder to the King ;
 The silver lamp a fitful lustre sent,
 So long that sad confession witnessing :
 For Roderick told of many a hidden thing,
 Such as are lothly utter'd to the air,
 When Fear, Remorse, and Shame, the bosom wring,
 And Guilt his secret burden cannot bear,
 And Conscience seeks in speech a respite from Despair.

VI.

Full on the Prelate's face, and silver hair,
 The stream of failing light was feebly roll'd :
 But Roderick's visage, though his head was bare,
 Was shadow'd by his hand and mantle's fold.
 While of his hidden soul the sins he told,
 Proud Alaric's descendant could not brook,
 That mortal man his bearing should behold,
 Or boast that he had seen, when Conscience shook,
 Fear tame a monarch's brow, Remorse a warrior's look.

VII.

The old man's faded cheek wax'd yet more pale,
 As many a secret sad the King bewray'd ;
 As sign and glance eked out the unfinish'd tale,
 When in the midst his faltering whisper stay'd.—
 " Thus royal Witiza was slain,"—he said ;
 " Yet, holy Father, deem not it was I,"—
 Thus still Ambition strives her crimes to shade,—
 " Oh ! rather deem 'twas stern necessity !
 Self-preservation bade, and I must kill or die.

VIII.

" And if Florinda's shrieks alarm'd the air,
 If she invoked her absent sire in vain,
 And on her knees implored that I would spare,
 Yet, reverend priest, thy sentence rash refrain !—
 All is not as it seems—the female train
 Know by their bearing to disguise their mood :"—
 But Conscience here, as if in high disdain,
 Sent to the Monarch's cheek the burning blood—
 He stay'd his speech abrupt—and up the Prelate stood.

IX.

" O harden'd offspring of an iron race !
 What of thy crimes, Don Roderick, shall I say ?
 What alms, or prayers, or penance, can efface
 Murder's dark spot, wash treason's stain away ?
 For the foul ravisher how shall I pray,
 Who, scarce repentant, makes his crime his boast ?
 How hope Almighty vengeance shall delay,
 Unless in mercy to you Christian host,
 He spare the shepherd, lest the guiltless sheep be lost ?"

X.

Then kindled the dark Tyrant in his mood,
 And to his brow return'd its dauntless gloom :
 " And welcome then," he cried, " be blood for blood,
 For treason treachery, for dishonour doom !
 Yet will I know whence come they, or by whom.
 Show, for thou canst—give forth the fated key,
 And guide me, Priest, to that mysterious room,
 Where, if aught true in old tradition be,
 His nation's future fates a Spanish King shall see."—

XI.

" Ill-fated Prince ! recall the desperate word,
 Or pause ere yet the omen thou obey !
 Bethink, yon spell-bound portal would afford
 Never to former Monarch entrance-way ;
 Nor shall it ever ope, old records say,
 Save to a King, the last of all his line,
 What time his empire totters to decay,
 And treason digs, beneath, her fatal mine,
 And, high above, impends avenging wrath divine."—

XII.

" Prelate ! a Monarch's fate brooks no delay ;
 Lead on !"—The ponderous key the old man took,
 And held the winking lamp and led the way,
 By winding stair, dark aisle, and secret nook,
 Then on an ancient gateway bent his look ;
 And, as the key the desperate King essay'd,
 Low mutter'd thunders the Cathedral shook,
 And twice he stopp'd, and twice new effort made,
 Till the huge bolts roll'd back, and the loud hinges bray'd.

XIII.

Long, large, and lofty, was that vaulted hall ;
 Roof, walls, and floor, were all of marble stone,
 Of polish'd marble, black as funeral pall,
 Carved o'er with signs and characters unknown.
 A paly light, as of the dawning, shone
 Through the sad bounds, but whence, they could not spy ;
 For window to the upper air was none ;
 Yet, by that light, Don Roderick could descry
 Wonders that ne'er till then were seen by mortal eye.

XIV.

Grim sentinels, against the upper wall,
 Of molten bronze, two Statues held their place ;
 Massive their naked limbs, their stature tall,
 Their frowning foreheads golden circles grace.
 Moulded they seem'd for kings of giant race,
 That lived and sinn'd before the avenging flood ;
 This grasp'd a scythe, that rested on a mace ;
 This spread his wings for flight, that pondering stood,
 Each stubborn seem'd and stern, immutable of mood.

XV.

Fix'd was the right-hand Giant's brazen look
 Upon his brother's glass of shifting sand,
 As if its ebb he measured by a book,
 Whose iron volume loaded his huge hand;
 In which was wrote of many a fallen land,
 Of empires lost, and kings to exile driven:
 And o'er that pair their names in scroll expand—
 "Lo, DESTINY and TIME! to whom by Heaven
 The guidance of the earth is for a season given."

XVI.

Even while they read, the sand-glass wastes away;
 And, as the last and lagging grains did creep,
 That right-hand Giant 'gan his club upsway,
 As one that startles from a heavy sleep.
 Full on the upper wall the mace's sweep
 At once descended with the force of thunder,
 And hurtling down at once, in crumbled heap,
 The marble boundary was rent asunder,
 And gave to Roderick's view new sights of fear and wonder

XVII.

For they might spy, beyond that mighty breach,
 Realms as of Spain in vision'd prospect laid,
 Castles and towers, in due proportion each,
 As by some skilful artist's hand portray'd:
 Here, cross'd by many a wild Sierra's shade,
 And boundless plains that tire the traveller's eye;
 There, rich with vineyard and with olive glade,
 Or deep-embrown'd by forests huge and high,
 Or wash'd by mighty streams, that slowly murmur'd by.

XVIII.

And here, as erst upon the antique stage,
 Pass'd forth the band of masquers trimly led,
 In various forms, and various equipage,
 While fitting strains the hearer's fancy fed;
 So, to sad Roderick's eye in order spread,
 Successive pageants fill'd that mystic scene,
 Showing the fate of battles ere they bled,
 And issue of events that had not been;
 And, ever and anon, strange sounds were heard between

XIX.

First shrill'd an un-repeated female shriek!—
 It seem'd as if Don Roderick knew the call,
 For the bold blood was blanching in his cheek.—
 Then answer'd kettle-drum and atabal,
 Gong-peal and cymbal-clank the ear appar,
 The Tecbir war-cry, and the Lelie's yell,
 Ring wildly dissonant along the hall.
 Needs not to Roderick their dread import tell—
 "The Moor!" he cried, "the Moor!—ring out the Tocsin!"

XX.

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

XXI.

"By Heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians yield!
 Their coward leader gives for flight the sign!
 The sceptred craven mounts to quit the field—
 Is not yon steed Orelia?—Yes, 'tis mine!
 But never was she turn'd from battle-line:
 Lo! where the recreant spurs o'er stock and stone!
 Curses pursue the slave, and wrath divine!
 Rivers ingulph him!"—"Hush," in shuddering tone,
 The Prelate said—"rash Prince, yon vision'd form's thine own."

XXII.

Just then, a torrent cross'd the flier's course;
 The dangerous ford the Kingly Likeness tried,
 But the deep eddies whirl'd both man and horse,
 Swept like benighted peasant down the tide;
 And the proud Moslemah spread far and wide,
 As numerous as their native locust band;
 Berber and Ismael's sons the spoils divide,
 With naked scimitars mete out the land,
 And for the bondsmen base, the freeborn natives brand.

XXIII.

Then rose the grated Harem, to enclose
 The loveliest maidens of the Christian line;
 Then, menials, to their misbelieving foes,
 Castile's young nobles held forbidden wine:
 Then, too, the holy Cross, salvation's sign,
 By impious hands was from the altar thrown,
 And the deep aisles of the polluted shrine
 Echo'd, for holy hymn and organ-tone,
 The Santon's frantic dance, the Fakir's gibbering moan.

XXIV.

How fares Don Roderick?—E'en as one who spies
 Flames dart their glare o'er midnight's sable woof,
 And hears around his children's piercing cries,
 And sees the pale assistants stand aloof;
 While cruel Conscience brings him bitter proof,
 His folly or his crime have caused his grief;
 And while above him nods the crumbling roof,
 He curses earth and Heaven—himself in chief—
 Desperate of earthly aid, despairing Heaven's relief!

XXV.

That scythe-arm'd Giant turn'd his fatal glass,
 And twilight on the landscape closed her wings ;
 Far to Asturian hills the war-sounds pass,
 And in their stead rebeck or timbrel rings ;
 And to the sound the bell-deck'd dancer springs,
 Bazaars resound as when their marts are met,
 In tourney light the Moor his jerrid flings,
 And on the land as evening seem'd to set,
 The Imaum's chant was heard from mosque or minaret.

XXVI.

So pass'd that pageant. Ere another came,
 The visionary scene was wrapp'd in smoke,
 Whose sulph'rous wreaths were cross'd by sheets of flame ;
 With every flash a bolt explosive broke,
 Till Roderick deem'd the fiends had burst their yoke,
 And waved 'gainst heaven the infernal gonfalone !
 For War a new and dreadful language spoke,
 Never by ancient warrior heard or known ;
 Lightning and smoke her breath, and thunder was her tone.

XXVII.

From the dim landscape roll the clouds away—
 The Christians have regain'd their heritage ;
 Before the Cross has waned the Crescent's ray,
 And many a monastery decks the stage,
 And lofty church, and low-brow'd hermitage.
 The land obeys a Hermit and a Knight,—
 The Genii those of Spain for many an age ;
 This clad in sackcloth, that in armour bright,
 And that was VALOUR named, this BIGOTRY was hight.

XXVIII.

VALOUR was harness'd like a Chief of old,
 Arm'd at all points, and prompt for knightly gest ;
 His sword was temper'd in the Ebro cold,
 Morena's eagle plume adorn'd his crest,
 The spoils of Afric's lion bound his breast.
 Fierce he stepp'd forward and flung down his gage,
 As if of mortal kind to brave the best.
 Him follow'd his Companion, dark and sage,
 As he, my Master, sung the dangerous Archimage.

XXIX.

Haughty of heart and brow the Warrior came,
 In look and language proud as proud might be,
 Vaunting his lordship, lineage, fights, and fame :
 Yet was that barefoot Monk more proud than he ;
 And as the ivy climbs the tallest tree,
 So round the loftiest soul his toils he wound,
 And with his spells subdued the fierce and free,
 Till ermined Age, and Youth in arms renown'd,
 Honouring his scourge and haircloth, meekly kiss'd the ground.

XXX.

And thus it chanced that VALOUR, peerless knight,
 Who ne'er to King or Kaiser veil'd his crest,
 Victorious still in bull-feast or in fight,
 Since first his limbs with mail he did invest,
 Stoop'd ever to that Anchoret's behest;
 Nor reason'd of the right, nor of the wrong,
 But at his bidding laid the lance in rest,
 And wrought fell deeds the troubled world along,
 For he was fierce as brave, and pitiless as strong.

XXXI.

Of his proud galleys sought some new-found world,
 That latest sees the sun, or first the morn;
 Still at that Wizard's feet their spoils he hurl'd,—
 Ingots of ore from rich Petosi borne,
 Crowns by Caciques, aigrettes by Omrahs worn,
 Wrought of rare gems, but broken, rent, and foul;
 Idols of gold from heathen temples torn,
 Bedabbled all with blood.— With grisly scowl
 The Hermit mark'd the stains, and smiled beneath his cowl.

XXXII.

Then did he bless the offering, and bade make
 Tribute to Heaven of gratitude and praise;
 And at his word the choral hymns awake,
 And many a hand the silver censer sways,
 But with the incense-breath these censers raise,
 Mix steams from corpses smouldering in the fire;
 The groans of prison'd victims mar the lays,
 And shrieks of agony confound the quire;
 While, 'mid the mingled sounds, the darken'd scenes expire.

XXXIII.

Preluding light, were strains of music heard,
 As once again revolved that measured sand,
 Such sounds as when, for sylvan dance prepared,
 Gay Xeres summons forth her vintage band;
 When for the light bolero ready stand
 The mozo blithe, with gay muchacha met,
 He conscious of his broider'd cap and band,
 She of her netted locks and light corsette,
 Each tiptoe perch'd to spring, and shake the castanet.

XXXIV.

And well such strains the opening scene became;
 For VALOUR had relax'd his ardent look,
 And at a lady's feet, like lion tame,
 Lay stretch'd, full loth the weight of arms to brook;
 And soften'd BIGOTRY, upon his book,
 Patter'd a task of little good or ill:
 But the blithe peasant plied his pruning-hook,
 Whistled the muleteer o'er vale and hill,
 And rung from village-green the merry seguidille.

XXXV.

Grey Royalty, grown impotent of toil,
 Let the grave sceptre slip his lazy hold ;
 And, careless, saw his rule become the spoil
 Of a loose Female and her minion bold.
 But peace was on the cottage and the fold,
 From court intrigue, from bickering faction far ;
 Beneath the chestnut-tree Love's tale was told,
 And to the tinkling of the light guitar,
 Sweet stoop'd the western sun, sweet rose the evening star.

XXXVI.

As that sea-cloud, in size like human hand,
 When first from Carmel by the Tishbite seen,
 Came slowly overshadowing Israel's land,
 A while, perchance, bedeck'd with colours sheen,
 While yet the sunbeams on its skirts had been,
 Limning with purple and with gold its shroud,
 Till darker folds obscured the blue serene,
 And blotted heaven with one broad sable cloud,
 Then sheeted rain burst down, and whirlwinds howl'd aloud :

XXXVII.

Even so, upon that peaceful scene was pour'd,
 Like gathering clouds, full many a foreign band,
 And HE, their Leader, wore in sheath his sword,
 And offer'd peaceful front and open hand,
 Veiling the perjured treachery he plann'd,
 By friendship's zeal and honour's specious guise,
 Until he won the passes of the land ;
 Then burst were honour's oath and friendship's ties !
 He clutch'd his vulture-grasp, and call'd fair Spain his prize

XXXVIII.

An Iron Crown his anxious forehead bore ;
 And well such diadem his heart became,
 Who ne'er his purpose for remorse gave o'er,
 Or check'd his course for piety or shame ;
 Who, train'd a soldier, deem'd a soldier's fame
 Might flourish in the wreath of battles won,
 Though neither truth nor honour deck'd his name ;
 Who, placed by fortune on a Monarch's throne,
 Reck'd not of Monarch's faith, or Mercy's kingly tone.

XXXIX.

From a rude isle his ruder lineage came,
 The spark, that, from a suburb-hovel's hearth
 Ascending, wraps some capital in flame,
 Hath not a meaner or more sordid birth.
 And for the soul that bade him waste the earth—
 The sable land-flood from some swamp obscure,
 That poisons the glad husband-field with dearth,
 And by destruction bids its fame endure,
 Hath not a source more sullen, stagnant, and impure

XL.

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

XLI.

No longer now she spurn'd at mean revenge,
 Or stay'd her hand for conquer'd foeman's moan ;
 As when, the fates of aged Rome to change,
 By Cæsar's side she cross'd the Rubicon.
 Nor joy'd she to bestow the spoils she won,
 As when the banded powers of Greece were task'd
 To war beneath the Youth of Macedon :
 No seemly veil her modern minion ask'd,
 He saw her hideous face, and loved the fiend unmask'd.

XLII.

That Prelate mark'd his march—On banners blazed
 With battles won in many a distant land,
 On eagle-standards and on arms he gazed ;
 " And hopest thou then," he said, " thy power shall stand ?
 Oh ! thou hast builded on the shifting sand,
 And thou hast temper'd it with slaughter's flood ;
 And know, fell scourge in the Almighty's hand,
 Gore-moisten'd trees shall perish in the bud,
 And by a bloody death, shall die the Man of Blood ! "

XLIII.

The ruthless Leader beckon'd from his train
 A wan fraternal Shade, and bade him kneel,
 And paled his temples with the crown of Spain,
 While trumpets rang, and heralds cried, " Castile ! "
 Not that he loved him—No !—In no man's weal,
 Scarce in his own, e'er joy'd that sullen heart ;
 Yet round that throne he bade his warriors wheel,
 That the poor puppet might perform his part,
 And be a sceptred slave, at his stern beck to start.

XLIV.

But on the Natives of that Land misused,
 Not long the silence of amazement hung,
 Nor brook'd they long their friendly faith abused ;
 For, with a common shriek, the general tongue
 Exclaim'd, " To arms ! "—and fast to arms they sprung.
 And VALOUR woke, that Genius of the Land !
 Pleasure, and ease, and sloth, aside he flung,
 As burst the awakening Nazarite his band,
 When 'gainst his treacherous foes he clench'd his dreadful hand.

XLV.

That Mimic Monarch now cast anxious eye
 Upon the Satraps that begirt him round,
 Now doff'd his royal robe in act to fly,
 And from his brow the diadem unbound.
 So oft, so near, the Patriot bugle wound,
 From Tarick's walls to Bilboa's mountains blown,
 These martial satellites hard labour found,
 To guard a while his substituted throne—
 Light recking of his cause, but battling for their own.

XLVI.

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

XLVII.

But unappall'd, and burning for the fight,
 The Invaders march, of victory secure ;
 Skilful their force to sever or unite,
 And train'd alike to vanquish or endure.
 Nor skilful less, cheap conquest to ensure,
 Discord to breathe, and jealousy to sow,
 To quell by boasting, and by bribes to lure ;
 While nought against them bring the unpractised foe,
 Save hearts for Freedom's cause, and hands for Freedom's blow

XLVIII.

Proudly they march—but, oh ! they march not forth
 By one hot field to crown a brief campaign,
 As when their Eagles, sweeping through the North,
 Destroy'd at every stoop an ancient reign !
 Far other fate bad Heaven decreed for Spain ;
 In vain the steel, in vain the torch was plied,
 New Patriot armies started from the slain,
 High blazed the war, and long, and far, and wide,
 And oft the God of Battles blest the righteous side.

XLIX.

Nor unatoned, where Freedom's foes prevail,
 Remain'd their savage waste. With blade and brand,
 By day the Invaders ravaged hill and dale,
 But, with the darkness, the Guerilla band
 Came like night's tempest, and avenged the land,
 And claim'd for blood the retribution due,
 Probed the hard heart, and lopp'd the murd'rous hand ;
 And Dawn, when o'er the scene her beams she threw,
 Midst ruins they had made, the spoilers' corpses knew.

L.

What minstrel verse may sing, or tongue may tell,
 Amid the vision'd strife from sea to sea,
 How oft the Patriot banners rose or fell,
 Still honour'd in defeat as victory!
 For that sad pageant of events to be,
 Show'd every form of fight by field and flood;
 Slaughter and Ruin, shouting forth their glee,
 Beheld, while riding on the tempest scud,
 The waters choked with slain, the earth bedrench'd with blood

LI.

Then Zaragoza—blighted be the tongue
 That names thy name without the honour due!
 For never hath the harp of Minstrel rung,
 Of faith so felly proved, so firmly true!
 Mine, sap, and bomb, thy shatter'd ruins knew,
 Each art of war's extremity had room,
 Twice from thy half-sack'd streets the foe withdrew.
 And when at length stern fate decreed thy doom,
 They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb

LII.

Yet raise thy head, sad city! Though in chains,
 Enthral'd thou canst not be! Arise, and claim
 Reverence from every heart where Freedom reigns,
 For what thou worshippes!—thy sainted dame,
 She of the Column, honour'd be her name
 By all, whate'er their creed, who honour love!
 And like the sacred relics of the flame,
 That gave some martyr to the bless'd above,
 To every loyal heart may thy sad embers prove!

LIII.

Nor thine alone such wreck. Gerona fair!
 Faithful to death thy heroes shall be sung,
 Manning the towers, while o'er their heads the air
 Swart as the smoke from raging furnace hung;
 Now thicker dark'ning where the mine was sprung,
 Now briefly lighten'd by the cannon's flare,
 Now arch'd with fire-sparks as the bomb was flung,
 And redd'ning now with conflagration's glare,
 While by the fatal light the foes for storm prepare.

LIV.

While all around was danger, strife, and fear,
 While the earth shook, and darken'd was the sky,
 And wide Destruction stunn'd the listening ear,
 Appall'd the heart, and stupified the eye,—
 Afar was heard that thrice-repeated cry,
 In which old Albion's heart and tongue unite,
 Whene'er her soul is up, and pulse beats high,
 Whether it hail the wine-cup or the fight,
 And bid each arm be strong, or bid each heart be light

LV.

Don Roderick turn'd him as the shout grew loud—
 A varied scene the changeful vision show'd,
 For, where the ocean mingled with the cloud,
 A gallant navy stemm'd the billows broad.
 From mast and stern, St George's symbol flow'd,
 Blent with the silver cross to Scotland dear ;
 Mottling the sea their landward barges row'd,
 And flash'd the sun on bayonet, brand, and spear,
 And the wild beach return'd the seamen's jovial cheer.

LVI

It was a dread, yet spirit-starring sight !—
 The billows foam'd beneath a thousand oars ;
 Fast as they land, the red-cross ranks unite,
 Legions on legions bright'ning all the shores ;
 Then banners rise, and cannon-signal roars,
 Then peals the warlike thunder of the drum,
 Thrills the loud fife, the trumpet-flourish pours,
 And patriot hopes awake, and doubts are dumb,
 For, bold in Freedom's cause, the bands of Ocean come

LVII.

A various host they came—whose ranks display
 Each mode in which the warrior meets the fight :
 The deep battalion locks its firm array,
 And meditates his aim the marksman light ;
 Far glance the light of sabres flashing bright,
 Where mounted squadrons shake the echoing mead ;
 Lacks not artillery breathing flame and night,
 Nor the fleet ordnance whirl'd by rapid steed,
 That rivals lightning's flash in ruin and in speed.

LVIII.

A various host—from kindred realms they came,
 Brethren in arms, but rivals in renown—
 For yon fair bands shall merry England claim,
 And with their deeds of valour deck her crown.
 Hers their bold port, and hers their martial frown,
 And hers their scorn of death in freedom's cause,
 Their eyes of azure, and their locks of brown,
 And the blunt speech that bursts without a pause.
 And freeborn thoughts, which league the Soldier with the Laws

LIX.

And, oh ! loved warriors of the Minstrel's land !
 Yonder your bonnets nod, your tartans wave !
 The rugged form may mark the mountain band,
 And harsher features, and a mien more grave ;
 But ne'er in battle-field throbb'd heart so brave
 As that which beats beneath the Scottish plaid ;
 And when the pibroch bids the battle rave,
 And level for the charge your arms are laid,
 Where lives the desperate foe that for such onset staid !

LX.

Hark ! from yon stately ranks what laughter rings,
 Mingling wild mirth with war's stern minstrelsy,
 His jest while each blithe comrade round him flings,
 And moves to death with military glee !
 Boast, Erin, boast them ! tameless, frank, and free,
 In kindness warm, and fierce in danger known,
 Rough nature's children, humorous as she :
 And HE, yon Chieftain—strike the proudest tone
 Of thy bold harp, green Isle !—the Hero is thine own.

LXI.

Now on the scene Vimeira should be shown,
 On Talavera's fight should Roderick gaze,
 And hear Corunna wail her battle won,
 And see Busaco's crest with lightning blaze :—
 But shall fond fable mix with heroes' praise ?
 Hath Fiction's stage for Truth's long triumphs room ?
 And dare her wild-flowers mingle with the bays,
 That claim a long eternity to bloom
 Around the warrior's crest, and o'er the warrior's tomb !

LXII.

Or may I give adventurous Fancy scope,
 And stretch a bold hand to the awful veil
 That hides futurity from anxious hope,
 Bidding beyond it scenes of glory hail,
 And painting Europe rousing at the tale
 Of Spain's invaders from her confines hurl'd,
 While kindling nations buckle on their mail,
 And Fame, with clarion-blast and wings unfurl'd,
 To Freedom and Revenge awakes an injured World ?

LXIII.

O vain, though anxious, is the glance I cast,
 Since Fate has mark'd futurity her own :
 Yet Fate resigns to Worth the glorious past,
 The deeds recorded, and the laurels won.
 Then, though the Vault of Destiny be gone,
 King, Prelate, all the phantasms of my brain,
 Melted away like mist-wreaths in the sun,
 Yet grant for faith, for valour, and for Spain,
 One note of pride and fire, a Patriot's parting strain !

CONCLUSION.

" Who shall command Estrella's mountain-tide
 Back to the source, when tempest-chafed, to hie ?
 Who, when Gascogne's vex'd gulf is raging wide,
 Shall hush it as a nurse her infant's cry ?
 His magic power let such vain boaster try,
 And when the torrent shall his voice obey,
 And Biscay's whirlwinds list his lullaby,
 Let him stand forth and bar mine eagles' way,
 And they shall heed his voice, and at his bidding stay.

II.

" Else ne'er to stoop, till high on Lisbon's towers
 They close their wings, the symbol of our yoke,
 And their own sea hath whelm'd yon red-cross Powers !
 Thus, on the summit of Alverca's rock,
 To Marshal, Duke, and Peer, Gaul's Leader spoke.
 While downward on the land his legions press,
 Before them it was rich with vine and flock,
 And smiled like Eden in her summer dress ;—
 Behind their wasteful march, a reeking wilderness.

III.

And shall the boastful Chief maintain his word,
 Though Heaven hath heard the wailings of the land,
 Though Lusitania whet her vengeful sword,
 Though Britons arm, and WELLINGTON command ?
 No ! grim Busaco's iron ridge shall stand
 An adamantine barrier to his force ;
 And from its base shall wheel his shatter'd band,
 As from the unshaken rock the torrent hoarse
 Bears off its broken waves, and seeks a devious course.

IV.

Yet not because Alcoba's mountain-hawk
 Hath on his best and bravest made her food,
 In numbers confident, yon Chief shall baulk
 His Lord's imperial thirst for spoil and blood :
 For full in view the promised conquest stood,
 And Lisbon's matrons from their walls, might sum
 The myriads that had half the world subdued,
 And hear the distant thunders of the drum,
 That bids the bands of France to storm and havoc come.

V.

Four moons have heard these thunders idly roll'd,
 Have seen these wistful myriads eye their prey,
 As famish'd wolves survey a guarded fold—
 But in the middle path a Lion lay!
 At length they move—but not to battle-fray,
 Nor blaze yon fires where meets the manly fight;
 Beacons of infamy, they light the way
 Where cowardice and cruelty unite
 To damn with double shame their ignominious flight!

VI.

O triumph for the Fiends of Lust and Wrath!
 Ne'er to be told, yet ne'er to be forgot,
 What wanton horrors mark'd their wreckful path!—
 The peasant butcher'd in his ruin'd cot,
 The hoary priest even at the altar shot,
 Childhood and age given o'er to sword and flame,
 Woman to infamy;—no crime forgot,
 By which inventive demons might proclaim
 Immortal hate to man, and scorn of God's great name!

VII.

The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
 With horror paused to view the havoc done,
 Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch forlorn,
 Wiped his stern eye, then fiercer grasp'd his gun.
 Nor with less zeal shall Britain's peaceful son
 Exult the debt of sympathy to pay;
 Riches nor poverty the tax shall shun,
 Nor prince nor peer, the wealthy nor the gay,
 Nor the poor peasant's mite, nor bard's more worthless lay

VIII.

But thou—unfoughten wilt thou yield to Fate.
 Minion of Fortune, now miscall'd in vain!
 Can vantage-ground no confidence create,
 Marcella's pass, nor Guarda's mountain-chain?
 Vainglorious fugitive! yet turn again!
 Behold, where, named by some prophetic Seer,
 Flows Honour's Fountain, as foredoom'd the stain
 From thy dishonour'd name and arms to clear—
 Fallen Child of Fortune, turn, redeem her favour here!

IX.

Yet, ere thou turn'st, collect each distant aid;
 Those chief that never heard the lion roar!
 Within whose souls lives not a trace portray'd,
 Of Talavera, or Mondego's shore!
 Marshal each band thou hast, and summon more;
 Of war's fell stratagem exhaust the whole;
 Rank upon rank, squadron on squadron pour,
 Legion on legion on thy foeman roll,
 And weary out his arm—thou canst not quell his soul.

X.

O vainly gleams with steel Agueda's shore,
 Vainly thy squadrons hide Assuava's plain,
 And front the flying thunders as they roar,
 With frantic charge and tenfold odds, in vain!
 And what avails thee that, for CAMERON slain,
 Wild from his plaided ranks the yell was given—
 Vengeance and grief gave mountain-rage the rein,
 And, at the bloody spear-point headlong driven,
 Thy Despot's giant guards fled like the rack of heaven.

XI.

Go, baffled boaster! teach thy haughty mood
 To plead at thine imperious master's throne;
 Say, thou hast left his legions in their blood,
 Deceived his hopes, and frustrated thine own;
 Say, that thine utmost skill and valour shown,
 By British skill and valour were outvied;
 Last say, thy conqueror was WELLINGTON!
 And if he chafe, be his own fortune tried—
 God and our cause to friend, the venture we'll abide.

XII.

But you, ye heroes of that well-fought day,
 How shall a bard unknowing and unknown,
 His need to each victorious leader pay,
 Or bind on every brow the laurels won?
 Yet fain my harp would wake its boldest tone,
 O'er the wide sea to hail CADOGAN brave?
 And he, perchance, the minstrel-note might own,
 Mindful of meeting brief that Fortune gave
 Mid yon far western isles that hear the Atlantic rave.

XIII.

Yes! hard the task, when Britons wield the sword,
 To give each Chief and every field its fame:
 Hark! Albuera thunders BERESFORD!
 And Red Barossa shouts for dauntless GRÈME!
 O for a verse of tumult and of flame,
 Bold as the bursting of their cannon sound,
 To bid the world re-echo to their fame!
 For never, upon gory battle-ground,
 With conquest's well-bought wreath were braver victors
 crown'd!

XIV.

O who shall grudge him Albuera's bays,
 Who brought a race regenerato to the field,
 Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
 Temper'd their headlong rage, their courage steel'd,
 And raised fair Lusitania's fallen shield,
 And gave new edge to Lusitania's sword,
 And taught her sons forgotten arms to wield—
 Shiver'd my harp, and burst its every chord,
 If it forget thy worth, victorious BERESFORD!

XV.

Not on that bloody field of battle won,
 Though Gaul's proud legions roll'd like mist away,
 Was half his self-devoted valour shown,—
 He gaged but life on that illustrious day ;
 But when he toil'd those squadrons to array,
 Who fought like Britons in the bloody game,
 Sharper than Polish pike or assagay,
 He braved the shafts of censure and of shame,
 And, dearer far than life, he pledged a soldier's fame.

XVI.

Nor be his praise o'erpast who strove to hide
 Beneath the warrior's vest affection's wound,
 Whose wish Heaven for his country's weal denied ;
 Danger and fate he sought, but glory found.
 From clime to clime, where'er war's trumpets sound,
 The wanderer went ; yet, Caledonia ! still
 Thine was his thought in march and tented ground ;
 He dream'd 'mid Alpine cliffs of Athole's hill,
 And heard in Ebro's roar his Lyndoch's lovely rill.

XVII.

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

XVIII

But all too long, through seas unknown and dark,
 (With Spenser's parable I close my tale),
 By shoal and rock hath steer'd my venturous bark
 And landward now I drive before the gale.
 And now the blue and distant shore I hail,
 And nearer now I see the port expand,
 And now I gladly furl my weary sail,
 And as the prow light touches on the strand,
 I strike my red-cross flag, and bind my skiff to land.



ROKEBY:

A Poem.

IN SIX CANTOS.

TO

JOHN B. S. MORRITT, Esq.

THIS POEM,

THE SCENS OF WHICH IS LAID IN HIS BEAUTIFUL DEMESNE OF ROKEBY
IS INSCRIBED,

IN TOKEN OF SINCERE FRIENDSHIP,

BY

WALTER SCOTT.

DECEMBER 21, 1812.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Scene of this Poem is laid at Rokeby, near Greta Bridge, in Yorkshire, and shifts to the adjacent Fortress of Barnard Castle, and to other places in that Vicinity.

The Time occupied by the Action is a space of Five Days, Three of which are supposed to elapse between the end of the Fifth and the beginning of the Sixth Canto.

The Date of the supposed events is immediately subsequent to the great Battle of Marston Moor, 3d July 1644. This period of public confusion has been chosen, without any purpose of combining the Fable with the Military or Political Events of the Civil War, but only as affording a degree of probability to the Fictitious Narrative now presented to the Public.

ROKEBY.

CANTO FIRST.

I.

THE Moon is in her summer glow,
But hoarse and high the breezes blow
And, racking o'er her face, the cloud
Varies the tincture of her shroud ;
On Barnard's towers, and Tees's stream,
She changes as a guilty dream,
When Conscience, with remorse and fear,
Goads sleeping Fancy's wild career.
Her light seems now the blush of shame,
Seems now fierce anger's darker flame,
Shifting that shade, to come and go,
Like apprehension's hurried glow ;
Then sorrow's livery dims the air,
And dies in darkness, like despair.
Such varied hues the warder sees
Reflected from the woodland Tees,
Then from old Baliol's tower looks forth,
Sees the clouds mustering in the north,
Hears, upon turret-roof and wall,
By fits the plashing rain-drop fall,
Lists to the breeze's boding sound,
And wraps his shaggy mantle round.

II.

Those towers, which in the changeful gleam
Throw murky shadows on the stream,
Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
The emotions of whose troubled breast,
In wild and strange confusion driven,
Rival the flitting rack of heaven.
Ere sleep stern OSWALD'S senses tied,
Oft had he changed his weary side,
Composed his limbs, and vainly sought
By effort strong to banish thought.
Sleep came at length, but with a train
Of feelings true and fancies vain,
Mingling, in wild disorder cast,
The expected future with the past.
Conscience, anticipating time,
Already rues the enacted crime,

And calls her furies forth, to shake
 The sounding scourge and hissing snake;
 While her poor victim's outward throes
 Bear witness to his mental woes,
 And show what lesson may be read
 Beside a sinner's restless bed.

III.

Thus Oswald's labouring feelings trace
 Strange changes in his sleeping face,
 Rapid and ominous as these
 With which the moonbeams tinge the Tees
 There might be seen of shame the blush,
 There anger's dark and fiercer flush,
 While the perturbed sleeper's hand
 Seem'd grasping dagger-knife, or brand.
 Relax'd that grasp, the heavy sigh,
 The tear in the half-opening eye,
 The pallid cheek and brow, confess'd
 That grief was busy in his breast;
 Nor paused that mood—a sudden start
 Impell'd the life-blood from the heart:
 Features convulsed, and mutterings dread,
 Show terror reigns in sorrow's stead.
 That pang the painful slumber broke,
 And Oswald with a start awoke.

IV.

He woke, and fear'd again to close
 His eyelids in such dire repose;
 He woke,—to watch the lamp, and tell
 From hour to hour the castle-bell,
 Or listen to the owl's cry,
 Or the sad breeze that whistles by,
 Or catch, by fits, the tuneless rhyme
 With which the warder cheats the time,
 And envying think, how, when the sun
 Bids the poor soldier's watch be done,
 Couch'd on his straw, and fancy-free,
 He sleeps like careless infancy.

V.

Far town-ward sounds a distant tread,
 And Oswald, starting from his bed,
 Hath caught it, though no human ear,
 Unsharpen'd by revenge and fear,
 Could e'er distinguish horse's clank,
 Until it reach'd the castle bank.
 Now nigh and plain the sound appears,
 The warder's challenge now he hears,
 Then clanking chains and levers tell,
 That o'er the moat the drawbridge fell,
 And, in the castle court below,
 Voices are heard, and torches glow,
 As marshalling the stranger's way,
 Straight for the room where Oswald lay;

The cry war,—“ Tidings from the host,
Of weight—a messenger comes post.”
Stifling the tumult of his breast,
His answer Oswald thus express'd—
“ Bring food and wine, and trim the fire :
Admit the stranger, and retire.”

VI.

The stranger came with heavy stride ;
The morion's plumes his visage hide,
And the buff-coat, an ample fold,
Mantles his form's gigantic mould.
Full slender answer deigned he
To Oswald's anxious courtesy,
But mark'd, by a disdainful smile,
He saw and scorn'd the petty wile,
When Oswald changed the torch's place,
Anxious that on the soldier's face
Its partial lustre might be thrown,
To show his looks, yet hide his own.
His guest, the while, laid low aside
The ponderous cloak of tough bull's hide,
And to the torch glanced broad and clear
The corslet of a cuirassier ;
Then from his brows the casque he drew,
And from the dank plume dash'd the dew.
From gloves of mail relieved his hands,
And spread them to the kindling brands,
And, turning to the genial board,
Without a health, or pledge, or word
Of meet and social reverence said,
Deeply he drank, and fiercely fed ;
As free from ceremony's sway,
As famish'd wolf that tears his prey.

VII.

With deep impatience, tinged with fear,
His host beheld him gorge his cheer,
And quaff the full carouse, that lent
His brow a fiercer hardiment.
Now Oswald stood a space aside,
Now paced the room with hasty stride.
In feverish agony to learn
Tidings of deep and dread concern,
Cursing each moment that his guest
Protracted o'er his ruffian feast.
Yet, viewing with alarm, at last,
The end of that uncouth repast,
Almost he seem'd their haste to rue,
As, at his sign, his train withdrew,
And left him with the stranger, free
To question of his mystery.
Then did his silence long proclaim
A struggle between fear and shame

VIII.

Much in the stranger's mien appears,
 To justify suspicious fears.
 On his dark face a scorching clime,
 And toil, had done the work of time,
 Roughen'd the brow, the temples bared,
 And sable hairs with silver shared,
 Yet left—what age alone could tame—
 The lip of pride, the eye of flame ;
 The full-drawn lip that upward curl'd,
 The eye that seem'd to scorn the world.
 That lip had terror never blench'd ;
 Ne'er in that eye had tear-drop quench'd
 The flash severe of swarthy glow,
 That mock'd at pain, and knew not woe.
 Inured to danger's direst form,
 Tornado and earthquake, flood and storm,
 Death had he seen by sudden blow,
 By wasting plague, by tortures slow,
 By mine or breach, by steel or ball,
 Knew all his shapes, and scorn'd them all.

IX.

But yet, though BERTRAM's harden'd look,
 Unmoved, could blood and danger brook,
 Still worse than apathy had place
 On his swart brow and callous face ;
 For evil passions, cherish'd long,
 Had plough'd them with impression strong.
 All that gives gloss to sin, all gay
 Light folly, past with youth away,
 But rooted stood, in manhood's hour,
 The weeds of vice without their flower.
 And yet the soil in which they grew,
 Had it been tamed when life was new,
 Had depth and vigour to bring forth
 The hardier fruits of virtuous worth.
 Not that, e'en then, his heart had known
 The gentler feelings' kindly tone ;
 But lavish waste had been refined
 To bounty in his chasten'd mind,
 And lust of gold, that waste to feed,
 Been lost in love of glory's meed,
 And, frantic then no more, his pride
 Had ta'en fair virtue for its guide.

X.

Even now, by conscience unrestrain'd,
 Clogg'd by gross vice, by slaughter stain'd,
 Still knew his daring soul to soar,
 And mastery o'er the mind he bore ;
 For meaner guilt, or heart less hard,
 Quail'd beneath Bertram's bold regard.
 And this felt Oswald, while in vain
 He strove, by many a winding train.

To lure his sullen guest to show,
 Unask'd, the news he long'd to know,
 While on far other subject hung
 His heart, than falter'd from his tongue.
 Yet nought for that his guest did deign
 To note or spare his secret pain,
 But still, in stern and stubborn sort,
 Return'd him answer dark and short,
 Or started from the theme, to range
 In loose digression wild and strange,
 And forced the embarrass'd host to buy,
 By query close, direct reply.

XI.

A while he glozed upon the cause
 Of Commons, Covenant, and Laws,
 And Church Reform'd—but felt rebuke
 Beneath grim Bertram's sneering look,
 Then stammer'd—"Has a field been fought?
 Has Bertram news of battle brought?
 For sure a soldier, famed so far
 In foreign fields for feats of war,
 On eve of fight ne'er left the host,
 Until the field were won and lost."
 "Here, in your towers by circling Tees,
 You, Oswald Wycliffe, rest at ease;
 Why deem it strange that others come
 To share such safe and easy home,
 From fields where danger, death, and toil,
 Are the reward of civil broil?"—
 "Nay, mock not, friend! since well we know
 The near advances of the foe,
 To mar our northern army's work,
 Encamp'd before beleagu'er'd York;
 Thy horse with valiant Fairfax lay,
 And must have fought—how went the day?"—

XII.

"Wouldst hear the tale?—On Marston heath
 Met, front to front, the ranks of death;
 Flourish'd the trumpets fierce, and now
 Fired was each eye, and flush'd each brow;
 On either side loud clamours ring,
 'God and the Cause!'—'God and the King!
 Right English all, they rush'd to blows,
 With nought to win, and all to lose.
 I could have laugh'd—but lack'd the time—
 To see, in phrenesy sublime,
 How the fierce zealots fought and bled,
 For king or state, as humour led;
 Some for a dream of public good,
 Some for church-tippet, gown and hood,
 Draining their veins, in death to claim
 A patriot's or a martyr's name.—

Led Bertram Risingham the hearts,
 That counter'd there on adverse parts,
 No superstitious fool had I
 Sought El Dorados in the sky!
 Chili had heard me through her states,
 And Lima oped her silver gates,
 Rich Mexico I had march'd through,
 And sack'd the splendours of Peru,
 Till sunk Pizarro's daring name,
 And, Cortez, thine, in Bertram's fame."—
 "Still from the purpose wilt thou stray!
 Good gentle friend, how went the day?"—

XIII.

"Good am I deem'd at trumpet-sound,
 And good where goblets dance the round,
 Though gentle ne'er was join'd, till now,
 With rugged Bertram's breast and brow.—
 But I resume. The battle's rage
 Was like the strife which currents wage,
 Where Orinoco, in his pride,
 Rolls to the main no tribute tide,
 But 'gainst broad ocean urges far
 A rival sea of roaring war;
 While, in ten thousand eddies driven,
 The billows fling their foam to heaven,
 And the pale pilot seeks in vain,
 Where rolls the river, where the main.
 Even thus upon the bloody field,
 The eddying tides of conflict wheel'd
 Ambiguous, till that heart of flame,
 Hot Rupert, on our squadrons came,
 Hurling against our spears a line
 Of gallants, fiery as their wine;
 Then ours, though stubborn in their zeal,
 In zeal's despite began to reel.
 What wouldst thou more?—in tumult tost,
 Our leaders fell, our ranks were lost.
 A thousand men who drew the sword
 For both the Houses and the Word,
 Preach'd forth from hamlet, grange, and down,
 To curb the crosier and the crown,
 Now, stark and stiff, lie stretch'd in gore,
 And ne'er shall rail at mitre more.—
 Thus fared it, when I left the fight,
 With the good Cause and Commons' right."

XIV.

"Disastrous news!" dark Wycliffe said:
 Assumed despondence bent his head,
 While troubled joy was in his eye,
 The well-feign'd sorrow to belie.—
 "Disastrous news!—when needed most,
 Told ye not that your chiefs were lost?"

Complete the woeful tale, and say,
 Who fell upon that fatal day;
 What leaders of repute and name
 Bought by their death a deathless fame.
 If such my direst foeman's doom,
 My tears shall dew his honour'd tomb.—
 No answer?—Friend, of all our host,
 Thou know'st whom I should hate the most,
 Whom thou too, once, wert wont to hate,
 Yet leavest me doubtful of his fate.”—
 With look unmoved,—“ Of friend or foe,
 Aught,” answer'd Bertram, “ wouldst thou know
 Demand in simple terms and plain,
 A soldier's answer shalt thou gain;—
 For question dark, or riddle high,
 I have nor judgment nor reply.”

XV.

The wrath his art and fear suppress'd,
 Now blazed at once in Wycliffe's breast;
 And brave, from man so meanly born,
 Roused his hereditary scorn.
 “ Wretch! hast thou paid thy bloody debt?
 PHILIP OF MORTHAM, lives he yet?
 False to thy patron or thine oath,
 Trait'rous or perjured, one or both,
 Slave! hast thou kept thy promise plight,
 To slay thy leader in the fight?”—
 Then from his seat the soldier sprung,
 And Wycliffe's hand he strongly wrung;
 His grasp, as hard as glove of mail,
 Forced the red blood-drop from the nail—
 “ A health!” he cried; and, ere he quaff'd,
 Flung from him Wycliffe's hand and laugh'd:
 —“ Now, Oswald Wycliffe, speaks thy heart:
 Now play'st thou well thy genuine part!
 Worthy, but for thy craven fear,
 Like me to roam a bucanier.
 What reck'st thou of the Cause divine,
 If Mortham's wealth and lands be thine?
 What carest thou for beleagu'er'd York,
 If this good hand have done its work?
 Or what though Fairfax and his best
 Are reddening Marston's swarthy breast,
 If Philip Mortham with them lie,
 Lending his life-blood to the dye?—
 Sit, then! and as 'mid comrades free
 Carousing after victory,
 When tales are told of blood and fear,
 That boys and women shrink to hear,
 From point to point I frankly tell
 The deed of death as it befell.

XVI.

“ When purpos'd vengeance I forego,
 Term me a wretch, nor deem me foe;

And when an insult I forgive,
 Then brand me as a slave, and live!—
 Philip of Mortham is with those
 Whom Bertram Risingham calls foes;
 Or whom more sure revenge attends,
 If number'd with ungrateful friends.
 As was his wont, ere battle glow'd,
 Along the marshall'd ranks he rode,
 And wore his visor up the while.
 I saw his melancholy smile,
 When, full opposed in front, he knew
 Where **ROKEBY**'s kindred banner flew.
 ' And thus,' he said, ' will friends divide! '--
 I heard, and thought how, side by side,
 We two had turn'd the battle's tide,
 In many a well-debated field,
 Where Bertram's breast was Philip's shield.
 I thought on Darien's deserts pale,
 Where death bestrides the evening gale;
 How o'er my friend my cloak I threw,
 And fenceless faced the deadly dew;
 I thought on Quariana's cliff,
 Where, rescued from our foundering skiff,
 Through the white breakers' wrath I bore
 Exhausted Mortham to the shore;
 And when his side an arrow found,
 I suck'd the Indian's venom'd wound.
 These thoughts like torrents rush'd along,
 To sweep away my purpose strong.

XVII.

" Hearts are not flint, and flints are rent;
 Hearts are not steel, and steel is bent.
 When Mortham bade me, as of yore,
 Be near him in the battle's roar,
 I scarcely saw the spears laid low,
 I scarcely heard the trumpets blow;
 Lost was the war in inward strife,
 Debating Mortham's death or life.
 'Twas then I thought, how, lured to come,
 As partner of his wealth and home,
 Years of piratic wandering o'er,
 With him I sought our native shore.
 But Mortham's lord grew far estranged
 From the bold heart with whom he ranged;
 Doubts, horrors, superstitious fears,
 Sadden'd and dimm'd descending years;
 The wily priests their victim sought,
 And damn'd each free-born deed and thought
 Then must I seek another home,
 My licence shook his sober dome;
 If gold he gave, in one wild day
 I revell'd thrice the sum away.
 An idle outcast then I stray'd,
 Unfit for tillage or for trade:

Deem'd, like the steel of rusted lance,
Useless and dangerous at once,
The women fear'd my hardy look,
At my approach the peaceful shook;
The merchant saw my glance of flame,
And lock'd his hoards when Bertram came,
Each child of coward peace kept far
From the neglected son of war.

XVIII.

“ But civil discord gave the call,
And made my trade the trade of all.
By Mortham urged, I came again
His vassals to the fight to train.
What guerdon waited on my care?
I could not cant of creed or prayer;
Sour fanatics each trust obtain'd,
And I, dishonour'd and disdain'd,
Gain'd but the high and happy lot,
In these poor arms to front the shot!—
All this thou know'st, thy gestures tell;
Yet hear it o'er, and mark it well.
'Tis honour bids me now relate
Each circumstance of Mortham's fate.

XIX.

“ Thoughts, from the tongue that slowly part,
Glance quick as lightning through the heart.
As my spur press'd my courser's side,
Philip of Mortham's cause was tried,
And, ere the charging squadrons mix'd,
His plea was cast, his doom was fix'd,
I watch'd him through the doubtful fray,
That changed as March's moody day,
Till, like a stream that bursts its bank,
Fierce Rupert thunder'd on our flank.
'Twas then, midst tumult, smoke, and strife,
Where each man fought for death or life,
'Twas then I fired my petronel,
And Mortham, steed and rider, fell.
One dying look he upward cast,
Of wrath and anguish—'twas his last.
Think not that there I stopp'd, to view
What of the battle should ensue;
But ere I clear'd that bloody press,
Our northern horse ran masterless;
Monckton and Mitton told the news,
How troops of Roundheads choked the Ouse,
And many a bonny Scot, aghast,
Spurring his palfrey northward, past,
Cursing the day when zeal or meed
First lured their Lesley o'er the Tweed.
Yet when I reach'd the banks of Swale,
Had rumour learn'd another tale:

With his barb'd horse, fresh tidings say,
 Stout Cromwell has redeem'd the day :
 But whether false the news, or true,
 Oswald, I reck as light as you."

XX.

Not then by Wycliffe might be shown,
 How his pride startled at the tone
 In which his complice, fierce and free,
 Asserted guilt's equality.
 In smoothest terms his speech he wove,
 Of endless friendship, faith, and love ;
 Promised and vow'd in courteous sort,
 But Bertram broke professions short.
 " Wycliffe, be sure not here I stay,
 No, scarcely till the rising day ;
 Warn'd by the legends of my youth,
 I trust not an associate's truth.
 Do not my native dales prolong
 Of Percy Rede the tragic song,
 Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
 By Girsonfield, that treacherous Hall ?
 Oft, by the Pringle's haunted side,
 The shepherd sees his spectre glide.
 And near the spot that gave me name,
 The moated mound of Risingham,
 Where Reed upon her margin sees
 Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,
 Some ancient sculptor's art has shown
 An outlaw's image on the stone ;
 Unmatch'd in strength, a giant he,
 With quiver'd back, and kirtled knee.
 Ask how he died, that hunter bold,
 The tameless monarch of the wold,
 And age and infancy can tell,
 By brother's treachery he fell.
 Thus warn'd by legends of my youth,
 I trust to no associate's truth.

XXI.

" When last we reason'd of this deed,
 Nought, I bethink me, was agreed,
 Or by what rule, or when, or where,
 The wealth of Mortham we should share ;
 Then list, while I the portion name,
 Our differing laws give each to claim.
 Thou, vassal sworn to England's throne,
 Her rules of heritage must own ;
 They deal thee, as to nearest heir,
 Thy kinsman's lands and livings fair,
 And these I yield :—do thou revere
 The statutes of the Bucanier.
 Friend to the sea, and foeman sworn
 To all that on her waves are borne.

When falls a mate in battle broil,
 His comrade heirs his portion'd spoil ;
 When dies in fight a daring foe,
 He claims his wealth who struck the blow ;
 And either rule to me assigns
 Those spoils of Indian seas and mines,
 Hoarded in Mortham's caverns dark ;
 Ingot of gold and diamond spark,
 Chalice and plate from churches borne,
 And gems from shrieking beauty torn,
 Each string of pearl, each silver bar,
 And all the wealth of western war.
 I go to search, where, dark and deep,
 Those Transatlantic treasures sleep.
 Thou must along—for, lacking thee,
 The heir will scarce find entrance free ;
 And then farewell. I haste to try
 Each varied pleasure wealth can buy ;
 When cloy'd each wish, these wars afford
 Fresh work for Bertram's restless sword."

XXII.

An undecided answer hung
 On Oswald's hesitating tongue.
 Despite his craft, he heard with awe
 This ruffian stabber fix the law ;
 While his own troubled passions veer
 Through hatred, joy, regret, and fear :—
 Joy'd at the soul that Bertram flies,
 He grudged the murderer's mighty prize,
 Hated his pride's presumptuous tone,
 And fear'd to wend with him alone.
 At length, that middle course to steer,
 To cowardice and craft so dear,
 " His charge," he said, " would ill allow
 His absence from the fortress now ;
 WILFRID on Bertram should attend,
 His son should journey with his friend."

XXIII.

Contempt kept Bertram's anger down,
 And wreathed to savage smile his frown.
 " Wilfrid, or thou—'tis one to me,
 Whichever bears the golden key.
 Yet think not but I mark, and smile
 To mark, thy poor and selfish wile !
 If injury from me you fear,
 What, Oswald Wycliffe, shields thee here ?
 I've sprung from walls more high than these,
 I've swam through deeper streams than Tees.
 Might I not stab thee, ere one yell
 Could rouse the distant sentinel ?
 Start not—it is not my design,
 But, if it were, weak fence were thine :

And, trust me, that, in time of need,
 This hand hath done more desperate deed.
 Go, haste and rouse thy slumbering son;
 Time calls, and I must needs be gone."

XXIV.

Nought of his sire's ungenerous part
 Polluted Wilfrid's gentle heart;
 A heart too soft from early life
 To hold with fortune needful strife.
 His sire, while yet a hardier race
 Of numerous sons were Wycliffe's grace,
 On Wilfrid set contemptuous brand,
 For feeble heart and forceless hand;
 But a fond mother's care and joy
 Were centred in her sickly boy.
 No touch of childhood's frolic mood
 Show'd the elastic spring of blood;
 Hour after hour he loved to pore
 On Shakspeare's rich and varied lore,
 But turn'd from martial scenes and light,
 From Falstaff's feast and Percy's fight,
 To ponder Jacques' moral strain,
 And muse with Hamlet, wise in vain;
 And weep himself to soft repose
 O'er gentle Desdemona's woes.

XXV.

In youth he sought not pleasures found
 By youth in horse, and hawk, and hound,
 But loved the quiet joys that wake
 By lonely stream and silent lake;
 In Deepdale's solitude to lie,
 Where all is cliff and copse and sky;
 To climb Catcastle's dizzy peak,
 Or lone Pendragon's mound to seek.
 Such was his wont; and there his dream
 Soar'd on some wild fantastic theme,
 Of faithful love, or ceaseless spring,
 Till Contemplation's wearied wing
 The enthusiast could no more sustain,
 And sad he sunk to earth again.

XXVI.

He loved—as many a lay can tell,
 Preserved in Stanmore's lonely dell;
 For his was minstrel's skill, he caught
 The art unteachable, untaught;
 He loved—his soul did nature frame
 For love, and fancy nursed the flame;
 Vainly he loved—for seldom swain
 Of such soft mould is loved again;
 Silent he loved—in every gaze
 Was passion, friendship in his phrase.

So mused his life away—till died
His brethren all, their father's pride.
Wilfrid is now the only heir
Of all his stratagems and care,
And destined, darkling, to pursue
Ambition's maze by Oswald's clue.

XXVII.

Wilfrid must love and woo the bright
Matilda, heir of Rokeby's Knight.
To love her was an easy hest,
The secret empress of his breast ;
To woo her was a harder task
To one that durst not hope or ask.
Yet all Matilda could, she gave
In pity to her gentle slave ;
Friendship, esteem, and fair regard,
And praise, the poet's best reward !
She read the tales his taste approved,
And sung the lays he framed or loved ;
Yet, loath to nurse the fatal flame
Of hopeless love in friendship's name,
In kind caprice she oft withdrew
The favouring glance to friendship due,
Then grieved to see her victim's pain,
And gave the dangerous smiles again.

XXVIII.

So did the suit of Wilfrid stand,
When war's loud summons waked the land
Three banners, floating o'er the Tees,
The woe-foreboding peasant sees ;
In concert oft they braved of old
The bordering Scot's incursion bold ;
Frowning defiance in their pride,
Their vassals now and lords divide.
From his fair hall on Greta banks,
The Knight of Rokeby led his ranks,
To aid the valiant northern Earls,
Who drew the sword for royal Charles.
Mortham, by marriage near allied,—
His sister had been Rokeby's bride,
Though long before the civil fray,
In peaceful grave the lady lay,—
Philip of Mortham raised his band,
And march'd at Fairfax's command ;
While Wycliffe, bound by many a train
Of kindred art with wily Vane,
Less prompt to brave the bloody field,
Made Barnard's battlements his shield,
Secured them with his Lunedale powers.
And for the Commons held the towers.

XXIX.

The lovely heir of Rokeby's Knight
Waits in his halls the event of fight;

For England's war revered the claim
 Of every unprotected name,
 And spared, amid its fiercest rage,
 Childhood and womanhood and age
 But Wilfrid, son to Rokeby's foe,
 Must the dear privilege forego,
 By Greta's side, in evening grey,
 To steal upon Matilda's way,
 Striving, with fond hypocrisy,
 For careless step and vacant eye ;
 Calming each anxious look and glance,
 To give the meeting all to chance,
 Or framing, as a fair excuse,
 The book, the pencil, or the muse ;
 Something to give, to sing, to say,
 Some modern tale, some ancient lay.
 Then, while the long'd-for minutes last, —
 Ah ! minutes quickly over-past ! —
 Recording each expression free,
 Of kind or careless courtesy,
 Each friendly look, each softer tone,
 As food for fancy when alone.
 All this is o'er—but still, unseen,
 Wilfrid may lurk in Eastwood green,
 To watch Matilda's wonted round,
 While springs his heart at every sound.
 She comes !—'tis but a passing sight,
 Yet serves to cheat his weary night ;
 She comes not—he will wait the hour,
 When her lamp lightens in the tower ;
 'Tis something yet, if, as she past,
 Her shade is o'er the lattice cast.
 " What is my life, my hope ? " he said ;
 " Alas ! a transitory shade ! "

XXX.

Thus wore his life, though reason strove
 For mastery in vain with love,
 Forcing upon his thoughts the sum
 Of present woe and ills to come,
 While still he turn'd impatient ear
 From Truth's intrusive voice severe.
 Gentle, indifferent, and subdued,
 In all but this, unmoved he view'd
 Each outward change of ill and good :
 But Wilfrid, docile, soft, and mild,
 Was Fancy's spoil'd and wayward child,
 In her bright car she bade him ride,
 With one fair form to grace his side,
 Or, in some wild and lone retreat,
 Flung her high spells around his seat,
 Bathed in her dews his languid head,
 Her fairy mantle o'er him spread,
 For him her opiates gave to flow.

Which he who tastes, can ne'er forego,
 And placed him in her circle, free
 From every stern reality,
 Till, to the Visionary, seem
 Her day-dreams truth, and truth a dream.

XXXI.

Woe to the youth whom Fancy gains,
 Winning from Reason's hand the reins,
 Pity and woe! for such a mind
 Is soft, contemplative, and kind;
 And woe to those who train such youth,
 And spare to press the rights of truth,
 The mind to strengthen and anneal,
 While on the stithy glows the steel!
 O teach him, while your lessons last,
 To judge the present by the past;
 Remind him of each wish pursued,
 How rich it glow'd with promised good;
 Remind him of each wish enjoy'd,
 How soon his hopes possession cloy'd!
 Tell him, we play unequal game,
 Whene'er we shoot by Fancy's aim!
 And, ere he strip him for her race,
 Show the conditions of the chase.
 Two sisters by the goal are set,
 Cold Disappointment and Regret;
 One disenchants the winner's eyes,
 And strips of all its worth the prize;
 While one augments its gaudy show,
 More to enhance the loser's woe.
 The victor sees his fairy gold,
 Transform'd, when won, to drossy mold;
 But still the vanquish'd mourns his loss,
 And rues, as gold, that glittering dross.

XXXII.

More wouldst thou know—yon tower survey,
 Yon couch unpress'd since parting day,
 Yon untrimm'd lamp, whose yellow gleam
 Is mingling with the cold moonbeam,
 And yon thin form!—the hectic red
 On his pale cheek unequal spread;
 The head reclined, the loosen'd hair,
 The limbs relax'd, the mournful air.—
 See, he looks up;—a woeful smile
 Lightens his woe-worn cheek a while,
 'Tis fancy wakes some idle thought,
 To gild the ruin she has wrought;
 For, like the bat of Indian brakes,
 Her pinions fan the wound she makes,
 And soothing thus the dreamer's pain,
 She drinks his life-blood from the vein.
 Now to the lattice turn his eyes,
 Vain hope! to see the sun arise

The moon with clouds is still o'ercast,
 Still howls by fits the stormy blast ;
 Another hour must wear away,
 Ere the East kindle into day,
 And hark ! to waste that weary hour,
 He tries the minstrel's magic power.

XXXIII.

Song.

TO THE MOON.

Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
 Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky !
 Hail, though the mists that o'er thee stream
 Lend to thy brow their sullen dye !
 How should thy pure and peaceful eye
 Untroubled view our scenes below,
 Or how a tearless beam supply
 To light a world of war and woe !

Fair Queen ! I will not blame thee now,
 As once by Greta's fairy side ;
 Each little cloud that dimm'd thy brow
 Did then an angel's beauty hide.
 And of the shades I then could chide,
 Still are the thoughts to memory dear,
 For, while a softer strain I tried,
 They hid my blush, and calm'd my fear.

Then did I swear thy ray serene
 Was form'd to light some lonely dell,
 By two fond lovers only seen,
 Reflected from the crystal well,
 Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
 Or quivering on the lattice bright,
 Or glancing on their couch, to tell
 How swiftly wanes the summer night !

XXXIV.

He starts—a step at this lone hour !
 A voice !—his father seeks the tower,
 With haggard look and troubled sense,
 Fresh from his dreadful conference.
 “ Wilfrid !—what, not to sleep address'd ;
 Thou hast no cares to chase thy rest.
 Mortham has fall'n on Marston Moor ;
 Bertram brings warrant to secure
 His treasures, bought by spoil and blood,
 For the state's use and public good.
 The menials will thy voice obey ;
 Let his commission have his way,
 In every point, in every word.”—
 Then, in a whisper,—“ Take thy sword !
 Bertram is—what I must not tell.
 I hear his hasty step—farewell !”

CANTO SECOND

I.

FAR in the chambers of the west,
The gale had sigh'd itself to rest;
The moon was cloudless now and clear,
But pale, and soon to disappear.
The thin grey clouds wax dimly light
On Brusleton and Houghton height;
And the rich dale, that eastward lay,
Waited the wakening touch of day,
To give its woods and cultured plain,
And towers and spires, to light again.
But, westward, Stanmore's shapeless swell,
And Lunedale wild, and Kelton-fell,
And rock-begirdled Gilmanscar,
And Arkingarth, lay dark afar;
While, as a livelier twilight falls,
Emerge proud Barnard's banner'd walls.
High crown'd he sits, in dawning pale,
The sovereign of the lovely vale.

II.

What prospects, from his watch-tower high,
Gleam gradual on the warder's eye!—
Far sweeping to the east, he sees
Down his deep woods the course of Tees,
And tracks his wanderings by the steam
Of summer vapours from the stream;
And ere he paced his destined hour
By Brackenbury's dungeon-tower,
These silver mists shall melt away,
And dew the woods with glittering spray.
Then in broad lustre shall be shown
That mighty trench of living stone,
And each huge trunk that, from the side,
Reclines him o'er the darksome tide,
Where Tees, full many a fathom low,
Wears with his rage no common foe;
For pebbly bank, nor sand-bed here,
Nor clay-mound, checks his fierce career,
Condemn'd to mine a channell'd way,
O'er solid sheets of marble grey.

III.

Nor Tees alone, in dawning bright,
Shall rush upon the ravish'd sight;
But many a tributary stream
Each from its own dark dell shall gleam:
Staindrop, who, from her silvan bowers
Salutes proud Raby's battled towers;

The rural brook of Egliston,
 And Balder, named from Odin's son ;
 And Greta, to whose banks ere long
 We lead the lovers of the song ;
 And silver Lune, from Stanmore wild,
 And fairy Thorsgill's murmuring child ;
 And last and least, but loveliest still,
 Romantic Deepdale's slender rill.
 Who in that dim-wood glen hath stray'd,
 Yet long'd for Roslin's magic glade ?
 Who, wandering there, hath sought to change,
 Even for that vale so stern and strange,
 Where Cartland's Crag, fantastic rent,
 Through her green copse like spires are sent ?
 Yet, Albin, yet the praise be thine,
 Thy scenes and stories to combine !
 Thou bidd'st him, who by Roslin strays,
 List to the deeds of other days ;
 'Mid Cartland's Crag thou show'st the cave,
 The refuge of thy champion brave ;
 Giving each rock its storied tale,
 Pouring a lay for every dale,
 Knitting, as with a moral band,
 Thy native legends with thy land,
 To lend each scene the interest high
 Which genius beams from Beauty's eye.

IV.

Bertram awaited not the sight
 Which sun-rise shows from Barnard's height
 But from the towers, preventing day,
 With Wilfrid took his early way,
 While misty dawn, and moonbeam pale,
 Still mingled in the silent dale.
 By Barnard's bridge of stately stone,
 The southern bank of Tees they won ;
 Their winding path then eastward cast,
 And Egliston's grey ruins pass'd ;
 Each on his own deep visions bent,
 Silent and sad they onward went.
 Well may you think that Bertram's mood,
 To Wilfrid savage seem'd and rude ;
 Well may you think bold Risingham
 Held Wilfrid trivial, poor, and tame ;
 And small the intercourse, I ween,
 Such uncongenial souls between.

V.

Stern Bertram shunn'd the nearer way.
 Through Rokeby's park and chase that lay.
 And, skirting high the valley's ridge,
 They cross'd by Greta's ancient bridge.
 Descending where her waters wind
 Free for a space and unconfined,

As, 'scaped from Brignall's dark-wood glen,
 She seeks wild Mortham's deeper den.
 There, as his eye glanced o'er the mound,
 Raised by that Legion long renown'd,
 Whose votive shrine asserts their claim,
 Of pious, faithful, conquering fame,
 "Stern sons of war!" sad Wilfrid sigh'd,
 "Behold the boast of Roman pride!
 What now of all your toils are known?
 A grassy trench, a broken stone!"—
 This to himself; for moral strain
 To Bertram were address'd in vain.

VI.

Of different mood, a deeper sigh
 Awoke, when Rokeby's turrets high
 Were northward in the dawning seen
 To rear them o'er the thicket green.
 O then, though Spenser's self had stray'd
 Beside him through the lovely glade,
 Lending his rich luxuriant glow
 Of fancy, all its charms to show,
 Pointing the stream rejoicing free,
 As captive set at liberty,
 Flashing her sparkling waves abroad,
 And clamouring joyful on her road;
 Pointing where, up the sunny banks,
 The trees retire in scatter'd ranks,
 Save where, advanced before the rest,
 On knoll or hillock rears his crest,
 Lonely and huge, the giant Oak,
 As champions, when their band is broke,
 Stand forth to guard the rearward post,
 The bulwark of the scatter'd host—
 All this, and more, might Spenser say,
 Yet waste in vain his magic lay,
 While Wilfrid eyed the distant tower,
 Whose lattice lights Matilda's bower.

VII.

The open vale is soon pass'd o'er,
 Rokeby, though nigh, is seen no more;
 Sinking mid Greta's thickets deep,
 A wild and darker course they keep,
 A stern and lone, yet lovely road,
 As e'er the foot of Minstrel trode!
 Broad shadows o'er their passage fell,
 Deeper and narrower grew the dell;
 It seem'd some mountain, rent and river
 A channel for the stream had given,
 So high the cliffs of limestone grey
 Hung beetling o'er the torrent's way,
 Yielding, along their rugged base,
 A fainty footpath's niggard space,

Where he, who winds 'twixt rock and wave,
 May hear the headlong torrent rave,
 And like a steed in frantic fit,
 That flings the froth from curb and bit,
 May view her chafe her waves to spray,
 O'er every rock that bars her way,
 'Till foam-globes on her eddies ride,
 Thick as the schemes of human pride
 That down life's current drive amain,
 As frail, as frothy, and as vain !

VIII.

The cliffs that rear their haughty head
 High o'er the river's darksome bed,
 Were now all naked, wild, and grey,
 Now waving all with greenwood spray ;
 Here trees to every crevice clung,
 And o'er the dell their branches hung ;
 And there, all splinter'd and uneven,
 The shiver'd rocks ascend to heaven ;
 Oft, too, the ivy swathed their breast,
 And wreathed its garland round their crest,
 Or from the spires bade loosely flare
 Its tendrils in the middle air.
 As pennons wont to wave of old
 O'er the high feast of Baron bold,
 When revell'd loud the feudal rout,
 And the arch'd halls return'd their shout ;
 Such and more wild is Greta's roar,
 And such the echoes from her shore.
 And so the ivied banners gleam,
 Waved wildly o'er the brawling stream.

IX.

Now from the stream the rocks recede,
 But leave between no sunny mead,
 No, nor the spot of pebbly sand,
 Oft found by such a mountain strand ;
 Forming such warm and dry retreat,
 As fancy deems the lonely seat,
 Where hermit, wandering from his cell,
 His rosary might love to tell.
 But here, 'twixt rock and river, grew
 A dismal grove of sable yew,
 With whose sad tints were mingled seen
 The blighted fir's sepulchral green.
 Seem'd that the trees their shadows cast,
 The earth that nourish'd them to blast :
 For never knew that swarthy grove
 The verdant hue that fairies love ;
 Nor wilding green, nor woodland flower
 Arose within its baleful bower :
 The dank and sable earth receives
 Its only carpet from the leaves,

That, from the withering branches cast,
 Bestrew'd the ground with every blast.
 Though now the sun was o'er the hill,
 In this dark spot 'twas twilight still,
 Save that on Greta's farther side
 Some straggling beams through copeswood glide,
 And wild and savage contrast made
 That dingle's deep and funeral shade,
 With the bright tints of early day,
 Which, glimmering through the ivy spray,
 On the opposing summit lay.

X.

The lated peasant shunn'd the dell;
 For Superstition wont to tell
 Of many a grisly sound and sight,
 Scaring his path at dead of night.
 When Christmas logs blaze high and wide.
 Such wonders speed the festal tide;
 While Curiosity and Fear,
 Pleasure and Pain, sit crouching near,
 Till childhood's cheek no longer glows,
 And village maidens lose the rose.
 The thrilling interest rises higher,
 The circle closes nigh and nigher,
 And shuddering glance is cast behind,
 As louder moans the wintry wind.
 Believe, that fitting scene was laid
 For such wild tales in Mortham glade;
 For who had seen, on Greta's side,
 By that dim light fierce Bertram stride,
 In such a spot, at such an hour,—
 If touch'd by Superstition's power,
 Might well have deem'd that Hell had given
 A murderer's ghost to upper Heaven,
 While Wilfrid's form had seem'd to glide
 Like his pale victim by his side.

XI.

Nor think to village swains alone
 Are these unearthly terrors known;
 For not to rank nor sex confined
 Is this vain ague of the mind:
 Hearts firm as steel, as marble hard,
 'Gainst faith, and love, and pity barr'd,
 Have quaked, like aspen-leaves in May,
 Beneath its universal sway.
 Bertram had listed many a tale
 Of wonder in his native dale,
 That in his secret soul retain'd
 The credence they in childhood gain'd:
 Nor less his wild adventurous youth
 Believed in every legend's truth;
 Learn'd when, beneath the tropic gale,
 Full swell'd the vessel's steady sail,

And the broad Indian moon her light
 Pour'd on the watch of middle night,
 When seamen love to hear and tell
 Of portent, prodigy, and spell :
 What gales are sold on Lapland's shore,
 How whistle rash bids tempests roar,
 Of witch, of mermaid, and of sprite,
 Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light ;
 Or of that Phantom Ship, whose form
 Shoots like a meteor through the storm ;
 When the dark scud comes driving hard,
 And lower'd is every topsail-yard,
 And canvas, wove in earthly looms,
 No more to brave the storm presumes !
 Then, 'mid the war of sea and sky,
 Top and top-gallant hoisted high,
 Full spread and crowded every sail,
 The Demon Frigate braves the gale ;
 And well the doom'd spectators know
 The harbinger of wreck and woe.

XII.

Then, too, were told, in stifled tone,
 Marvels and omens all their own ;
 How, by some desert isle or key,
 Where Spaniards wrought their cruelty,
 Or where the savage pirate's mood
 Repaid it home in deeds of blood,
 Strange nightly sounds of woe and fear
 Appall'd the listening Bucanier,
 Whose light-arm'd shallop anchor'd lay
 In ambush by the lonely bay.
 The groan of grief, the shriek of pain,
 Ring from the moonlight groves of cane ;
 The fierce adventurer's heart they scare,
 Who wearies memory for a prayer,
 Curses the road-stead, and with gale
 Of early morn'ng lifts the sail,
 To give, in thirst of blood and prey,
 A legend for another bay.

XIII.

Thus, as a man, a youth, a child,
 Train'd in the mystic and the wild,
 With this on Bertram's soul at times
 Rush'd a dark feeling of his crimes ;
 Such to his troubled soul their form,
 As the pale Death-ship to the storm,
 And such their omen dim and dread,
 As shrieks and voices of the dead,—
 That pang, whose transitory force
 Hover'd 'twixt horror and remorse—
 That pang, perchance, his bosom press'd,
 As Wilfrid sudden he address'd :—

" Wilfrid, this glen is never trode
 Until the sun rides high abroad ;
 Yet twice have I beheld to-day
 A Form, that seem'd to dog our way ;
 Twice from my glance it seem'd to flee,
 And shroud itself by cliff or tree.
 How think'st thou ?—Is our path way-laid ?
 Or hath thy sire my trust betray'd ?
 If so"——Ere, starting from his dream,
 That turn'd upon a gentler theme,
 Wilfrid had roused him to reply,
 Bertram sprung forward, shouting high,
 " Whate'er thou art, thou now shalt stand !"—
 And forth he darted, sword in hand.

XIV.

As bursts the levin in its wrath,
 He shot him down the sounding path ;
 Rock, wood, and stream, rang wildly out,
 To his loud step and savage shout.
 Seems that the object of his race
 Hath scaled the cliffs ; his frantic chase
 Sidelong he turns, and now 'tis bent
 Right up the rock's tall battlement ;
 Straining each sinew to ascend,
 Foot, hand, and knee, their aid must lend
 Wilfrid, all dizzy with dismay,
 Views, from beneath, his dreadful way :
 Now to the oak's warp'd roots he clings,
 Now trusts his weight to ivy-strings ;
 Now, like the wild-goat, must he dare
 An unsupported leap in air ;
 Hid in the shrubby rain-course now,
 You mark him by the crashing bough,
 And by his corslet's sullen clank,
 And by the stones spurn'd from the bank,
 And by the hawk scared from her nest,
 And ravens croaking o'er their guest,
 Who deem his forfeit limbs shall pay
 The tribute of his bold essay.

XV.

See, he emerges !—desperate now
 All farther course—Yon beetling brow,
 In craggy nakedness sublime,
 What heart or foot shall dare to climb ?
 It bears no tendril for his clasp,
 Presents no angle to his grasp :
 Sole stay his foot may rest upon,
 Is yon earth-bedded jetting stone.
 Balanced on such precarious prop,
 He strains his grasp to reach the top.
 Just as the dangerous stretch he makes,
 By heaven, his faithless footstool shakes !

Beneath his tottering bulk it bends,
 It sways, . . . it loosens, . . . it descends !
 And downward holds its headlong way,
 Crashing o'er rock and copsewood spray,
 Loud thunders shake the echoing dell !—
 Fell it alone ?—alone it fell.
 Just on the very verge of fate,
 The hardy Bertram's falling weight
 He trusted to his sinewy hands,
 And on the top unharm'd he stands !

XVI.

Wilfrid a safer path pursued ;
 At intervals where, roughly hew'd,
 Rude steps ascending from the dell
 Render'd the cliffs accessible.
 By circuit slow he thus attain'd
 The height that Risingham had gain'd,
 And when he issued from the wood,
 Before the gate of Mortham stood.
 'Twas a fair scene ! the sunbeam lay
 On battled tower and portal grey :
 And from the grassy slope he sees
 The Greta flow to meet the Tees ;
 Where, issuing from her darksome bed,
 She caught the morning's eastern red,
 And through the softening vale below
 Roll'd her bright waves, in rosy glow,
 All blushing to her bridal bed,
 Like some shy maid in convent bred ;
 While linnet, lark, and blackbird gay,
 Sing forth her nuptial roundelay.

XVII.

'Twas sweetly sung that roundelay ;
 That summer morn shone blithe and gay,
 But morning beam, and wild-bird's call,
 A waked not Mortham's silent hall.
 No porter, by the low-brow'd gate,
 Took in the wonted niche his seat ;
 To the paved court no peasant drew ;
 Waked to their toil no menial crew ;
 The maiden's carol was not heard,
 As to her morning task she fared :
 In the void offices around,
 Kung not a hoof, nor bay'd a hound ;
 Nor eager steed, with shrilling neigh,
 Accused the lagging groom's delay ;
 Untrimm'd, undress'd, neglected now,
 Was alley'd walk and orchard bough ;
 All spoke the master's absent care,
 All spoke neglect and disrepair.
 South of the gate, an arrow flight,
 Two mighty elms their limbs unite.

As if a canopy, to spread
 O'er the lone dwelling of the dead ;
 For their huge bows in arches bent
 Above a massive monument,
 Carved o'er in ancient Gothic wise,
 With many a scutcheon and device :
 There, spent with toil and sunk in gloom,
 Bertram stood pondering by the tomb.

XVIII.

" It vanish'd like a flitting ghost !
 Behind this tomb," he said, "'twas lost—
 This tomb, where oft I deem'd lies stored
 Of Mortham's Indian wealth the hoard.
 'Tis true, the aged servants said
 Here his lamented wife is laid ;
 But weightier reasons may be guess'd
 For their lord's strict and stern behest,
 That none should on his steps intrude,
 Whene'er he sought this solitude.—
 An ancient mariner I knew,
 What time I sail'd with Morgan's crew,
 Who oft, 'mid our carousals, spake
 Of Raleigh, Forbisher, and Drake ;
 Adventurous hearts ! who barter'd, bold,
 Their English steel for Spanish gold.
 Trust not, would his experience say,
 Captain or comrade with your prey ;
 But seek some charnel, when, at full,
 The moon gilds skeleton and skull :
 There dig, and tomb your precious heap,
 And bid the dead your treasure keep ;
 Sure stewards they, if fitting spell
 Their service to the task compel.
 Lacks there such charnel ?—kill a slave,
 Or prisoner, on the treasure-grave ;
 And bid his discontented ghost
 Stalk nightly on his lonely post.—
 Such was his tale. Its truth, I ween,
 Is in my morning vision seen."

XIX.

Wilfrid, who scorn'd the legend wild,
 In mingled mirth and pity smiled,
 Much marvelling that a breast so bold
 In such fond tale belief should hold ;
 But yet of Bertram sought to know
 The apparition's form and show.
 The power within the guilty breast,
 Oft vanquish'd, never quite suppress'd,
 That unsubdued and lurking lies
 To take the felon by surprise,
 And force him, as by magic spell,
 In his despite his guilt to tell, —

That power in Bertram's breast awoke ;
 Scarce conscious he was heard, he spoke ;
 " 'Twas Mortham's form, from foot to head !
 His morion, with the plume of red,
 His shape, his mien—'twas Mortham, right
 As when I slew him in the fight."—
 " Thou slay him ?—thou ?"—With conscious start
 He heard, then mann'd his haughty heart—
 " I slew him ?—I !—I had forgot
 Thou, stripling, knew'st not of the plot.
 But it is spoken—nor will I
 Deed done, or spoken word, deny.
 I slew him ; I ! for thankless pride ;
 'Twas by this hand that Mortham died !"

XX.

Wilfrid, of gentle hand and heart,
 Averse to every active part,
 But most averse to martial broil,
 From danger shrunk, and turn'd from toil ;
 Yet the meek lover of the lyre
 Nursed one brave spark of noble fire ;
 Against injustice, fraud, or wrong,
 His blood beat high, his hand wax'd strong.
 Not his the nerves that could sustain,
 Unshaken, danger, toil, and pain ;
 But, when that spark blazed forth to flame,
 He rose superior to his frame.
 And now it came, that generous mood ;
 And, in full current of his blood,
 On Bertram he laid desperate hand,
 Placed firm his foot, and drew his brand :
 " Should every fiend, to whom thou'rt sold.
 Rise in thine aid, I keep my hold.—
 Arouse there, ho ! take spear and sword !
 Attach the murderer of your lord !"

XXI.

A moment, fix'd as by a spell,
 Stood Bertram—It seem'd miracle,
 That one so feeble, soft, and tame,
 Set grasp on warlike Risingham,
 But when he felt a feeble stroke,
 The fiend within the ruffian woke !
 To wrench the sword from Wilfrid's hand,
 To dash him headlong on the sand,
 Was but one moment's work,—one more
 Had drench'd the blade in Wilfrid's gore ;
 But, in the instant it arose,
 To end his life, his love, his woes,
 A warlike form, that mark'd the scene,
 Presents his rapier sheathed between,
 Parries the fast-descending blow,
 And steps 'twixt Wilfrid and his foe ;

Nor then unscabbarded his brand,
 But, sternly pointing with his hand,
 With monarch's voice forbade the fight,
 And motion'd Bertram from his sight.
 "Go, and repent," he said, "while time
 Is given thee; add not crime to crime."

XXII.

Mute, and uncertain, and amazed,
 As on a vision, Bertram gazed!
 'Twas Mortham's bearing, bold and high,
 His sinewy frame, his falcon eye,
 His look and accent of command,
 The martial gesture of his hand,
 His stately form, spare-built and tall,
 His war-bleach'd locks—'twas Mortham all.
 Through Bertram's dizzy brain career
 A thousand thoughts, and all of fear;
 His wavering faith received not quite
 The form he saw as Mortham's sprite,
 But more he fear'd it, if it stood
 His lord, in living flesh and blood.—
 What spectre can the charnel send,
 So dreadful as an injured friend?
 Then, too, the habit of command,
 Used by the leader of the band,
 When Risingham, for many a day,
 Had march'd and fought beneath his sway,
 Tamed him—and, with reverted face,
 Backwards he bore his sullen pace;
 Oft stopp'd, and oft on Mortham stared,
 And dark as rated mastiff glared;
 But when the tramp of steeds was heard,
 Plunged in the glen, and disappear'd;—
 Nor longer there the Warrior stood,
 Retiring eastward through the wood;
 But first to Wilfrid warning gives,
 "Tell thou to none that Mortham lives."

XXIII.

Still rung these words in Wilfrid's ear,
 Hinting he knew not what of fear;
 When nearer came the coursers' tread,
 And, with his father at their head,
 Of horsemen arm'd a gallant power
 Rein'd up their steeds before the tower.
 "Whence these pale looks, my son?" he said:
 "Where's Bertram?—Why that naked blade?"
 Wilfrid ambiguously replied,
 (For Mortham's charge his honour tied,)
 "Bertram is gone—the villain's word
 Avouch'd him murderer of his lord!
 Even now we fought—but, when your tread
 Announced you nigh, the felon fled."

In Wycliffe's conscious eye appear
A guilty hope, a guilty fear ;
On his pale brow the dewdrop broke,
And his lip quiver'd as he spoke :—

XXIV.

“ A murderer !—Philip Mortham died
Amid the battle's wildest tide.
Wilfrid, or Bertram raves, or you !
Yet, grant such strange confession true,
Pursuit were vain—let him fly far—
Justice must sleep in civil war.”
A gallant Youth rode near his side,
Brave Rokeby's page, in battle tried ;
That morn, an embassy of weight
He brought to Barnard's castle gate,
And follow'd now in Wycliffe's train,
An answer for his lord to gain.
His steed, whose arch'd and sable neck
An hundred wreaths of foam bedeck,
Chafed not against the curb more high
Than he at Oswald's cold reply ;
He bit his lip, implored his saint,
(His the old faith)—then burst restraint :—

XXV.

“ Yes ! I beheld his bloody fall,
By that base traitor's dastard ball,
Just when I thought to measure sword,
Presumptuous hope ! with Mortham's lord
And shall the murderer 'scape, who slew
His leader, generous, brave, and true ?
Escape, while on the dew you trace
The marks of his gigantic pace ?
No ! ere the sun that dew shall dry,
False Risingham shall yield or die.—
Ring out the castle 'larum bell !
Arouse the peasants with the knell !
Meantime disperse—ride, gallants, ride !
Beset the wood on every side.
But if among you one there be,
That honours Mortham's memory,
Let him dismount and follow me !
Else on your crests sit fear and shame,
And foul suspicion dog your name !”

XXVI.

Instant to earth young REDMOND sprung
Instant on earth the harness rung
Of twenty men of Wycliffe's band,
Who waited not their lord's command.
Redmond his spurs from buskins drew,
His mantle from his shoulders threw,
His pistols in his belt he placed,
The greenwood gain'd, the footsteps traced.

Shouted like huntsman to his hounds,
 "To cover, hark!"—and in he bounds.
 Scarce heard was Oswald's anxious cry,
 "Suspicion! yes—pursue him—fly—
 But venture not, in useless strife,
 On ruffian desperate of his life;
 Whoever finds him, shoot him dead!
 Five hundred nobles for his head!"

XXVII.

The horsemen gallopp'd, to make good
 Each path that issued from the wood.
 Loud from the thickets rung the shout
 Of Redmond and his eager rout;
 With them was Wilfrid, stung with ire,
 And envying Redmond's martial fire,
 And emulous of fame.—But where
 Is Oswald, noble Mortham's heir?
 He, bound by honour, law, and faith,
 Avenger of his kinsman's death?
 Leaning against the elmin tree,
 With drooping head and slacken'd knee,
 And clenched teeth, and close-clasp'd hands,
 In agony of soul he stands!
 His downcast eye on earth is bent,
 His soul to every sound is lent;
 For in each shout that cleaves the air,
 May ring discovery and despair.

XXVIII.

What 'vail'd it him, that brightly play'd
 The morning sun on Mortham's glade?
 All seems in giddy round to ride,
 Like objects on a stormy tide,
 Seen eddying by the moonlight dim,
 Imperfectly to sink and swim.
 What 'vail'd it, that the fair domain,
 Its battled mansion, hill, and plain,
 On which the sun so brightly shone,
 Envied so long, was now his own?
 The lowest dungeon, in that hour,
 Of Brackenbury's dismal tower,
 Had been his choice, could such a doom
 Have open'd Mortham's bloody tomb!
 Forced, too, to turn unwilling ear
 To each surmise of hope or fear,
 Murmur'd among the rustics round,
 Who gather'd at the 'larum sound;
 He dared not turn his head away,
 E'en to look up to heaven to pray,
 Or call on hell, in bitter mood,
 For one sharp death-shot from the wood!

XXIX.

At length, o'erpast that dreadful space,
 Back straggling came the scatter'd chase:

Jaded and weary, horse and man,
 Return'd the troopers, one by one.
 Wilfrid, the last, arrived to say,
 All trace was lost of Bertram's way,
 Though Redmond still, up Brignall wood,
 The hopeless quest in vain pursued.—
 Oh, fatal doom of human race !
 What tyrant passions passions chase !
 Remorse from Oswald's brow is gone—
 Avarice and pride resume their throne ;
 The pang of instant terror by,
 They dictate thus their slave's reply :—

XXX.

“ Ay—let him range like hasty hound !
 And if the grim wolf's lair be found,
 Small is my care how goes the game
 With Redmond, or with Risingham.—
 Nay, answer not, thou simple boy !
 Thy fair Matilda, all so coy
 To thee, is of another mood
 To that bold youth of Erin's blood.
 Thy ditties will she freely praise,
 And pay thy pains with courtly phrase.
 In a rough path will oft command—
 Accept at least—thy friendly hand ;
 His she avoids, or, urged and pray'd,
 Unwilling takes his proffer'd aid,
 While conscious passion plainly speaks
 In downcast look and blushing cheeks.
 Whene'er he sings, will she glide nigh,
 And all her soul is in her eye ;
 Yet doubts she still to tender free
 The wonted words of courtesy.
 These are strong signs !—yet wherefore sigh,
 And wipe, effeminate, thine eye ?
 Thine shall she be, if thou attend
 The counsels of thy sire and friend.

XXXI.

“ Scarce wert thou gone, when peep of light
 Brought genuine news of Marston's fight.
 Brave Cromwell turn'd the doubtful tide,
 And conquest bless'd the rightful side .
 Three thousand Cavaliers lie dead,
 Rupert and that bold Marquis fled ;
 Nobles and knights, so proud of late,
 Must fine for freedom and estate.
 Of these, committed to my charge
 Is Rokeby, prisoner at large ;
 Redmond, his page, arrived to say
 He reaches Barnard's towers to-day.
 Bight heavy shall his ransom be,
 Unless that maid compound with thee ' ”

Go to her now—be bold of cheer,
 While her soul floats 'twixt hope and fear ;
 It is the very change of tide,
 When best the female heart is tried—
 Pride, prejudice, and modesty,
 Are in the current swept to sea ;
 And the bold swain, who plies his oar,
 May lightly row his bark to shore."

CANTO THIRD.

I.

THE hunting tribes of air and earth
 Respect the brethren of their birth ;
 Nature, who loves the claim of kind,
 Less cruel chase to each assign'd.
 The falcon, poised on soaring wing,
 Watches the wild-duck by the spring ;
 The slow-hound wakes the fox's lair ;
 The grey-hound presses on the hare ;
 The eagle pounces on the lamb ;
 The wolf devours the fleecy dam :
 Even tiger fell, and sullen bear,
 Their likeness and their lineage spare ;—
 Man, only, mars kind Nature's plan,
 And turn's the fierce pursuit on man ;
 Plying war's desultory trade,
 Incurion, flight, and ambuscade,
 Since Nimrod, Cush's mighty son,
 At first the bloody game begun.

II.

The Indian, prowling for his prey,
 Who hears the settlers track his way,
 And knows in distant forest far
 Camp his red brethren of the war—
 He, when each double and disguise
 To baffle the pursuit he tries,
 Low crouching now his head to hide,
 Where swampy streams through rushes glide.
 Now covering with the wither'd leaves
 The foot-prints that the dew receives—
 He, skill'd in every silvan guile,
 Knows not, nor tries, such various wile,
 As Risingham, when on the wind
 Arose the loud pursuit behind.
 In Redesdale his youth had heard
 Each art her wily dalesmen dared,

When Rooken-edge, and Redswair high,
 To bugle rung and blood-hound's cry,
 Announcing Jedwood-axe and spear,
 And Lidd'sdale riders in the rear ;
 And well his venturous life had proved
 The lessons that his childhood loved.

III.

Oft had he shown, in climes afar,
 Each attribute of roving war :
 The sharpen'd ear, the piercing eye,
 The quick resolve in danger nigh ;
 The speed, that in the flight or chase,
 Outstripp'd the Charib's rapid race ;
 The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
 To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim ;
 The iron frame, inured to bear
 Each dire inclemency of air ;
 Nor less confirm'd to undergo
 Fatigue's faint chill, and famine's throe.
 These arts he proved, his life to save.
 In peril oft by land and wave,
 On Arawaca's desert shore,
 Or where La Plata's billows roar,
 When oft the sons of vengeful Spain
 Track'd the marauder's steps in vain ;—
 These arts, in Indian warfare tried,
 Must save him now by Greta's side.

IV.

'Twas then, in hour of utmost need,
 He proved his courage, art, and speed.
 Now slow he stalk'd with stealthy pace,
 Now started forth in rapid race,
 Oft doubling back in mazy train,
 To blind the trace the dewa retain ;
 Now clombe the rocks projecting high,
 To baffle the pursuer's eye ;
 Now sought the stream, whose brawling sound
 The echo of his footsteps drown'd.
 But if the forest verge he nears,
 There trample steeds, and glimmer spears ;
 If deeper down the copse he drew,
 He heard the rangers' loud halloo,
 Beating each cover while they came.
 As if to start the silvan game.
 'Twas then—like tiger close beset
 At every pass with toil and net,
 'Counter'd, where'er he turns his glare,
 By clashing arms and torches' flare,
 Who meditates, with furious bound,
 To burst on hunter, horse, and hound,—
 'Twas then that Bertram's soul arose,
 Prompting to rush upon his foes .

But as that crouching tiger, cow'd
 By brandish'd steel and shouting crowd,
 Retreats beneath the jungle's shroud,
 Bertram suspends his purpose stern,
 And couches in the brake and fern,
 Hiding his face, lest foemen spy
 The sparkle of his swarthy eye.

V.

Then Bertram might the bearing trace
 Of the bold youth who led the chase ;
 Who paused to list for every sound,
 Climb every height to look around,
 Then rushing on with naked sword,
 Each dingle's bosky depths explored.
 'Twas Redmond—by the azure eye ;
 'Twas Redmond—by the locks that fly
 Disorder'd from his glowing cheek ;
 Mien, face, and form, young Redmond speak,
 A form more active, light, and strong,
 Ne'er shot the ranks of war along ;
 The modest, yet the manly mien,
 Might grace the court of maiden queen ;
 A face more fair you well might find,
 For Redmond's knew the sun and wind,
 Nor boasted, from their tinge when free,
 The charm of regularity ;
 But every feature had the power
 To aid the expression of the hour :
 Whether gay wit, and humour sly,
 Danced laughing in his light-blue eye ;
 Or bended brow, and glance of fire,
 And kindling cheek, spoke Erin's ire :
 Or soft and sadden'd glances show
 Her ready sympathy with woe ;
 Or in that wayward mood of mind,
 When various feelings are combined,
 When joy and sorrow mingle near,
 And hope's bright wings are check'd by fear,
 And rising doubts keep transport down,
 And anger lends a short-lived frown ;
 In that strange mood which maids approve
 Even when they dare not call it love ;
 With every change his features play'd.
 As aspens show the light and shade.

VI.

Well Risingham young Redmond knew :
 And much he marvell'd that the crew,
 Roused to revenge bold Mortham dead,
 Were by that Mortham's foeman led ;
 For never felt his soul the woe,
 That wails a generous foeman low,
 Far less that sense of justice strong,
 That wrecks a generous foeman's wrong

But small his leisure now to pause ;
 Redmond is first, whate'er the cause :
 And twice that Redmond came so near
 Where Bertram couch'd like hunted deer,
 The very boughs his steps displace,
 Rustled against the ruffian's face,
 Who, desperate, twice prepared to start,
 And plunge his dagger in his heart !
 But Redmond turn'd a different way,
 And the bent boughs resumed their sway,
 And Bertram held it wise, unseen.
 Deeper to plunge in coppice green.
 Thus, circled in his coil, the snake,
 When roving hunters beat the brake,
 Watches with red and glistening eye,
 Prepared, if heedless step draw nigh,
 With forked tongue and venom'd fang
 Instant to dart the deadly pang ;
 But if the intruders turn aside,
 A way his coils unfolded glide,
 And through the deep savannah wind,
 Some undisturb'd retreat to find.

VII.

But Bertram, as he backward drew,
 And heard the loud pursuit renew,
 And Redmond's hollo on the wind,
 Oft mutter'd in his savage mind—
 " Redmond O'Neale ! were thou and I
 Alone this day's event to try,
 With not a second here to see,
 But the grey cliff and oaken tree,—
 That voice of thine, that shouts so loud,
 Should ne'er repeat its summons proud !
 No ! nor e'er try its melting power
 Again in maiden's summer bower."
 Eluded, now behind him die,
 Faint and more faint each hostile cry ;
 He stands in Scargill wood alone,
 Nor hears he now a harsher tone
 Than the hoarse cushat's plaintive cry,
 Or Greta's sound that murmurs by ;
 And on the dale, so lone and wild,
 The summer sun in quiet smiled.

VIII.

He listen'd long with anxious heart,
 Ear bent to hear, and foot to start,
 And, while his stretch'd attention glows,
 Refused his weary frame repose.
 'Twas silence all—he laid him down,
 Where purple heath profusely strown,
 And throatwort, with its azure bell,
 And moss and thyme his cushion swell.
 There, spent with toil, he listless eyed
 The course of Greta's playful tide :

Beneath, her banks now eddying dun,
 Now brightly gleaming to the sun,
 As, dancing over rock and stone,
 In yellow light her currents shone,
 Matching in hue the favourite gem
 Of Albin's mountain-diadem.
 Then, tired to watch the current's play,
 He turn'd his weary eyes away,
 To where the bank opposing show'd
 Its huge, square cliffs through shaggy wood.
 One, prominent above the rest,
 Bear'd to the sun its pale grey breast ;
 Around its broken summit grew
 The hazel rude, and sable yew ;
 A thousand varied lichens dyed
 Its waste and weather-beaten side ;
 And round its rugged basis lay,
 By time or thunder rent away,
 Fragments, that, from its frontlet torn,
 Were mantled now by verdant thorn.
 Such was the scene's wild majesty,
 That fill'd stern Bertram's gazing eye.

IX.

In sullen mood he lay reclined,
 Revolving, in his stormy mind,
 The felon deed, the fruitless guilt,
 His patron's blood by treason spilt ;
 A crime, it seem'd, so dire and dread,
 That it had power to wake the dead.
 Then, pondering on his life betray'd
 By Oswald's art to Redmond's blade,
 In treacherous purpose to withhold,
 So seem'd it, Mortham's promised gold.
 A deep and full revenge he vow'd
 On Redmond, forward, fierce, and proud ;
 Revenge on Wilfrid—on his sire
 Redoubled vengeance, swift and dire !—
 If, in such mood, (as legends say,
 And well believed that simple day,)
 The Enemy of Man has power
 To profit by the evil hour,
 Here stood a wretch, prepared to change
 His soul's redemption for revenge !
 But though his vows, with such a fire
 Of earnest and intense desire
 For vengeance dark and fell, were made,
 As well might reach hell's lowest shade,
 No deeper clouds the grove embrown'd,
 No nether thunders shook the ground ;—
 The demon knew his vassal's heart,
 And spared temptation's needless art.

X.

Oft, mingled with the direful theme,
 Came Mortham's form—Was it a dream ;

Or had he seen, in vision true,
 That very Mortham whom he slew?
 Or had in living flesh appear'd
 The only man on earth he fear'd?—
 To try the mystic cause intent,
 His eyes, that on the cliff were bent,
 'Counter'd at once a dazzling glance,
 Like sunbeam flash'd from sword or lance.
 At once he started as for fight,
 But not a foeman was in sight;
 He heard the cushat's murmur hoarse,
 He heard the river's sounding course;
 The solitary woodlands lay
 As slumbering in the summer ray.
 He gazed, like lion roused, around,
 Then sunk again upon the ground.
 'Twas but, he thought, some fitful beam,
 Glanced sudden from the sparkling stream;
 Then plunged him from his gloomy train
 Of ill-connected thoughts again,
 Until a voice behind him cried,
 "Bertram! well met on Greta side."

XI.

Instant his sword was in his hand,
 As instant sunk the ready brand;
 Yet, dubious still, opposed he stood
 To him that issued from the wood:
 "Guy Denzil!—is it thou?" he said,
 "Do we two meet in Scargill shade!—
 Stand back a space!—thy purpose show,
 Whether thou comest as friend or foe.
 Report hath said, that Denzil's name
 From Rokeby's band was razed with shame."—
 "A shame I owe that hot O'Neale,
 Who told his knight, in peevish zeal,
 Of my marauding on the clowns
 Of Calverley and Bradford downs.
 I reckon not. In a war to strive,
 Where, save the leaders, none can thrive,
 Suits ill my mood; and better game
 Awaits us both, if thou'rt the same
 Unscrupulous, bold Risingham,
 Who watch'd with me in midnight dark,
 To snatch a deer from Rokeby-park.
 How think'st thou?"—"Speak thy purpose out.
 I love not mystery or doubt."

XII.

"Then list.—Not far there lurk a crew
 Of trusty comrades, stanch and true,
 Glean'd from both factions—Roundheads, freed
 From cant of sermon and of creed;
 And Cavaliers, whose souls, like mine,
 Spurn at the bonds of discipline."

Wiser, we judge, by dale and wold,
 A warfare of our own to hold,
 Than breathe our last on battle-down,
 For cloak or surplice, mace or crown.
 Our schemes are laid, our purpose set,
 A chief and leader lack we yet.—
 Thou art a wanderer, it is said ;
 For Mortham's death, thy steps way-laid,
 Thy head at price—so say our spies,
 Who range the valley in disguise.
 Join then with us :—though wild debate
 And wrangling rend our infant state,
 Each to an equal loath to bow,
 Will yield to chief renown'd as thou.”—

XIII.

“ Even now,” thought Bertram, passion-stirr'd,
 “ I call'd on hell, and hell has heard !
 What lack I, vengeance to command,
 But of stanch comrades such a band ?
 This Denzil, vow'd to every evil,
 Might read a lesson to the devil.
 Well, be it so ! each knave and fool
 Shall serve as my revenge's tool.”—
 Aloud, “ I take thy proffer, Guy,
 But tell me where thy comrades lie.”—
 “ Not far from hence,” Guy Denzil said ;
 “ Descend, and cross the river's bed,
 Where rises yonder cliff so grey.”—
 “ Do thou,” said Bertram, “ lead the way.”
 Then mutter'd, “ It is best make sure ;
 Guy Denzil's faith was never pure.”
 He follow'd down the steep descent,
 Then through the Greta's streams they went,
 And, when they reach'd the farther shore,
 They stood the lonely cliff before.

XIV.

With wonder Bertram heard within
 The flinty rock a murmur'd din ;
 But when Guy pull'd the wilding spray,
 And brambles, from its base away,
 He saw, appearing to the air,
 A little entrance, low and square,
 Like opening cell of hermit lone,
 Dark, winding through the living stone.
 Here enter'd Denzil, Bertram here ;
 And loud and louder on their ear,
 As from the bowels of the earth,
 Resounded shonts of boisterous mirth.
 Of old, the cavern strait and rude,
 In slaty rock the peasant hew'd ;
 And Brignall's woods, and Scargill's wave,
 E'en now, o'er many a sister cave.

Where, far within the darksome rift,
 The wedge and lever ply their thrift.
 But war had silenced rural trade,
 And the deserted mine was made
 The banquet-hall, and fortress too,
 Of Denzil and his desperate crew.—
 There Guilt his anxious revel kept ;
 There, on his sordid pallet, slept
 Guilt-born Excess,—the goblet drain'd,
 Still in his slumbering grasp retain'd ;
 Regret was there, his eye still cast
 With vain repining on the past ;
 Among the feasters waited near
 Sorrow, and unrepentant Fear,
 And Blasphemy, to frenzy driven,
 With his own crimes reproaching heaven ;
 While Bertram show'd, amid the crew,
 The Master-Fiend that Milton drew.

XV.

Hark ! the loud revel wakes again,
 To greet the leader of the train.
 Behold the group by the pale lamp,
 That struggles with the earthy damp.
 By what strange features Vice hath known,
 To single out and mark her own !
 Yet some there are, whose brows retain
 Less deeply stamp'd her brand and stain.
 See yon pale stripling ! when a boy,
 A mother's pride, a father's joy !
 Now, 'gainst the vault's rude walls reclined.
 An early image fills his mind :
 The cottage, once his sire's, he sees
 Embower'd upon the banks of Tees ;
 He views sweet Winston's woodland scene.
 And shares the dance on Gainford-green.
 A tear is springing—but the zest
 Of some wild tale, or brutal jest,
 Hath to loud laughter stirr'd the rest.
 On him they call, the aptest mate
 For jovial song and merry feat :
 Fast flies his dream—with dauntless air,
 As one victorious o'er Despair,
 He bids the ruddy cup go round,
 Till sense and sorrow both are drown'd :
 And soon, in merry wassail, he,
 The life of all their revelry,
 Peals his loud song !—The muse has found
 Her blossoms on the wildest ground,
 Mid noxious weeds at random strew'd,
 Themselves all profitless and rude.
 With desperate merriment he sung,
 The cavern to the chorus rung ;
 Yet mingled with his reckless glee
 Remorse's bitter agony.

XVI.

Song.

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

CHORUS.

“O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
 Than reign our English queen.”—
 “If, Maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
 To leave both tower and town,
 Thou first must guess what life lead we,
 That dwell by dale and down.
 And if thou canst that riddle read,
 As read full well you may,
 Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
 As blithe as Queen of May.”—

CHORUS.

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

XVII.

“I read you, by your bugle-horn,
 And by your palfrey good,
 I read you for a Ranger sworn,
 To keep the king's greenwood.”—
 “A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
 And 'tis at peep of light;
 His blast is heard at merry morn,
 And mine at dead of night.”—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, “Brignall banks are fair.
 And Greta woods are gay;
 I would I were with Edmund there,
 To reign his Queen of May!
 “With burnish'd brand and musketoön
 So gallantly you come,
 I read you for a bold Dragoon,
 That lists the tuck of drum.”—
 “I list no more the tuck of drum,
 No more the trumpet hear;
 But when the beetle sounds his hum,
 My comrades take the spear.

CHORUS.

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

XVIII.

“ Maiden ! a nameless life I lead,
 A nameless death I'll die !
 The fiend, whose lantern lights the mead,
 Were better mate than I !
 And when I'm with my comrades met,
 Beneath the greenwood bough,
 What once we were we all forget,
 Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS.

“ Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen.”

When Edmund ceased his simple song,
 Was silence on the sullen throng,
 Till waked some ruder mate their glee
 With note of coarser minstrelsy.
 But, far apart, in dark divan,
 Denzil and Bertram many a plan,
 Of import foul and fierce, design'd,
 While still on Bertram's grasping mind
 The wealth of murder'd Northam hung ;
 Though half he fear'd his daring tongue,
 When it should give his wishes birth,
 Might raise a spectre from the earth !

XIX.

At length his wondrous tale he told :
 When, scornful, smiled his comrade bold ;
 For, train'd in licence of a court,
 Religion's self was Denzil's sport ;
 Then judge in what contempt he held
 The visionary tales of eld !
 His awe for Bertram scarce repress'd
 The unbeliever's sneering jest.
 “ Twere hard,” he said, “ for sage or seer,
 To spell the subject of your fear ;
 Nor do I boast the art renown'd,
 Vision and omen to expound,
 Yet, faith if I must needs afford
 To spectre watching treasured hoard,
 As ban-dog keeps his master's roof,
 Bidding the plunderer stand aloof,
 This doubt remains—thy goblin gaunt
 Hath chosen ill his ghostly haunt ;

For why his guard on Mortham hold,
When Rokeby castle hath the gold
Thy patron won on Indian soil,
By stealth, by piracy, and spoil?"—

XX.

At this he paused—for angry shame
Lower'd on the brow of Risingham.
He blush'd to think, that he should seem
Assertor of an airy dream,
And gave his wrath another theme.
"Denzil," he says, "though lowly laid,
Wrong not the memory of the dead;
For, while he lived, at Mortham's look
Thy very soul, Guy Denzil, shook!
And when he tax'd thy breach of word
To yon fair rose of Allenford,
I saw thee crouch like chasten'd hound,
Whose back the huntsman's lash hath found,
Nor dare to call his foreign wealth
The spoil of piracy or stealth;
He won it bravely with his brand,
When Spain waged warfare with our land.
Mark, too—I brook no idle jeer,
Nor couple Bertram's name with fear;
Mine is but half the demon's lot,
For I believe, but tremble not.—
Enough of this.—Say, why this hoard
Thou deem'st at Rokeby castle stored;
Or think'st that Mortham would bestow
His treasure with his faction's foe?"

XXI.

Soon quench'd was Denzil's ill-timed mirth
Rather he would have seen the earth
Give to ten thousand spectres birth,
Than venture to awake to flame
The deadly wrath of Risingham.
Submit he answer'd,—“Mortham's mind
Thou know'st, to joy was ill inclined.
In youth, 'tis said, a gallant free,
A lusty reveller was he;
But since return'd from over sea,
A sullen and a silent mood
Hath numb'd the current of his blood.
Hence he refused each kindly call
To Rokeby's hospitable hall;
And our stout knight, at dawn of morn
Who loved to hear the bugle-horn,
Nor less, when eve his oaks embrown'd,
To see the ruddy cup go round,
Took umbrage that a friend so near
Refused to share his chase and cheer;
Thus did the kindred barons jar
Ere they divided in the war.

Yet, trust me, friend, Matilda fair
Of Mortham's wealth is destined heir."—

XXII.

"Destined to her! to yon slight maid!
The prize my life had well-nigh paid,
When 'gainst Laroche, by Cayo's wave,
I fought, my patron's wealth to save!—
Denzil, I knew him long, yet ne'er
Knew him that joyous cavalier,
Whom youthful friends and early fame
Call'd soul of gallantry and game.
A moody man, he sought our crew,
Desperate and dark, whom no one knew,
And rose, as men with us must rise,
By scorning life and all its ties.
On each adventure rash he roved,
As danger for itself he loved;
On his sad brow nor mirth nor wine
Could e'er one wrinkled knot untwine;
Ill was the omen if he smiled,
For 'twas in peril stern and wild;
But when he laugh'd, each luckless mate
Might hold our fortune desperate.
Foremost he fought in every broil,
Then scornful turn'd him from the spoil;
Nay, often strove to bar the way
Between his comrades and their prey;
Preaching, even then, to such as we,
Hot with our dear-bought victory,
Of mercy and humanity.

XXIII.

"I loved him well—His fearless part,
His gallant leading, won my heart.
And after each victorious fight,
'Twas I that wrangled for his right,
Redeem'd his portion of the prey
That greedier mates had torn away;
In field and storm thrice saved his life,
And once amid our comrades' strife.—
Yes, I have loved thee! Well hath proved
My toil, my danger, how I loved!
Yet will I mourn no more thy fate,
Ingrate in life, in death ingrate.—
Rise if thou canst!"—he look'd around,
And sternly stamp'd upon the ground—
"Rise, with thy bearing proud and high,
Even as this morn it met mine eye,
And give me, if thou darest, the lie!"
He paused—then, calm and passion-free'd,
Bade Denzil with his tale proceed.

XXIV.

"Bertram, to thee I need not tell,
What thou hast cause to wot so well.

How Superstition's nets were twined
 Around the Lord of Mortham's mind !
 But since he drove thee from his tower,
 A maid he found in Greta's bower,
 Whose speech, like David's harp, had sway
 To charm his evil fiend away.
 I know not if her features moved
 Remembrance of the wife he loved ;
 But he would gaze upon her eye,
 Till his mood soften'd to a sigh.
 He, whom no living mortal sought
 To question of his secret thought,
 Now every thought and care confess'd
 To his fair niece's faithful breast ;
 Nor was there aught of rich and rare,
 In earth, in ocean, or in air,
 But it must deck Matilda's hair.
 Her love still bound him unto life ;
 But then awoke the civil strife,
 And menials bore, by his commands,
 Three coffers, with their iron bands,
 From Mortham's vault, at midnight deep,
 To her lone bower in Rokeby-Keep,
 Ponderous with gold and plate of pride,
 His gift, if he in battle died."—

XXV.

" Then Denzil, as I guess, lays train,
 These iron-banded chests to gain ;
 Else, wherefore should he hover here,
 Where many a peril waits him near,
 For all his feats of war and peace,
 For plunder'd boors, and harts of greese ?
 Since through the hamlets as he fared,
 What hearth has Guy's marauding spared,
 Or where the chase that hath not rung
 With Denzil's bow, at midnight strung ?"—
 " I hold my wont—my rangers go,
 Even now to track a milk-white doe.
 By Rokeby-hall she takes her lair,
 In Greta wood she harbours fair,
 And when my huntsman marks her way,
 What think'st thou, Bertram, of the prey ?
 Were Rokeby's daughter in our power,
 We rate her ransom at her dower."—

XXVI.

" 'Tis well !—there's vengeance in the thought
 Matilda is by Wilfrid sought ;
 And hot-brain'd Redmond, too, 'tis said,
 Pays lover's homage to the maid.
 Bertram she scorn'd—If met by chance,
 She turn'd from me her shuddering glance,
 Like a nice dame, that will not brook
 On what she hates and loathes to look :

She told to Mortham she could ne'er
Behold me without secret fear,
Foreboding evil :—She may rue
To find her prophecy fall true !—
The war has weeded Rokeby's train,
Few followers in his halls remain ;
If thy scheme miss, then, brief and bold
We are enow to storm the hold ;
Bear off the plunder, and the dame,
And leave the castle all in flame."—

XXVII.

" Still art thou Valour's venturous son !
Yet ponder first the risk to run :
The menials of the castle, true,
And stubborn to their charge, though few ;
The wall to scale—the moat to cross—
The wicket-grate—the inner fosse"—
—" Fool ! if we blench for toys like these,
On what fair guerdon can we seize ?
Our hardest venture, to explore
Some wretched peasant's fenceless door,
And the best prize we bear away,
The earnings of his sordid day."—
" A while thy hasty taunt forbear :
In sight of road more sure and fair,
Thou wouldst not choose, in blindfold wrath,
Or wantonness, a desperate path ?
List, then ;—for vantage or assault,
From gilded vane to dungeon-vault,
Each pass of Rokeby-house I know
There is one postern, dark and low,
That issues at a secret spot,
By most neglected or forgot.
Now, could a spial of our train
On fair pretext admittance gain,
That sally-port might be unbarr'd :
Then, vain were battlement and ward !"—

XXVIII.

' Now speak'st thou well :—to me the same
If force or art shall urge the game ;
Indifferent, if like fox I wind,
Or spring like tiger on the hind.—
But, hark ! our merry men so gay
Troll forth another roundelay."—

Song.

" A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine !
To pull the thorn thy brow to braid,
And press the rue for wine !
A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
A feather of the blue,

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
 Though his spur be as sharp, and his blade be as bright ;
 Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
 Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word ;
 And the best of our nobles his bonnet will veil,
 Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale.

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come ;
 The mother, she ask'd of his household and home :
 " Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,
 My hall," quoth bold Allen, " shows gallanter still ;
 'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so pale,
 And with all its bright spangles ! " said Allen-a-Dale.

The father was steel, and the mother was stone ;
 They lifted the latch, and they bade him be gone ;
 But loud, on the morrow, their wail and their cry :
 He had laugh'd on the lass with his bonny black eye,
 And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
 And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-Dale !

XXXI

" Thou see'st that, whether sad or gay,
 Love mingles ever in his lay.
 But when his boyish wayward fit
 Is o'er, he hath address and wit ;
 Oh ! 'tis a brain of fire, can ape
 Each dialect, each various shape."—
 " Nay, then, to aid thy project, Guy—
 Soft ! who comes here ?"—" My trusty spy.
 Speak, Hamlin ! hast thou lodged our deer ?"—
 " I have—but two fair stags are near.
 I watch'd her, as she slowly stray'd
 From Egliston up Thorsgill glade ;
 But Wilfrid Wycliffe sought her side,
 And then young Redmond, in his pride,
 Shot down to meet them on their way :
 Much, as it seem'd, was theirs to say :
 There's time to pitch both toil and net,
 Before their path be homeward set."
 A hurried and a whisper'd speech
 Did Bertram's will to Denzil teach :
 Who, turning to the robber band,
 Bade four, the bravest, take the brand.

CANTO FOURTH.

L

WHEN Denmark's raven soar'd on high,
 Triumphant through Northumbrian sky.
 Till, hovering near, her fatal croak
 Bade Reged's Britons dread the yoke.

And the broad shadow of her wing
 Blacken'd each cataract and spring,
 Where Tees in tumult leaves his source,
 Thundering o'er Caldron and High-Force :
 Beneath the shade the Northmen came,
 Fix'd on each vale a Runic name,
 Rear'd high their altar's rugged stone,
 And gave their Gods the land they won.
 Then, Balder, one bleak garth was thine,
 And one sweet brooklet's silver line,
 And Woden's Croft did title gain
 From the stern Father of the Slain ;
 But to the Monarch of the Mace,
 That held in fight the foremost place,
 To Odin's son, and Sifia's spouse,
 Near Stratforth high they paid their vows.
 Remember'd Thor's victorious fame,
 And gave the dell the Thunderer's name.

II.

Yet Scald or Kemper err'd, I ween,
 Who gave that soft and quiet scene,
 With all its varied light and shade,
 And every little sunny glade,
 And the blithe brook that strolls along
 Its pebbled bed with summer song,
 To the grim God of blood and scar,
 The grisly King of Northern War.
 Oh, better were its banks assign'd
 To spirits of a gentler kind !
 For where the thicket-groups recede,
 And the rath primrose decks the mead,
 The velvet grass seems carpet meet
 For the light fairies' lively feet.
 Yon tufted knoll, with daisies strown,
 Might make proud Oberon a throne,
 While, hidden in the thicket nigh,
 Puck should brood o'er his frolic sly ;
 And where profuse the wood-vetch clings
 Round ash and elm, in verdant rings,
 Its pale and azure-pencill'd flower
 Should canopy Titania's bower.

III.

Here rise no cliffs the vale to shade ;
 But, skirting every sunny glade,
 In fair variety of green
 The woodland lends its silvan screen.
 Hoary, yet haughty, frowns the oak,
 Its boughs by weight of ages broke ;
 And towers erect, in sable spire,
 The pine-tree scathed by lightning-fire
 The drooping ash and birch, between,
 Hang their fair tresses o'er the green.

And all beneath, at random grow
 Each coppice dwarf of varied show,
 Or, round the stems profusely twined,
 Fling summer odours on the wind.
 Such varied group Urbino's hand
 Round Him of Tarsus nobly plann'd,
 What time he bade proud Athens own
 On Mars's Mount the God Unknown!
 Then grey Philosophy stood nigh,
 Though bent by age, in spirit high:
 There rose the scar-seam'd veteran's spears,
 There Grecian Beauty bent to hear,
 While Childhood at her foot was placed,
 Or clung delighted to her waist.

IV.

"And rest we here," Matilda said,
 And sat her in the varying shade.
 "Chance-met, we well may steal an hour,
 To friendship due from fortune's power.
 Thou, Wilfrid, ever kind, must lend
 Thy counsel to thy sister-friend;
 And, Redmond, thou, at my behest,
 No farther urge thy desperate 'quest.
 For to my care a charge is left,
 Dangerous to one of aid bereft;
 Well-nigh an orphan, and alone,
 Captive her sire, her house o'erthrown."
 Wilfrid, with wonted kindness graced,
 Beside her on the turf she placed;
 Then paused, with downcast look and eye,
 Nor bade young Redmond seat him nigh.
 Her conscious diffidence he saw,
 Drew backward, as in modest awe,
 And sat a little space removed,
 Unmark'd to gaze on her he loved.

V.

Wreathed in its dark-brown rings, her hat
 Half hid Matilda's forehead fair,
 Half hid and half reveal'd to view
 Her full dark eye of hazel hue.
 The rose, with faint and feeble streak,
 So slightly tinged the maiden's cheek,
 That you had said her hue was pale;
 But if she faced the summer gale,
 Or spoke, or sung, or quicker moved,
 Or heard the praise of those she loved,
 Or when of interest was express'd
 Aught that waked feeling in her breast
 The mantling blood in ready play
 Rival'd the blush of rising day.
 There was a soft and pensive grace,
 A cast of thought upon her face,

That suited well the forehead high,
 The eyelash dark, and downcast eye ;
 The mild expression spoke a mind
 In duty firm, composed, resign'd ;—
 'Tis that which Roman art has given,
 To mark their maiden Queen of Heaven
 In hours of sport, that mood gave way
 To Fancy's light and frolic play ;
 And when the dance, or tale, or song,
 In harmless mirth sped time along,
 Full oft her doting sire would call
 His Maud the merriest of them all.
 But days of war and civil crime,
 Allow'd but ill such festal time,
 And her soft pensiveness of brow
 Had deepen'd into sadness now.
 In Marston field her father ta'en,
 Her friends dispersed, brave Mortham slain,
 While every ill her soul foretold,
 From Oswald's thirst of power and gold,
 And boding thoughts that she must part
 With a soft vision of her heart,—
 All lower'd around the lovely maid,
 To darken her dejection's shade.

VI.

Who has not heard—while Erin yet
 Strove 'gainst the Saxon's iron bit—
 Who has not heard how brave O'Neale
 In English blood imbrued his steel,
 Against St George's cross blazed high
 The banners of his Tanistry,
 To fiery Essex gave the foil,
 And reign'd a prince on Ulster's soil ?
 But chief arose his victor pride,
 When that brave Marshal fought and died
 And Avon-Duff to ocean bore
 His billows red with Saxon gore.
 'Twas first in that disastrous fight,
 Rokeby and Mortham proved their might
 There had they fallen amongst the rest,
 But pity touch'd a chieftain's breast—
 The Tanist he to great O'Neale ;
 He check'd his followers' bloody zeal,
 To quarter took the kinsman bold,
 And bore them to his mountain-hold,
 Gave them each silvan joy to know,
 Slieve-Donard's cliffs and woods could show
 Shared with them Erin's festal cheer,
 Show'd them the chase of wolf and deer,
 And, when a fitting time was come,
 Safe and unransom'd sent them home,
 Loaded with many a gift, to prove
 A generous foe's respect and love.

VII.

Years speed away. On Rokeby's head
 Some touch of early snow was shed ;
 Calm he enjoy'd, by Greta's wave,
 The peace which James the Peaceful gave,
 While Mortham, far beyond the main,
 Waged his fierce wars on Indian Spain.—
 It chanced upon a wintry night,
 That whiten'd Stanmore's stormy height,
 The chase was o'er, the stag was kill'd,
 In Rokeby-hall the cups were fill'd,
 And by the huge stone chimney sate
 The Knight in hospitable state.
 Moonless the sky, the hour was late,
 When a loud summons shook the gate,
 And sore for entrance and for aid,
 A voice of foreign accent pray'd.
 The porter answer'd to the call,
 And instant rush'd into the hall
 A Man, whose aspect and attire
 Startled the circle by the fire.

VIII.

His plaited hair in elf-locks spread
 Around his bare and matted head ;
 On leg and thigh, close stretch'd and trim,
 His vesture show'd the sinewy limb ;
 In saffron dyed, a linen vest
 Was frequent folded round his breast ;
 A mantle long and loose he wore,
 Shaggy with ice, and stain'd with gore.
 He clasp'd a burden to his heart,
 And, resting on a knotted dart,
 The snow from hair and beard he shook,
 And round him gazed with wilder'd look.
 Then up the hall, with staggering pace,
 He hasten'd by the blaze to place,
 Half lifeless from the bitter air,
 His load, a Boy of beauty rare.
 To Rokeby, next, he louted low,
 Then stood erect his tale to show,
 With wild majestic port and tone,
 Like envoy of some barbarous throne.
 " Sir Richard, Lord of Rokeby, hear !
 Turlough O'Neale salutes thee dear ;
 He graces thee, and to thy care
 Young Redmond gives, his grandson fair
 He bids thee breed him as thy son,
 For Turlough's days of joy are done ;
 And other lords have seized his land.
 And faint and feeble is his hand ;
 And all the glory of Tyrone
 Is like a morning vapour flown .

To bind the duty on thy soul,
 He bids thee think on Erin's bowl !
 If any wrong the young O'Neale,
 He bids thee think of Erin's steel.
 To Mortham first this charge was due,
 But, in his absence, honours you.—
 Now is my master's message by,
 And Ferraight will contented die."

IX.

His look grew fix'd, his cheek grew pale,
 He sunk when he had told his tale ;
 For, hid beneath his mantle wide,
 A mortal wound was in his side.
 Vain was all aid—in terror wild,
 And sorrow, scream'd the orphan Child.
 Poor Ferraight raised his wistful eyes,
 And faintly strove to soothe his cries,
 All reckless of his dying pain,
 He blest, and blest him o'er again !
 And kiss'd the little hands outspread,
 And kiss'd and cross'd the infant head,
 And, in his native tongue and phrase,
 Pray'd to each saint to watch his days ;
 Then all his strength together drew,
 The charge to Rokeby to renew.
 When half was falter'd from his breast,
 And half by dying signs express'd,
 " Bless thee, O'Neale !" he faintly said,
 And thus the faithful spirit fled.

X.

'Twas long ere soothing might prevail
 Upon the Child to end the tale ;
 And then he said, that from his home
 His grandsire had been forced to roam,
 Which had not been if Redmond's hand
 Had but had strength to draw the brand,
 The brand of Lenaugh More the Red,
 That hung beside the grey wolf's head.—
 'Twas from his broken phrase descried,
 His foster-father was his guide,
 Who, in his charge, from Ulster bore
 Letters, and gifts a goodly store ;
 But ruffians met them in the wood,—
 Ferraight in battle boldly stood,
 Till wounded and o'erpower'd at length,
 And stripp'd of all, his failing strength
 Just bore him here—and then the child
 Renew'd again his moaning wild.

XI.

The tear, down childhood's cheek that flows,
 Is like the dewdrop on the rose ;
 When next the summer breeze comes by,
 And waves the bush, the flower is dry.

Won by their care, the orphan Child
 Soon on his new protector smiled,
 With dimpled cheek and eye so fair,
 Through his thick curls of flaxen hair,
 But blithest laugh'd that cheek and eye,
 When Rokeby's little Maid was nigh ;
 'Twas his, with elder brother's pride,
 Matilda's tottering steps to guide ;
 His native lays in Irish tongue,
 To soothe her infant ear he sung,
 And primrose twined with daisy fair,
 To form a chaplet for her hair.
 By lawn, by grove, by brooklet's strand,
 The children still were hand in hand,
 And good Sir Richard smiling eyed
 The early knot so kindly tied.

XII.

But summer months bring wilding shoot
 From bud to bloom, from bloom to fruit ;
 And years draw on our human span,
 From child to boy, from boy to man ;
 And soon in Rokeby's woods is seen
 A gallant boy in hunter's green.
 He loves to wake the felon boar,
 In his dark haunt on Greta's shore,
 And loves, against the deer so dun,
 To draw the shaft, or lift the gun :
 Yet more he loves, in autumn prime,
 The hazel's spreading boughs to climb,
 And down its cluster'd stores to hail,
 Where young Matilda holds her veil.
 And she, whose veil receives the shower,
 Is alter'd too, and knows her power ;
 Assumes a monitress's pride,
 Her Redmond's dangerous sports to chide ;
 Yet listens still to hear him tell
 How the grim wild-boar fought and fell,
 How at his fall the bugle rung,
 Till rock and greenwood answer flung ;
 Then blesses her, that man can find
 A pastime of such savage kind !

XIII.

But Redmond knew to weave his tale
 So well with praise of wood and dale,
 And knew so well each point to trace,
 Gives living interest to the chase,
 And knew so well o'er all to throw
 His spirit's wild romantic glow,
 That, while she blamed, and while she tear'd
 She loved each venturous tale she heard.
 Oft, too, when drifted snow and rain
 To bower and hall their steps restrain,

Together they explored the page
 Of glowing bard or gifted sage ;
 Oft, placed the evening fire beside,
 The minstrel art alternate tried,
 While gladsome harp and lively lay
 Bade winter-night sit fast away :
 Thus, from their childhood blending still
 Their sport, their study, and their skill,
 An union of the soul they prove,
 But must not think that it was love.
 But though they dared not, envious Fame
 Soon dared to give that union name ;
 And when so often, side by side,
 From year to year the pair she eyed,
 She sometimes blamed the good old Knight,
 As dull of ear and dim of sight,
 Sometimes his purpose would declare,
 That young O'Neale should wed his heir.

XIV.

The suit of Wilfrid rent disguise
 And bandage from the lovers' eyes ;
 'Twas plain that Oswald, for his son,
 Had Rokeby's favour well-nigh won.
 Now must they meet with change of cheer,
 With mutual looks of shame and fear ;
 Now must Matilda stray apart,
 To school her disobedient heart :
 And Redmond now alone must rue
 The love he never can subdue.
 But factions rose, and Rokeby sware,
 No rebel's son should wed his heir ;
 And Redmond, nurtured while a child
 In many a bard's traditions wild,
 Now sought the lonely wood or stream,
 To cherish there a happier dream,
 Of maiden won by sword or lance,
 As in the regions of romance ;
 And count the heroes of his line,
 Great Nial of the Pledges Nine,
 Shane-Dymas wild, and Geraldine,
 And Connan-more, who vow'd his race
 For ever to the fight and chase,
 And cursed him, of his lineage born,
 Should sheathe the sword to reap the corn.
 Or leave the mountain and the wold,
 To shroud himself in castled hold.
 From such examples hope he drew,
 And brighten'd as the trumpet blew.

XV.

If brides were won by heart and blade,
 Redmond had both, his cause to aid,
 And all beside of nurture rare
 That might beseech a baron's heir.

Turlough O'Neale, in Erin's strife,
 On Rokeby's Lord bestow'd his life,
 And well did Rokeby's generous Knight
 Young Redmond for the deed requite.
 Nor was his liberal care and cost
 Upon the gallant stripling lost :
 Seek the North Riding broad and wide,
 Like Redmond none could steed bestride ;
 From Tynemouth search to Cumberland,
 Like Redmond none could wield a brand ;
 And then, of humour kind and free,
 And bearing him to each degree
 With frank and fearless courtesy,
 There never youth was form'd to steal
 Upon the heart like brave O'Neale.

XVI

Sir Richard loved him as his son ;
 And when the days of peace were done,
 And to the gales of war he gave
 The banner of his sires to wave,
 Redmond, distinguish'd by his care,
 He chose that honour'd flag to bear,
 And named his page—the next degree,
 In that old time to chivalry.
 In five pitch'd fields he well maintain'd
 The honour'd place his worth obtain'd,
 And high was Redmond's youthful name
 Blazed in the roll of martial fame.
 Had fortune smiled on Marston fight,
 The eve had seen him dubb'd a knight ;
 Twice, 'mid the battle's doubtful strife,
 Of Rokeby's Lord he saved the life ;
 But when he saw him prisoner made,
 He kiss'd and then resign'd his blade,
 And yielded him an easy prey
 To those who led the Knight away ;
 Resolved Matilda's sire should prove
 In prison, as in fight, his love.

XVII.

When lovers meet in adverse hour,
 'Tis like a sun-glimpse through a shower,
 A watery ray, an instant seen
 The darkly closing clouds between.
 As Redmond on the turf reclined,
 The past and present fill'd his mind :
 " It was not thus," Affection said,
 " I dream'd of my return, dear maid !
 Not thus, when from thy trembling hand,
 I took the banner and the brand ;
 When round me, as the bugles blew,
 Their blades three hundred warriors drew.
 And, while the standard I unroll'd,
 Clash'd their bright arms, with clamour bold.

Where is that banner now ?—its pride
Lies 'whelm'd in Ouse's sullen tide !
Where now these warriors ?—in their gore.
They cumber Marston's dismal moor !
And what avails a useless brand,
Held by a captive's shackled hand,
That only would his life retain,
To aid thy sire to bear his chain !"
Thus Redmond to himself apart :
Nor lighter was his rival's heart ;
For Wilfrid, while his generous soul
Disdain'd to profit by control,
By many a sign could mark too plain,
Save with such aid, his hopes were vain. . . .
But now Matilda's accents stole
On the dark visions of their soul,
And bade their mournful musing fly,
Like mist before the zephyr's sigh.

XVIII.

" I need not to my friends recall,
How Mortham shunn'd my father's hall ;
A man of silence and of woe,
Yet ever anxious to bestow
On my poor self whate'er could prove
A kinsman's confidence and love.
My feeble aid could sometimes chase
The clouds of sorrow for a space ;
But oftener, fix'd beyond my power,
I mark'd his deep despondence lower.
One dismal cause, by all unguess'd,
His fearful confidence confess'd ;
And twice it was my hap to see
Examples of that agony,
Which for a season can o'erstrain
And wreck the structure of the brain.
He had the awful power to know
The approaching mental overthrow,
And while his mind had courage yet
To struggle with the dreadful fit,
The victim writhed against its throes,
Like wretch beneath a murderer's blows.
This malady, I well could mark,
Sprung from some direful cause and dark ;
But still he kept its source conceal'd,
Till arming for the civil field ;
Then in my charge he bade me hold
A treasure huge of gems and gold,
With this disjointed dismal scroll,
That tells the secret of his soul,
In such wild words as oft betray
A mind by anguish forced astray."—

XIX.

Mortham's History.

" Matilda! thou hast seen me start,
 As if a dagger thrill'd my heart,
 When it has happ'd some casual phrase
 Waked memory of my former days.
 Believe, that few can backward cast
 Their thoughts with pleasure on the past;
 But I!—my youth was rash and vain,
 And blood and rage my manhood stain,
 And my grey hairs must now descend
 To my cold grave without a friend!
 Even thou, Matilda, wilt disown
 Thy kinsman, when his guilt is known.
 And must I lift the bloody veil,
 That hides my dark and fatal tale!
 I must—I will—Pale phantom, cease!
 Leave me one little hour in peace!
 Thus haunted, think'st thou I have skill
 Thine own commission to fulfil?
 Or, while thou point'st with gesture fierce,
 Thy blighted cheek, thy bloody hearse,
 How can I paint thee as thou wert,
 So fair in face, so warm in heart!

XX.

" Yes, she was fair!—Matilda, thou
 Hast a soft sadness on thy brow;
 But hers was like the sunny glow,
 That laughs on earth and all below!
 We wedded secret—there was need—
 Differing in country and in creed;
 And, when to Mortham's tower she came,
 We mention'd not her race and name,
 Until thy sire, who fought afar,
 Should turn him home from foreign war.
 On whose kind influence we relied
 To soothe her father's ire and pride.
 Few months we lived retired, unknown,
 To all but one dear friend alone,
 One darling friend—I spare his shame,
 I will not write the villain's name!
 My trespasses I might forget,
 And sue in vengeance for the debt
 Due by a brother worm to me,
 Ungrateful to God's clemency,
 That spared me penitential time,
 Nor cut me off amid my crime.—

XXI.

" A kindly smile to all she lent,
 But on her husband's friend 'twas bent
 So kind, that from its harmless glee,
 The wretch misconstrued villany.

Repulsed in his presumptuous love,
 A vengeful snare the traitor wove.
 Alone we sat—the flask had flow'd,
 My blood with heat unwonted glow'd,
 When through the alley'd walk we spied
 With hurried step my Edith glide,
 Cowering beneath the verdant screen,
 As one unwilling to be seen.
 Words cannot paint the fiendish smile
 That curl'd the traitor's cheek the while !
 Fiercely I question'd of the cause ;
 He made a cold and artful pause,
 Then pray'd it might not chafe my mood—
 ' There was a gallant in the wood !'
 We had been shooting at the deer ;
 My cross-bow (evil chance !) was near :
 That ready weapon of my wrath
 I caught, and, hasting up the path,
 In the yew grove my wife I found,—
 A stranger's arms her neck had bound !
 I mark'd his heart—the bow I drew—
 I loosed the shaft—'twas more than true !
 I found my Edith's dying charms
 Lock'd in her murder'd brother's arms !—
 He came in secret to inquire
 Her state, and reconcile her sire.

XXII.

“ All fled my rage—the villain first,
 Whose craft my jealousy had nursed ;
 He sought in far and foreign clime
 To 'scape the vengeance of his crime.
 The manner of the slaughter done
 Was known to few, my guilt to none ;
 Some tale my faithful steward framed—
 I know not what—of shaft mis-aim'd :
 And even from those the act who knew,
 He hid the hand from which it flew.
 Untouch'd by human laws I stood,
 But God had heard the cry of blood !
 There is a blank upon my mind,
 A fearful vision ill-defined,
 Of raving till my flesh was torn,
 Of dungeon-bolts and fetters worn—
 And when I waked to woe more mild,
 And question'd of my infant child—
 (Have I not written, that she bare
 A boy, like summer morning fair ?)—
 With looks confused, my menials tell
 That armed men in Mortham dell
 Beset the nurse's evening way,
 And bore her, with her charge, away.
 My faithless friend, and none but he,
 Could profit by this villany ;

Him then I sought, with purpose dread
 Of treble vengeance on his head !
 He 'scaped me—but my bosom's wound
 Some faint relief from wandering found ;
 And over distant land and sea
 I bore my load of misery.

XXIII.

" 'Twas then that fate my footsteps led
 Among a daring crew and dread,
 With whom full oft my hated life
 I ventured in such desperate strife,
 That even my fierce associates saw
 My frantic deeds with doubt and awe.
 Much then I learn'd, and much can show
 Of human guilt and human woe,
 Yet ne'er have, in my wanderings, known
 A wretch, whose sorrows match'd my own !—
 It chanced, that after battle fray,
 Upon the bloody field we lay ;
 The yellow moon her lustre shed
 Upon the wounded and the dead,
 While, sense in toil and wassail drown'd,
 My ruffian comrades slept around,
 There came a voice—its silver tone
 Was soft, Matilda, as thine own—
 ' Ah, wretch !' it said, ' what makest thou here,
 While unavenged my bloody bier ?
 While unprotected lives mine heir,
 Without a father's name and care ?'

XXIV.

" I heard—obey'd—and homeward drew.
 The fiercest of our desperate crew
 I brought, at time of need to aid
 My purposed vengeance, long delay'd.
 But, humble be my thanks to Heaven,
 That better hopes and thoughts has given,
 And by our Lord's dear prayer has taught,
 Mercy by mercy must be bought !—
 Let me in misery rejoice—
 I've seen his face—I've heard his voice—
 I claim'd of him my only child—
 As he disown'd the theft, he smiled !
 That very calm and callous look,
 That fiendish sneer his visage took,
 As when he said, in scornful mood,
 ' There is a gallant in the wood !'—
 I did not slay him as he stood—
 All praise be to my Maker given !
 Long suff'rance is one path to heaven."

XXV.

Thus far the woeful tale was heard,
 When something in the thicket stirr'd.

Up Redmond sprung; the villain Guy,
 (For he it was that lurk'd so nigh,)
 Drew back—he durst not cross his steel;
 A moment's space with brave O'Neal,
 For all the treasured gold that rests
 In Mortham's iron-banded chests.
 Redmond resumed his seat;—he said,
 Some roe was rustling in the shade.
 Bertram laugh'd grimly when he saw
 His timorous comrade backward draw;
 "A trusty mate art thou, to fear
 A single arm, and aid so near!
 Yet have I seen thee mark a deer.
 Give me thy carabine—I'll show
 An art that thou wilt gladly know,
 How thou may'st safely quell a foe."

XXVI.

On hands and knees fierce Bertram drew
 The spreading birch and hazels through,
 Till he had Redmond full in view;
 The gun he levell'd—Mark like this
 Was Bertram never known to miss,
 When fair opposed to aim there sate
 An object of his mortal hate.
 That day young Redmond's death had seen,
 But twice Matilda came between
 The carabine and Redmond's breast,
 Just ere the spring his finger press'd.
 A deadly oath the ruffian swore,
 But yet his fell design forebore:
 "It ne'er," he mutter'd, "shall be said,
 That thus I scathed thee, haughty maid!"
 Then moved to seek more open aim,
 When to his side Guy Denzil came:
 "Bertram, forbear!—we are undone
 For ever, if thou fire the gun.
 By all the fiends, an armed force
 Descends the dell, of foot and horse!
 We perish if they hear a shot—
 Madman! we have a safer plot—
 Nay, friend, be ruled, and bear thee back!
 Behold, down yonder hollow track,
 The warlike leader of the band
 Comes, with his broadsword in his hand
 Bertram look'd up; he saw, he knew
 That Denzil's fears had counsell'd true,
 Then cursed his fortune and withdrew,
 Threaded the woodlands undescried,
 And gain'd the cave on Greta side.

XXVII

They whom dark Bertram, in his wrath,
 Doom'd to captivity or death,

Their thoughts to one sad subject lent,
Saw not nor heard the ambushment.
Heedless and unconcern'd they sate,
While on the very verge of fate ;
Heedless and unconcern'd remain'd,
When Heaven the murderer's arm restrain'd ;
As ships drift darkling down the tide,
Nor see the shelves o'er which they glide.
Uninterrupted thus they heard
What Mortham's closing tale declared.
He spoke of wealth as of a load,
By Fortune on a wretch bestow'd,
In bitter mockery of hate,
His cureless woes to aggravate ;
But yet he pray'd Matilda's care
Might save that treasure for his heir—
His Edith's son—for still he raved
As confident his life was saved ;
In frequent vision, he averr'd,
He saw his face, his voice he heard ;
Then argued calm—had murder been,
The blood, the corpses, had been seen ;
Some had pretended, too, to mark
On Windermere a stranger bark,
Whose crew, with jealous care, yet mild,
Guarded a female and a child.
While these faint proofs he told and press'd.
Hope seem'd to kindle in his breast ;
Though inconsistent, vague, and vain,
It warp'd his judgment and his brain.

XXVIII.

These solemn words his story close :—
“ Heaven witness for me, that I chose
My part in this sad civil fight,
Moved by no cause but England's right.
My country's groans have bid me draw
My sword for gospel and for law ;—
These righted, I fling arms aside,
And seek my son through Europe wide.
My wealth, on which a kinsman nigh
Already casts a grasping eye,
With thee may unsuspected lie.
When of my death Matilda hears,
Let her retain her trust three years ;
If none, from me, the treasure claim,
Perish'd is Mortham's race and name.
Then let it leave her generous hand,
And flow in bounty o'er the land ;
Soften the wounded prisoner's lot.
Rebuild the peasant's ruin'd cot ;
So spoils, acquired by fight afar,
Shall mitigate domestic war.”

XXIX.

The generous youths, who well had known
 Of Mortham's mind the powerful tone,
 To that high mind, by sorrow swerved,
 Gave sympathy his woes deserved ;
 But Wilfrid chief, who saw reveal'd
 Why Mortham wish'd his life conceal'd,
 In secret, doubtless, to pursue
 The schemes his wilder'd fancy drew .
 Thoughtful he heard Matilda tell
 That she would share her father's cell,
 His partner of captivity,
 Where'er his prison-house should be ;
 Yet grieved to think that Rokeby-hall,
 Dismantled, and forsook by all,
 Open to rapine and to stealth,
 Had now no safeguard for the wealth
 Intrusted by her kinsman kind,
 And for such noble use design'd.
 " Was Barnard Castle then her choice,"
 Wilfrid inquired with hasty voice,
 " Since there the victor's laws ordain,
 Her father must a space remain ?"
 A flutter'd hope his accent shook,
 A flutter'd joy was in his look.
 Matilda hasten'd to reply,
 For anger flash'd in Redmond's eye ;—
 " Duty," she said, with gentle grace,
 " Kind Wilfrid, has no choice of place ;
 Else had I for my sire assign'd
 Prison less galling to his mind,
 Than that his wild-wood haunts which sees
 And hears the murmur of the Tees,
 Recalling thus, with every glance,
 What captive's sorrow can enhance ;
 But where those woes are highest, there
 Needs Rokeby most his daughter's care."

XXX.

He felt the kindly check she gave,
 And stood abash'd—then answer'd grave :—
 " I sought thy purpose, noble maid,
 Thy doubts to clear, thy schemes to aid.
 I have beneath mine own command,
 So wills my sire, a gallant band,
 And well could send some horsemen wight
 To bear the treasure forth by night,
 And so bestow it as you deem
 In these ill days may safest seem."—
 " Thanks, gentle Wilfrid, thanks," she said :
 " Oh, be it not one day delay'd !
 And, more thy sister-friend to aid,
 Be thou thyself content to hold,
 In thine own keeping, Mortham's gold

Safest with thee."—While thus she spoke,
 Arm'd soldiers on their converse broke,
 The same of whose approach afraid,
 The ruffians left their ambushade.
 Their chief to Wilfrid bended low,
 Then look'd around as for a foe.
 "What mean'st thou, friend," young Wycliffe said,
 "Why thus in arms beset the glade?"—
 "That would I gladly learn from you;
 For up my squadron as I drew,
 To exercise our martial game
 Upon the moor of Barninghame,
 A stranger told you were waylaid,
 Surrounded, and to death betray'd.
 He had a leader's voice, I ween,
 A falcon glance, a warrior's mien.
 He bade me bring you instant aid;
 I doubted not, and I obey'd."

XXXI.

Wilfrid changed colour, and, amazed,
 Turn'd short, and on the speaker gazed;
 While Redmond every thicket round
 Track'd earnest as a questing hound,
 And Denzil's carbine he found;
 Sure evidence, by which they knew
 The warning was as kind as true.
 Wisest it seem'd, with cautious speed
 To leave the dell. It was agreed,
 That Redmond, with Matilda fair,
 And fitting guard, should home repair;
 At nightfall Wilfrid should attend,
 With a strong band, his sister-friend,
 To bear with her from Rokeby's bowers
 To Barnard Castle's lofty towers,
 Secret and safe the banded chests,
 In which the wealth of Mortham rests.
 This hasty purpose fix'd, they part,
 Each with a grieved and anxious heart.

CANTO FIFTH.

I.

THE sultry summer day is done,
 The western hills have hid the sun,
 But mountain peak and village spire
 Retain reflection of his fire.
 Old Barnard's towers are purple still,
 'To those that gaze from Toller-hill:

Distant and high, the tower of Bowes
Like steel upon the anvil glows ;
And Stanmore's ridge, behind that lay,
Rich with the spoils of parting day,
In crimson and in gold array'd,
Streaks yet a while the closing shade,
Then slow resigns to darkening heaven
The tints which brighter hours had given.
Thus aged men, full loath and slow,
The vanities of life forego,
And count their youthful follies o'er,
Till Memory lends her light no more.

II.

The eve, that slow on upland fades,
Has darker closed on Rokeby's glades,
Where, sunk within their banks profound,
Her guardian streams to meeting wound.
The stately oaks, whose sombre frown
Of noontide made a twilight brown,
Impervious now to fainter light,
Of twilight make an early night.
Hoarse into middle air arose
The vespers of the roosting crows,
And with congenial murmurs seem
To wake the Genii of the stream ;
For louder clamour'd Greta's tide,
And Tees in deeper voice replied,
And fitful waked the evening wind,
Fitful in sighs its breath resign'd.
Wilfrid, whose fancy-nurtured soul
Felt in the scene a soft control,
With lighter footstep press'd the ground,
And often paused to look around ;
And, though his path was to his love,
Could not but linger in the grove,
To drink the thrilling interest dear,
Of awful pleasure check'd by fear.
Such inconsistent moods have we,
Even when our passions strike the key.

III.

Now, through the wood's dark mazes past,
The opening lawn he reach'd at last,
Where, silver'd by the moonlight ray,
The ancient Hall before him lay.
Those martial terrors long were fled,
That frown'd of old around its head :
The battlements, the turrets grey,
Seem'd half abandon'd to decay ;
On barbican and keep of stone
Stern Time the foeman's work had done
Where banners the invader braved,
The harebell now and wallflower waved,

In the rude guard-room, where of yore
 Their weary hours the warders wore,
 Now, while the cheerful fagots blaze,
 On the paved floor the spindle plays ;
 The flanking guns dismantled lie,
 The moat is ruinous and dry,
 The grim portcullis gone—and all
 The fortress turn'd to peaceful Hall.

IV.

But yet precautions, lately ta'en,
 Show'd danger's day revived again ;
 The court-yard wall show'd marks of care,
 The fallen defences to repair,
 Lending such strength as might withstand
 The insult of marauding band.
 The beams once more were taught to bear
 The trembling drawbridge into air,
 And not, till question'd o'er and o'er,
 For Wilfrid oped the jealous door,
 And when he enter'd, bolt and bar
 Resumed their place with sullen jar ;
 Then, as he cross'd the vaulted porch,
 The old grey porter raised his torch,
 And view'd him o'er, from foot to head,
 Ere to the hall his steps he led.
 That huge old hall, of knightly state,
 Dismantled seem'd and desolate.
 The moon through transom-shafts of stone,
 Which cross'd the latticed oriels, shone,
 And by the mournful light she gave,
 The Gothic vault seem'd funeral cave.
 Pennon and banner waved no more
 O'er beams of stag and tusks of boar,
 Nor glimmering arms were marshall'd seen,
 To glance those silvan spoils between.
 Those arms, those ensigns, borne away,
 Accomplish'd Rokeby's brave array,
 But all were lost on Marston's day !
 Yet here and there the moonbeams fall
 Where armour yet adorns the wall,
 Cumbrons of size, uncouth to sight,
 And useless in the modern fight !
 Like veteran relic of the wars,
 Known only by neglected scars.

V.

Matilda soon to greet him came,
 And bade them light the evening flame
 Said, all for parting was prepared,
 And tarried but for Wilfrid's guard
 But then, reluctant to unfold
 His father's avarice of gold,
 He hinted, that lest jealous eye
 Should on their precious burden pry,

He judged it best the castle gate
 To enter when the night wore late;
 And therefore he had left command
 With those he trusted of his band,
 That they should be at Rokeby met,
 What time the midnight-watch was set.
 Now Redmond came, whose anxious car
 Till then was busied to prepare
 All needful, meetly to arrange
 The mansion for its mournful change.
 With Wilfrid's care and kindness please
 His cold unready hand he seized,
 And press'd it, till his kindly strain
 The gentle youth return'd again.
 Seem'd as between them this was said,—
 "A while let jealousy be dead;
 And let our contest be, whose care
 Shall best assist this helpless fair."

VI.

There was no speech the truce to bind,
 It was a compact of the mind,—
 A generous thought, at once impress'd
 On either rival's generous breast.
 Matilda well the secret took,
 From sudden change of mien and look;
 And—for not small had been her fear
 Of jealous ire and danger near—
 Felt, even in her dejected state,
 A joy beyond the reach of fate.
 They closed beside the chimney's blaze,
 And talk'd, and hoped for happier days,
 And lent their spirits' rising glow
 A while to gild impending woe;—
 High privilege of youthful time,
 Worth all the pleasures of our prime!
 The bickering fagot sparkled bright,
 And gave the scene of love to sight,
 Bade Wilfrid's cheek more lively glow,
 Play'd on Matilda's neck of snow,
 Her nut-brown curls and forehead high,
 And laugh'd in Redmond's azure eye.
 Two lovers by the maiden sate,
 Without a glance of jealous hate;
 The maid her lovers sat between,
 With open brow and equal mien:
 It is a sight but rarely spied,—
 Thanks to man's wrath and woman's pride.

VII.

While thus in peaceful guise they sate,
 A knock alarm'd the outer gate,
 And ere the tardy porter stirr'd,
 The tinkling of a harp was heard.

A manly voice of mellow swell,
Bore burden to the music well :—

Song.

“ Summer eve is gone and past,
Summer dew is falling fast ;
I have wander'd all the day,
Do not bid me farther stray !
Gentle hearts, of gentle kin,
Take the wandering harper in !”

But the stern porter answer gave,
With “ Get thee hence, thou strolling knave !
The king wants soldiers ; war, I trow,
Were meeter trade for such as thou.”
At this unkind reproof, again
Answer'd the ready Minstrel's strain :—

Song resumed.

“ Bid not me, in battle-field,
Buckler lift, or broadsword wield !
All my strength and all my art
Is to touch the gentle heart,
With the wizard notes that ring
From the peaceful minstrel string.”—

The porter, all unmoved, replied,—
“ Depart in peace, with Heaven to guide ;
If longer by the gate thou dwell,
Trust me, thou shalt not part so well.”

VIII.

With somewhat of appealing look,
The harper's part young Wilfrid took :
“ These notes so wild and ready thrill,
They show no vulgar minstrel's skill ;
Hard were his task to seek a home
More distant, since the night is come ;
And for his faith I dare engage—
Your Harpool's blood is sour'd by age ;
His gate, once readily display'd,
To greet the friend, the poor to aid,
Now even to me, though known of old,
Did but reluctantly unfold.”—
“ O blame not, as poor Harpool's crime,
An evil of this evil time.
He deems dependent on his care
The safety of his patron's heir,
Nor judges meet to ope the tower
To guest unknown at parting hour,
Urging his duty to excess
Of rough and stubborn faithfulness.
For this poor harper, I would fain
He may relax :—Hark to his strain !”—

II.

Song resumed.

“ I have song of war for knight,
Lay of love for lady bright,
Fairy tale to lull the heir,
Goblin grim the maids to scare.
Dark the night, and long till day,
Do not bid me further stray !

“ Rokeby's lords of martial fame,
I can count them name by name ;
Legends of their line there be,
Known to few, but known to me ;
If you honour Rokeby's kin,
Take the wandering harper in !

“ Rokeby's lords had fair regard
For the harp, and for the bard ;
Baron's race throve never well,
Where the curse of minstrel fell.
If you love that noble kin,
Take the weary harper in ! ” —

“ Hark ! Harpool parleys,—there is hope,”
Said Redmond, “ that the gate will ope.” —
—“ For all thy brag and boast, I trow,
Nought know'st thou of the Felon Sow,”
Quoth Harpool, “ nor how Greta-side
She roam'd, and Rokeby forest wide.
Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the beast
To Richmond's friars to make a feast.
Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
That well could strike with sword amain,
And of the valiant son of Spain,
Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir Ralph ;
There were a jest to make us laugh !
If thou canst tell it, in yon shed
Thou'st won thy supper and thy bed.”

X.

Matilda smiled : “ Cold hope,” said she,
“ From Harpool's love of minstrelsy !
But, for this harper, may we dare,
Redmond, to mend his couch and fare ? ”
“ Oh, ask me not !—At minstrel-string
My heart from infancy would spring ;
Nor can I hear its simplest strain,
But it brings Erin's dream again,
When placed by Owen Lysagh's knee,
(The Fílea of O'Neale was he,
A blind and bearded man, whose eld,
Was sacred as a prophet's held,)
I've seen a ring of rugged kerne,
With aspects shaggy, wild, and stern,

Enchanted by the master's lay,
 Linger around the livelong day,
 Shift from wild rage to wilder glee,
 To love, to grief, to ecstasy,
 And feel each varied change of soul
 Obedient to the bard's control.—
 Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor
 Slieve-Donard's oak shall light no more;
 Nor Owen's harp, beside the blaze,
 Tell maiden's love or hero's praise!
 The mantling brambles hide thy hearth,
 Centre of hospitable mirth;
 All undistinguish'd in the glade,
 My sires' glad home is prostrate laid,
 Their vassals wander wide and far,
 Serve foreign lords in distant war,
 And now the stranger's sons enjoy
 The lovely woods of Clandeboy!"
 He spoke, and proudly turn'd aside,
 The starting tear to dry and hide.

XL

Matilda's dark and soften'd eye
 Was glistening ere O'Neale's was dry.
 Her hand upon his arm she laid,—
 "It is the will of Heaven," she said.
 "And think'st thou, Redmond, I can part
 From this loved home with lightsome heart,
 Leaving to wild neglect whate'er,
 Even from my infancy was dear?
 For in this calm domestic bound
 Were all Matilda's pleasures found.
 That hearth, my sire was wont to grace,
 Full soon may be a stranger's place;
 This hall, in which a child I play'd,
 Like thine, dear Redmond, lowly laid,
 The bramble and the thorn may braid;
 Or, pass'd for aye from me and mine,
 It ne'er may shelter Rokeby's line.
 Yet is this consolation given,
 My Redmond,—'tis the will of Heaven."
 Her word, her action, and her phrase,
 Were kindly as in early days;
 For cold reserve had lost its power,
 In sorrow's sympathetic hour.
 Young Redmond dared not trust his voice;
 But rather had it been his choice
 To share that melancholy hour,
 Than, arm'd with all a chieftain's power,
 In full possession to enjoy
 Slieve-Donard wide, and Clandeboy.

XII.

The blood left Wilfrid's ashen cheek;
 Matilda sees, and hastes to speak.—

" Happy in friendship's ready aid,
 Let all my murmurs here be staid !
 And Rokeby's maiden will not part
 From Rokeby's hall with moody heart.
 This night at least, for Rokeby's fame.
 The hospitable hearth shall flame,
 And, ere its native heir retire,
 Find for the wanderer rest and fire,
 While this poor harper, by the blaze,
 Recounts the tale of other days.
 Bid Harpool ope the door with speed,
 Admit him, and relieve each need.—
 Meantime, kind Wycliffe, wilt thou try
 Thy minstrel skill ?—Nay, no reply—
 And look not sad !—I guess thy thought,
 Thy verse with laurels would be bought ;
 And poor Matilda, landless now,
 Has not a garland for thy brow.
 True, I must leave sweet Rokeby's glades,
 Nor wander more in Greta shades ;
 But sure, no rigid jailer, thou
 Wilt a short prison-walk allow,
 Where summer flowers grow wild at will,
 On Marwood-chase and Toller Hill ;
 Then holly green and lily gay
 Shall twine in guerdon of thy lay."
 The mournful youth, a space aside,
 To tune Matilda's harp applied ;
 And then a low sad descant rung,
 As prelude to the lay he sung.

XIII.

The Cypress Wreath.

O Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree !
 Too lively glow the lilies light,
 The varnish'd holly's all too bright,
 The May-flower and the eglantine
 May shade a brow less sad than mine ;
 But, Lady, weave no wreath for me,
 Or weave it of the cypress-tree !

Let dimpled Mirth his temples twine
 With tendrils of the laughing vine ;
 The manly oak, the pensive yew,
 To patriot and to sage be due ;
 The myrtle bough bids lovers live,
 But that Matilda will not give ;
 Then, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
 Or twine it of the cypress-tree !

Let merry England proudly rear
 Her blended roses, bought so dear ;
 Let Albin bind her bonnet blue
 With heath and harebell dipp'd in dew .

On favour'd Erin's crest be seen
The flower she loves of emerald green—
But, Lady, twine no wreath for me,
Or twine it of the cypress-tree.

Strike the wild harp, while maids prepare
The ivy meet for minstrel's hair ;
And, while his crown of laurel leaves,
With bloody hand the victor weaves,
Let the loud trump his triumph tell ;
But when you hear the passing-bell,
Then, Lady, twine a wreath for me,
And twine it of the cypress-tree.

Yes ! twine for me the cypress bough ;
But, O Matilda, twine not now !
Stay till a few brief months are past,
And I have look'd and loved my last !
When villagers my shroud bestrew
With panzies, rosemary, and rue,—
Then, Lady, weave a wreath for me,
And weave it of the cypress-tree.

XIV.

O'Neale observed the starting tear,
And spoke with kind and blithesome cheer—
“ No, noble Wilfrid ! ere the day
When mourns the land thy silent lay,
Shall many a wreath be freely wove
By hand of friendship and of love.
I would not wish that rigid Fate
Had doom'd thee to a captive's state,
Whose hands are bound by honour's law,
Who wears a sword he must not draw :
But were it so, in minstrel pride
The land together would we ride,
On prancing steeds, like harpers old,
Bound for the halls of barons bold ;
Each lover of the lyre we'd seek,
From Michael's Mount to Skiddaw's Peak,
Survey wild Albin's mountain strand,
And roam green Erin's lovely land ;
While thou the gentler souls should move,
With lay of pity and of love,
And I, thy mate, in rougher strain,
Would sing of war and warriors slain :
Old England's bards were vanquish'd then,
And Scotland's vaunted Hawthornden,
And, silenced on Iernian shore,
M' Curtin's harp should charm no more ! ”
In lively mood he spoke, to wile
From Wilfrid's woe-worn cheek a smile.

XV.

“ But,” said Matilda, “ ere thy name,
Good Redmond, gain its destined fame

Say, wilt thou kindly deign to call
 Thy brother-minstrel to the hall?
 Bid all the household, too, attend,
 Each in his rank a humble friend,
 I know their faithful hearts will grieve,
 When their poor Mistress takes her leave:
 So let the horn and beaker flow
 To mitigate their parting woe."
 The harper came;—in youth's first prime
 Himself; in mode of olden time
 His garb was fashion'd, to express
 The ancient English minstrel's dress,
 A seemly gown of Kendal green,
 With gorget closed of silver sheen;
 His harp in silken scarf was slung,
 And by his side an anlace hung.
 It seem'd some masquer's quaint array,
 For revel or for holiday.

XVI.

He made obeisance with a tree
 Yet studied air of courtesy.
 Each look and accent, framed to please.
 Seem'd to affect a playful ease;
 His face was of that doubtful kind,
 That wins the eye, but not the mind;
 Yet harsh it seem'd to deem amiss
 Of brow so young and smooth as this.
 His was the subtle look and sly,
 That, spying all, seems nought to spy;
 Round all the group his glances stole,
 Unmark'd themselves, to mark the whole.
 Yet sunk beneath Matilda's look,
 Nor could the eye of Redmond brook.
 To the suspicious, or the old,
 Subtile and dangerous and bold
 Had seem'd this self-invited guest;
 But young our lovers,—and the rest,
 Wrapt in their sorrow and their fear
 At parting of their Mistress dear,
 Tear-blinded, to the Castle-hall,
 Came as to hear her funeral pall.

XVII.

All that expression base was gone,
 When waked the guest his minstrel tone;
 It fled at inspiration's call,
 As erst the demon fled from Saul.
 More noble glance he cast around,
 More free-drawn breath inspired the sound
 His pulse beat bolder and more high,
 In all the pride of minstrelsy!
 Alas! too soon that pride was o'er,
 Sunk with the lay that bade it soar!

His soul resumed, with habit's chain,
 Its vices wild, and follies vain,
 And gave the talent, with him born,
 To be a common curse and scorn.
 Such was the youth whom Rokeby's Maid,
 With condescending kindness, pray'd
 Here to renew the strains she loved,
 At distance heard, and well approved.

XVIII.

Song.

THE HARP.

I was a wild and wayward boy,
 My childhood scorn'd each childish toy;
 Retired from all, reserved and coy,
 To musing prone,
 I woo'd my solitary joy,
 My Harp alone.

My youth, with bold Ambition's mood,
 Despised the humble stream and wood,
 Where my poor father's cottage stood,
 To fame unknown;—
 What should my soaring views make good?
 My Harp alone!

Love came with all his frantic fire,
 And wild romance of vain desire:
 The baron's daughter heard my lyre,
 And praised the tone;—
 What could presumptuous hope inspire?
 My Harp alone!

At manhood's touch the bubble burst,
 And manhood's pride the vision curst,
 And all that had my folly nursed
 Love's sway to own;
 Yet spared the spell that lull'd me first,
 My Harp alone!

Woe came with war, and want with woe:
 And it was mine to undergo
 Each outrage of the rebel foe:—
 Can aught atone
 My fields laid waste, my cot laid low?
 My Harp alone!

Ambition's dream I've seen depart,
 Have rued of penury the smart,
 Have felt of love the venom'd dart,
 When hope was flown:
 Yet rests one solace to my heart,—
 My Harp alone!

Then over mountain, moor, and hill,
 My faithful Harp, I'll bear thee still;

And when this life of want and ill
 Is well-nigh gone,
 Thy strings mine elegy shall thrill,
 My Harp alone!

XIX.

“A pleasing lay!” Matilda said;
 But Harpool shook his old grey head,
 And took his baton and his torch,
 To seek his guard-room in the porch.
 Edmund observed—with sudden change,
 Among the strings his fingers range,
 Until they waked a bolder glee
 Of military melody;
 Then paused amid the martial sound,
 And look’d with well-feign’d fear around;—
 “None to this noble house belong,”
 He said, “that would a Minstrel wrong,
 Whose fate has been, through good and ill,
 To love his Royal Master still;
 And, with your honour’d leave, would fain
 Rejoice you with a loyal strain.”
 Then, as assured by sign and look,
 The warlike tone again he took;
 And Harpool stopp’d and turn’d to hear
 A ditty of the Cavalier.

XX.

Song.

THE CAVALIER.

While the dawn on the mountain was misty and grey,
 My true love has mounted his steed, and away
 Over hill, over valley, o’er dale, and o’er down,—
 Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

He has doff’d the silk doublet the breast-plate to bear,
 He has placed the steel-cap o’er his long flowing hair,
 From his belt to his stirrup his broadsword hangs down,—
 Heaven shield the brave Gallant that fights for the Crown!

For the rights of fair England that broadsword he draws:
 Her King is his leader, her Church is his cause;
 His watchword is honour, his pay is renown,—
 God strike with the Gallant that strikes for the Crown!

They may boast of their Fairfax, their Waller, and all
 The roundheaded rebels of Westminster Hall;
 But tell these bold traitors of London’s proud town,
 That the spears of the North have encircled the Crown.

There’s Derby and Cavendish, dread of their foes;
 There’s Erin’s high Ormond, and Scotland’s Montrose!
 Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and Brown
 With the Barons of England, that fight for the Crown?

Now joy to the crest of the brave Cavalier !
 Be his banner unconquer'd, resistless his spear,
 Till in peace and in triumph his toils he may drown,
 In a pledge to fair England, her Church, and her Crown

XXI.

“ Alas !” Matilda said, “ that strain,
 Good harper, now is heard in vain !
 The time has been, at such a sound,
 When Rokeby's vassals gather'd round,
 An hundred manly hearts would bound ;
 But now, the stirring verse we hear
 Like trump in dying soldier's ear !
 Listless and sad the notes we own,
 The power to answer them is flown.
 Yet not without his meet applause
 Be he that sings the rightful cause,
 Even when the crisis of its fate
 To human eye seems desperate.
 While Rokeby's Heir such power retains,
 Let this slight guerdon pay thy pains :—
 And, lend thy harp ; I fain would try
 If my poor skill can aught supply,
 Ere yet I leave my fathers' hall,
 To mourn the cause in which we fall.”

XXII.

The harper, with a downcast look,
 And trembling hand, her bounty took.—
 As yet, the conscious pride of art
 Had steel'd him in his treacherous part ;
 A powerful spring, of force unguess'd,
 That hath each gentler mood suppress'd,
 And reign'd in many a human breast—
 From his that plans the red campaign,
 To his that wastes the woodland reign.
 The failing wing, the blood-shot eye,—
 The sportsman marks with apathy,
 Each feeling of his victim's ill
 Drown'd in his own successful skill.
 The veteran, too, who now no more
 Aspires to head the battle's roar,
 Loves still the triumph of his art,
 And traces on the pencill'd chart
 Some stern invader's destined way,
 Through blood and ruin, to his prey ;
 Patriots to death, and towns to flame,
 He dooms, to raise another's name,
 And shares the guilt, though not the fame.
 What pays him for his span of time
 Spent in premeditating crime ?
 What against pity arms his heart ?
 It is the conscious pride of art.

XXIII.

But principles in Edmund's mind
 Were baseless, vague, and undefined.
 His soul, like bark with rudder lost,
 On Passion's changeful tide was tost
 Nor Vice nor Virtue had the power
 Beyond the impression of the hour ;
 And, oh ! when Passion rules, how rare
 The hours that fall to Virtue's share !
 Yet now she roused her—for the pride,
 That lack of sterner guilt supplied,
 Could scarce support him when arose
 The lay that mourn'd Matilda's woes.

Song.

THE FAREWELL.

The sound of Rokeby's woods I hear,
 They mingle with the song :
 Dark Greta's voice is in mine ear,
 I must not hear them long.
 From every loved and native haunt
 The native Heir must stray,
 And, like a ghost whom sunbeams daunt,
 Must part before the day.

Soon from the halls my fathers rear'd,
 Their scutcheons may descend,
 A line so long beloved and fear'd
 May soon obscurely end.
 No longer here Matilda's tone
 Shall bid those echoes swell ;
 Yet shall they hear her proudly own
 The cause in which we fell.

The Lady paused, and then again
 Resumed the lay in loftier strain.—

XXIV.

Let our halls and towers decay,
 Be our name and line forgot,
 Lands and manors pass away,—
 We but share our Monarch's lot.
 If no more our annals show
 Battles won and banners taken,
 Still in death, defeat, and woe,
 Ours be loyalty unshaken !

Constant still in danger's hour,
 Princes own'd our fathers' aid ;
 Lands and honours, wealth and power
 Well their loyalty repaid.
 Perish wealth, and power, and pride !
 Mortal boons by mortals given ;
 But let Constancy abide,—
 Constancy's the gift of Heaven.

XXV.

While thus Matilda's lay was heard,
 A thousand thoughts in Edmund stirr'd
 In peasant life he might have known
 As fair a face, as sweet a tone ;
 But village notes could ne'er supply
 That rich and varied melody ;
 And ne'er in cottage maid was seen
 The easy dignity of mien,
 Claiming respect, yet waving state,
 That marks the daughters of the great.
 Yet not, perchance, had these alone
 His scheme of purposed guilt o'erthrown ;
 But while her energy of mind
 Superior rose to griefs combined,
 Lending its kindling to her eye,
 Giving her form new majesty,—
 To Edmund's thought Matilda seem'd
 The very object he had dream'd ;
 When, long ere guilt his soul had known,
 In Winston bowers he mused alone,
 Taxing his fancy to combine
 The face, the air, the voice divine,
 Of princess fair, by cruel fate
 Reft of her honours, power, and state,
 Till to her rightful realm restored
 By destined hero's conquering sword.

XXVI.

“Such was my vision !” Edmund thought ;
 “And have I, then, the ruin wrought
 Of such a maid, that fancy ne'er
 In fairest vision form'd her peer ?
 Was it my hand that could uncloset
 The postern to her ruthless foes ?
 Foes, lost to honour, law, and faith—
 Their kindest mercy sudden death !
 Have I done this ? I ! who have sworn,
 That if the globe such angel bore,
 I would have traced its circle broad,
 To kiss the ground on which she trod !—
 And now—oh ! would that earth would give,
 And close upon me while alive !—
 Is there no hope ?—is all then lost ?—
 Bertram's already on his post !
 Even now, beside the Hall's arch'd door,
 I saw his shadow cross the floor !
 He was to wait my signal strain—
 A little respite thus we gain :
 By what I heard the menials say,
 Young Wycliffe's troop are on their way—
 Alarm precipitates the crime !
 My harp must wear away the time.”—

And then, in accents faint and low,
He falter'd forth a tale of woe.—

XXVII.

Ballad.

“ And whither would you lead me, then ?
Quoth the Friar of orders grey ;
And the Ruffians twain replied again,
“ By a dying woman to pray.”—

“ I see,” he said, “ a lovely sight,
A sight bodes little harm,
A lady as a lily bright,
With an infant on her arm.”—

“ Then do thine office, Friar grey,
And see thou shrive her free !
Else shall the sprite, that parts to-night,
Fling all its guilt on thee.

“ Let mass be said, and trentals read,
When thou’rt to convent gone,
And bid the bell of Saint Benedict
Toll out its deepest tone.”

The shrift is done, the Friar is gone,
Blindfolded as he came—
Next morning, all in Littlecot Hall
Were weeping for their dame.

Wild Darrel is an alter'd man,
The village crones can tell ;
He looks pale as clay, and strives to pray
If he hears the convent bell.

If prince or peer cross Darrell’s way,
He’ll beard him in his pride—
If he meet a Friar of orders grey,
He droops and turns aside.

XXVIII.

‘ Harper ! methinks thy magic lays,’
Matilda said, ‘ can goblins raise !
Well-nigh my fancy can discern,
Near the dark porch, a visage stern ;
E’en now, in yonder shadowy nook,
I see it !—Redmond, Wilfrid, look !—
A human form distinct and clear—
God, for thy mercy !—It draws near !’
She saw too true. Stride after stride,
The centre of that chamber wide
Fierce Bertram gain’d ; then made a stand,
And, proudly waving with his hand,
Thunder’d—“ Be still, upon your lives !—
He bleeds who speaks, he dies who strives.”
Behind their chief, the robber crew
Forth from the darken’d portal drew

In silence—save that echo dread
 Return'd their heavy measured tread.
 The lamp's uncertain lustre gave
 Their arms to gleam, their plumes to wave ;
 File after file in order pass,
 Like forms on Banquo's mystic glass.
 Then, halting at their leader's sign,
 At once they form'd and curv'd their line,
 Hemming within its crescent drear
 Their victims, like a herd of deer.
 Another sign, and to the aim
 Levell'd at once their muskets came,
 As waiting but their chieftain's word,
 To make their fatal volley heard.

XXIX.

Back in a heap the menials drew ;
 Yet, even in mortal terror, true,
 Their pale and startled group oppose
 Between Matilda and the foes.
 "Oh, haste thee, Wilfrid !" Redmond cried ;
 "Undo that wicket by thy side !
 Bear hence Matilda—gain the wood—
 The pass may be a while made good—
 Thy band, ere this, must sure be nigh—
 Oh, speak not—dally not—but fly !"
 While yet the crowd their motions hide,
 Through the low wicket door they glide.
 Through vaulted passages they wind,
 In Gothic intricacy twined ;
 Wilfrid half led, and half he bore,
 Matilda to the postern door,
 And safe beneath the forest tree,
 The Lady stands at liberty.
 The moonbeams, the fresh gale's caress,
 Renew'd suspended consciousness ;—
 "Where's Redmond ?" eagerly she cries :
 "Thou answer'st not—he dies ! he dies !
 And thou hast left him, all bereft
 Of mortal aid—with murderers left !
 I know it well—he would not yield
 His sword to man—his doom is seal'd !
 For my scorn'd life, which thou hast bought
 At price of his, I thank thee not."

XXX.

The unjust reproach, the angry look,
 The heart of Wilfrid could not brook.
 "Lady," he said, "my band so near,
 In safety thou may'st rest thee here.
 For Redmond's death thou shalt not mourn.
 If mine can buy his safe return."
 He turn'd away—his heart throbb'd high.
 The tear was bursting from his eye ;

The sense of her injustice press'd
 Upon the Maid's distracted breast,—
 "Stay, Wilfrid, stay! all aid is vain!"
 He heard, but turn'd him not again;
 He reaches now the postern-door,
 Now enters—and is seen no more.

XXXI.

With all the agony that e'er
 Was gender'd 'twixt suspense and fear,
 She watch'd the line of windows tall,
 Whose Gothic lattice lights the Hall,
 Distinguish'd by the paly red
 The lamps in dim reflection shed,
 While all beside, in wan moonlight
 Each grated casement glimmer'd white.
 No sight of harm, no sound of ill,
 It is a deep and midnight still.
 Who look'd upon the scene, had guess'd
 All in the Castle were at rest—
 When sudden on the windows shone
 A lightning flash, just seen and gone!
 A shot is heard—again the flame
 Flash'd thick and fast—a volley came!
 Then echo'd wildly, from within,
 Of shout and scream the mingled din,
 And weapon-clash, and maddening cry,
 Of those who kill, and those who die!—
 As fill'd the Hall with sulphurous smoke,
 More red, more dark, the death-flash broke,
 And forms were on the lattice cast,
 That struck, or struggled, as they past.

XXXII.

What sounds upon the midnight wind
 Approach so rapidly behind?
 It is—it is—the tramp of steeds,—
 Matilda hears the sound—she speeds,—
 Seizes upon the leader's rein—
 "Oh, haste to aid, ere aid be vain!
 Fly to the postern—gain the Hall!"
 From saddle spring the troopers all;
 Their gallant steeds, at liberty,
 Run wild along the moonlight lea.
 But, ere they burst upon the scene,
 Full stubborn had the conflict been.
 When Bertram mark'd Matilda's flight.
 It gave the signal for the fight;
 And Rokeby's veterans, scar'd with scars
 Of Scotland's and of Erin's wars,
 Their momentary panic o'er,
 Stood to the arms which then they bore;
 (For they were weapon'd, and prepared
 Their Mistress on her way to guard.)

Then cheer'd them to the fight O'Neale,
 Then peal'd the shot, and clash'd the steel;
 The war-smoke soon with sable breath
 Darken'd the scene of blood and death,
 While on the few defenders close
 The Bandits, with redoubled blows,
 And, twice driven back, yet fierce and fell
 Renew the charge with frantic yell.

XXXIII.

Wilfrid has fallen—but o'er him stood
 Young Redmond, soil'd with smoke and blood.
 Cheering his mates with heart and hand
 Still to make good their desperate stand.—
 “Up, comrades, up! In Rokeby halls
 Ne'er be it said our courage falls.
 What! faint ye for their savage cry,
 Or do the smoke-wreaths daunt your eye?
 These rafters have return'd a shout
 As loud at Rokeby's wassail rout,
 As thick a smoke these hearths have given
 At Hallow-tide or Christmas-even.
 Stand to it yet! renew the fight,
 For Rokeby's and Matilda's right!
 These slaves! they dare not, hand to hand,
 Bide buffet from a true man's brand.”
 Impetuous, active, fierce, and young,
 Upon the advancing foes he sprung.
 Woe to the wretch at whom is bent
 His brandish'd falchion's sheer descent!
 Backward they scatter'd as he came,
 Like wolves before the levin flame,
 When, 'mid their howling conclave driven,
 Hath glanced the thunderbolt of heaven.
 Bertram rush'd on—But Harpool clasp'd
 His knees, although in death he gasp'd,
 His falling corpse before him flung,
 And round the trammell'd ruffian clung.
 Just then the soldiers fill'd the dome,
 And, shouting, charged the felons home
 So fiercely, that, in panic dread,
 They broke, they yielded, fell, or fled.
 Bertram's stern voice they heed no more.
 Though heard above the battle's roar;
 While, trampling down the dying man,
 He strove, with volley'd threat and ban,
 In scorn of odds, in fate's despite,
 To rally up the desperate fight.

XXXIV.

Soon murkier clouds the Hall enfold,
 Than e'er from battle-thunders roll'd,
 So dense, the combatants scarce know
 To aim or to avoid the blow.

Smothering and blindfold grows the fight,
 But soon shall dawn a dismal light!
 Mid cries, and clashing arms, there came
 The hollow sound of rushing flame;
 New horrors on the tumult dire
 Arise—the Castle is on fire!
 Doubtful, if chance had cast the brand,
 Or frantic Bertram's desperate hand.
 Matilda saw—for frequent broke
 From the dim casements gusts of smoke.
 Yon tower, which late so clear defined,
 On the fair hemisphere reclined,
 That, pencill'd on its azure pure,
 The eye could count each embazure,
 Now, swathed within the sweeping cloud.
 Seems giant-spectre in his shroud;
 Till, from each loop-hole flashing light,
 A spout of fire shines ruddy bright,
 And, gathering to united glare,
 Streams high into the midnight air;
 A dismal beacon, far and wide
 That waken'd Greta's slumbering side.
 Soon all beneath, through gallery long,
 And pendant arch, the fire flash'd strong.
 Snatching whatever could maintain,
 Raise, or extend, its furious reign;
 Startling, with closer cause of dread,
 The females who the conflict fled,
 And now rush'd forth upon the plain,
 Filling the air with clamours vain.

XXXV.

But ceased not yet, the Hall within,
 The shriek, the shout, the carnage-din,
 Till bursting lattices give proof
 The flames have caught the rafter'd roof.
 What! wait they till its beams amain
 Crash on the slayers and the slain?
 The alarm is caught—the drawbridge falls
 The warriors hurry from the walls,
 But, by the conflagration's light,
 Upon the lawn renew the fight.
 Each straggl'ing felon down was hew'd,
 Not one could gain the sheltering wood;
 But forth the affrighted harper sprung,
 And to Matilda's robe he clung.
 Her shriek, entreaty, and command,
 Stopp'd the pursuer's lifted hand.
 Denzil and he alive were ta'en;
 The rest, save Bertram, all are slain.

XXXVI.

And where is Bertram?—Soaring high.
 The general flame ascends the sky;

In gather'd group the soldiers gaze
 Upon the broad and roaring blaze,
 When, like infernal demon, sent
 Red from his penal element,
 To plague and to pollute the air,—
 His face all gore, on fire his hair,
 Forth from the central mass of smoke
 The giant form of Bertram broke !
 His brandish'd sword on high he rears,
 Then plunged among opposing spears ;
 Round his left arm his mantle truss'd,
 Received and foil'd three lances' thrust ;
 Nor these his headlong course withstood,
 Like reeds he snapp'd the tough ash-wood.
 In vain his foes around him clung ;
 With matchless force aside he flung
 Their boldest,—as the bull, at bay,
 Tosses the ban-dogs from his way,
 Through forty foes his path he made,
 And safely gain'd the forest glade.

XXXVII.

Scarce was this final conflict o'er,
 When from the postern Redmond bore
 Wilfrid, who, as of life bereft,
 Had in the fatal Hall been left,
 Deserted there by all his train ;
 But Redmond saw, and turn'd again.—
 Beneath an oak he laid him down,
 That in the blaze gleam'd ruddy brown,
 And then his mantle's clasp undid ;
 Matilda held his drooping head,
 Till, given to breathe the freer air,
 Returning life repaid their care.
 He gazed on them with heavy sigh,—
 " I could have wish'd even thus to die !"
 No more he said—for now with speed
 Each trooper had regain'd his steed ;
 The ready palfreys stood array'd,
 For Redmond and for Rokeby's Maid ;
 Two Wilfrid on his horse sustain,
 One leads his charger by the rein.
 But oft Matilda look'd behind,
 As up the Vale of Tees they wind,
 Where far the mansion of her sires
 Beacon'd the dale with midnight fires.
 In gloomy arch above them spread,
 The clouded heaven lower'd bloody red ;
 Beneath, in sombre light, the flood
 Appear'd to roll in waves of blood.
 Then, one by one, was heard to fall
 The tower, the donjon-keep, the hall.
 Each rushing down with thunder sound,
 A space the conflagration drown'd ;

Till, gathering strength, again it rose,
Announced its triumph in its close,
Shook wide its light the landscape o'er,
Then sunk—and Rokeby was no more!

CANTO SIXTH.

THE summer sun, whose early power
Was wont to gild Matilda's bower,
And rouse her with his matin ray
Her duteous orisons to pay,—
That morning sun has three times seen
The flowers unfold on Rokeby green,
But sees no more the slumbers fly
From fair Matilda's hazel eye;
That morning sun has three times broke
On Rokeby's glades of elm and oak,
But, rising from their silvan screen,
Marks no grey turrets glance between.
A shapeless mass lie keep and tower,
That, hissing to the morning shower,
Can but with smouldering vapour pay
The early smile of summer day.
The peasant to his labour bound,
Pauses to view the blacken'd mound,
Striving, amid the ruin'd space,
Each well-remember'd spot to trace.
That length of frail and fire-scorch'd wall
Once screen'd the hospitable hall;
When yonder broken arch was whole,
'Twas there was dealt the weekly dole;
And where yon tottering columns nod,
The chapel sent the hymn to God.—
So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.
The towers must share the builder's doom.
Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb:
But better boon benignant Heaven
To Faith and Charity has given,
And bids the Christian hope sublime
Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.

II.

Now the third night of summer came,
Since that which witness'd Rokeby's flame.

On Brignall cliffs and Scargill brake
 The owl's homilies awake,
 The bittern scream'd from rush and flag,
 The raven slumber'd on his crag,
 Forth from his den the otter drew,—
 Grayling and trout their tyrant knew,
 As between reed and sedge he peers,
 With fierce round snout and sharpen'd ears,
 Or, prowling by the moonbeam cool,
 Watches the stream or swims the pool;—
 Perch'd on his wonted eyrie high,
 Sleep seal'd the tercelet's wearied eye,
 That all the day had watch'd so well
 The cushat dart across the dell.
 In dubious beam reflected shone
 That lofty cliff of pale grey stone,
 Beside whose base the secret cave
 To rapine late a refuge gave.
 The crag's wild crest of copse and yew
 On Greta's breast dark shadows threw;
 Shadows that met or shunn'd the sight,
 With every change of fitful light;
 As hope and fear alternate chase
 Our course through life's uncertain race.

III.

Gliding by crag and copsewood green,
 A solitary form was seen
 To trace with stealthy pace the wold,
 Like fox that seeks the midnight fold,
 And pauses oft, and cowers dismay'd,
 At every breath that stirs the shade.
 He passes now the ivy bush,—
 The owl has seen him, and is hush;
 He passes now the dodder'd oak,—
 Ye heard the startled raven croak;
 Lower and lower he descends,
 Rustle the leaves, the brushwood bends
 The otter hears him tread the shore,
 And dives, and is beheld no more;
 And by the cliff of pale grey stone
 The midnight wanderer stands alone.
 Methinks, that by the moon we trace
 A well-remember'd form and face!
 That stripling shape, that cheek so pale
 Combine to tell a rueful tale,
 Of powers misused, of passion's force,
 Of guilt, of grief, and of remorse!
 'Tis Edmund's eye, at every sound
 That flings that guilty glance around;
 'Tis Edmund's trembling haste divides
 The brushwood that the cavern hides;
 And, when its narrow porch lies bare,
 'Tis Edmund's form that enters there.

IV.

His flint and steel have sparkled bright,
 A lamp hath lent the cavern light.
 Fearful and quick his eye surveys
 Each angle of the gloomy maze.
 Since last he left that stern abode,
 It seem'd as none its floor had trode ;
 Untouch'd appear'd the various spoil,
 The purchase of his comrades' toil ;
 Masks and disguises grimed with mud,
 Arms broken and defiled with blood,
 And all the nameless tools that aid
 Night-felons in their lawless trade,
 Upon the gloomy walls were hung,
 Or lay in nooks obscurely flung.
 Still on the sordid board appear
 The relics of the noontide ocher :
 Flagons and emptied flasks were there,
 And bench o'erthrown, and shatter'd chair ;
 And all around the semblance show'd,
 As when the final revel glow'd,
 When the red sun was setting fast,
 And parting pledge Guy Denzil past.
 " To Rokeby treasure-vaults ! " they quaff'd,
 And shouted loud and wildly laugh'd,
 Pour'd maddening from the rocky door,
 And parted—to return no more !
 They found in Rokeby vaults their doom,—
 A bloody death, a burning tomb !

V.

There his own peasant dress he spies,
 Doff'd to assume that quaint disguise ;
 And, shuddering, thought upon his glee,
 When prank'd in garb of minstrelsy.
 " Oh, be the fatal art accurst, "
 He cried, " that moved my folly first ;
 Till, bribed by bandits' base applause,
 I burst through God's and Nature's laws !
 Three summer days are scantily past
 Since I have trod this cavern last,
 A thoughtless wretch, and prompt to err—
 But, oh, as yet no murderer !
 Even now I list my comrades' cheer,
 That general laugh is in mine ear,
 Which raised my pulse and steel'd my heart
 As I rehearsed my treacherous part—
 And would that all since then could seem
 The phantom of a fever's dream !
 But fatal Memory notes too well
 The horrors of the dying yell
 From my despairing mates that broke,
 When flash'd the fire and roll'd the smoke ;

When the avengers shouting came,
 And hemm'd us 'twixt the sword and flame!
 My frantic flight,—the lifted brand,—
 That angel's interposing hand!—
 If, for my life from slaughter freed,
 I yet could pay some grateful meed!
 Perchance this object of my quest
 May aid"—he turn'd, nor spoke the rest.

VI.

Due northward from the rugged hearth,
 With paces five he metes the earth,
 Then toil'd with mattock to explore
 The entrails of the cavern floor,
 Nor paused till, deep beneath the ground,
 His search a small steel casket found.
 Just as he stoop'd to loose its hasp,
 His shoulder felt a giant grasp;
 He started, and look'd up aghast,
 Then shriek'd!—'twas Bertram held him fast.
 "Fear not!" he said; but who could hear
 That deep stern voice, and cease to fear?
 "Fear not!—By heaven! he shakes as much
 As partridge in the falcon's clutch:"—
 He raised him, and unloos'd his hold,
 While from the opening casket roll'd
 A chain and reliquaire of gold.
 Bertram beheld it with surprise,
 Gazed on its fashion and device,
 Then, cheering Edmund as he could,
 Somewhat he smoothen'd his rugged mood:
 For still the youth's half-lifted eye
 Quiver'd with terror's agony,
 And sidelong glanced, as to explore,
 In meditated flight, the door.
 "Sit," Bertram said, "from danger free:
 Thou canst not, and thou shalt not, flee.
 Chance brings me hither; hill and plain
 I've sought for refuge-place in vain.
 And tell me now, thou aguish boy,
 What makest thou here? what means this toy?
 Denzil and thou, I mark'd, were ta'en;
 What lucky chance unbound your chain?
 I deem'd, long since on Baliol's tower,
 Your heads were warp'd with sun and shower.
 Tell me the whole—and, mark! nought e'er
 Chafes me like falsehood, or like fear."
 Gathering his courage to his aid,
 But trembling still, the youth obey'd.

VII.

"Denzil and I two nights pass'd o'er
 In fetters on the dungeon floor.
 A guest the third sad morrow brought;
 Our hold dark Oswald Wycliffe sought,

And eyed my comrade long askance,
 With fix'd and penetrating glance.
 'Guy Denzil art thou call'd?'—'The same.'
 'At Court who served wild Buckingham;
 Thence banish'd, won a keeper's place,
 So Villiers will'd, in Marwood-chase;
 That lost—I need not tell thee why—
 Thou madest thy wit thy wants supply,
 Then fought for Rokeby:—Have I guess'd
 My prisoner right?'—'At thy behest.'—
 He paused a while, and then went on
 With low and confidential tone;—
 Me, as I judge, not then he saw,
 Close nestled in my couch of straw.—
 'List to me, Guy. Thou know'st the great
 Have frequent need of what they hate;
 Hence, in their favour oft we see
 Unscrupled, useful men like thee.
 Were I disposed to bid thee live,
 What pledge of faith hast thou to give?'

VIII.

"The ready Fiend, who never yet
 Hath fail'd to sharpen Denzil's wit,
 Prompted his lie—'His only child
 Should rest his pledge.'—The Baron smiled,
 And turn'd to me—'Thou art his son?'
 I bow'd—our fetters were undone,
 And we were led to hear apart
 A dreadful lesson of his art.
 Wilfrid, he said, his heir and son,
 Had fair Matilda's favour won;
 And long since had their union been,
 But for her father's bigot spleen,
 Whose brute and blindfold party-rage
 Would, force per force, her hand engage
 To a base kern of Irish earth,
 Unknown his lineage and his birth,
 Save that a dying ruffian bore
 The infant brat to Rokeby door.
 Gentle restraint, he said, would lead
 Old Rokeby to enlarge his creed;
 But fair occasion he must find
 For such restraint, well meant and kind.
 The Knight being render'd to his charge,
 But as a prisoner at large.

IX.

"He school'd us in a well-forged tale,
 Of scheme the Castle walls to scale,
 To which was leagued each Cavalier
 That dwells upon the Tyne and Wear:
 That Rokeby, his parole forgot,
 Had dealt with us to aid the plot.

Such was the charge, which Denzil's zeal
 Of hate to Rokeby and O'Neale
 Proffer'd, as witness, to make good,
 Even though the forfeit were their blood.
 I scrupled, until o'er and o'er
 His prisoners' safety Wycliffe swore;
 And then—alas! what needs there more?
 I knew I should not live to say
 The proffer I refused that day;
 Ashamed to live, yet loath to die,
 I soil'd me with their infamy!"—
 "Poor youth!" said Bertram, "wavering still,
 Unfit alike for good or ill!
 But what fell next?"—"Soon as at large
 Was scroll'd and sign'd our fatal charge,
 There never yet, on tragic stage,
 Was seen so well a painted rage
 As Oswald's show'd! With loud alarm
 He call'd his garrison to arm;
 From tower to tower, from post to post,
 He hurried as if all were lost;
 Consign'd to dungeon and to chain
 The good old Knight and all his train;
 Warn'd each suspected Cavalier,
 Within his limits, to appear
 To-morrow, at the hour of noon,
 In the high church of Eglistone."—

X.

"Of Eglistone!—Even now I pass'd,"
 Said Bertram, "as the night closed fast;
 Torches and cressets gleam'd around,
 I heard the saw and hammer sound,
 And I could mark they toil'd to raise
 A scaffold, hung with sable baize,
 Which the grim headsman's scene display'd,
 Block, axe, and sawdust ready laid.
 Some evil deed will there be done,
 Unless Matilda wed his son;—
 She loves him not—'tis shrewdly guess'd
 That Redmond rules the damsel's breast.
 This is a turn of Oswald's skill;
 But I may meet, and foil him still!—
 How camest thou to thy freedom?"—"There
 Lies mystery more dark and rare.
 In midst of Wycliffe's well-feign'd rage,
 A scroll was offer'd by a page,
 Who told, a muffled horseman late
 Had left it at the Castle-gate.
 He broke the seal—his cheek show'd change,
 Sudden, portentous, wild, and strange;
 The mimic passion of his eye
 Was turn'd to actual agony;

His hand like summer sapling shook,
 Terror and guilt were in his look.
 Denzil he judged, in time of need,
 Fit counsellor for evil deed ;
 And thus apart his counsel broke,
 While with a ghastly smile he spoke :—

XL

“ As in the pageants of the stage,
 The dead awake in this wild age,
 Mortham—whom all men deem'd decreed
 In his own deadly snare to bleed,
 Slain by a bravo, whom, o'er sea,
 He train'd to aid in murdering me,—
 Mortham has 'scaped !—the coward shot
 The steed, but harm'd the rider not.”
 Here, with an execration fell,
 Bertram leap'd up, and paced the cell :—
 “ Thine own grey head, or bosom dark,”
 He mutter'd, “ may be surer mark !”
 Then sat, and sign'd to Edmund, pale
 With terror, to resume his tale.
 “ Wycliffe went on :—‘ Mark with what flights
 Of wilder'd reverie he writes :—

The Letter.

“ ‘ Ruler of Mortham's destiny !
 Though dead, thy victim lives to thee.
 Once had he all that binds to life—
 A lovely child, a lovelier wife ;
 Wealth, fame, and friendship, were his own—
 Thou gavest the word, and they are flown.
 Mark how he pays thee :—To thy hand
 He yields his honours and his land,
 One boon promised ;—Restore his child !
 And, from his native land exiled,
 Mortham no more returns to claim
 His lands, his honours, or his name ;
 Refuse him this, and from the slain
 Thou shalt see Mortham rise again.’

XII.

“ This billet while the Baron read,
 His faltering accents show'd his dread ;
 He press'd his forehead with his palm,
 Then took a scornful tone and calm :
 ‘ Wild as the winds, as billows wild !
 What wot I of his spouse or child ?
 Hither he brought a joyous dame,
 Unknown her lineage or her name :
 Her, in some frantic fit, he slew ;
 The nurse and child in fear withdrew.
 Heaven be my witness ! wist I where
 To find this youth, my kinsman's heir.—

Unguerdon'd, I would give with joy
 The father's arms to fold his boy,
 And Mortham's lands and towers resign
 To the just heirs of Mortham's line.—
 Thou know'st that scarcely e'en his fear
 Suppresses Denzil's cynic sneer;—
 'Then happy is thy vassal's part,'
 He said, 'to ease his patron's heart;
 In thine own jailer's watchful care
 Lies Mortham's just and rightful heir;
 Thy generous wish is fully won,—
 Redmond O'Neale is Mortham's son.'—

XIII.

“Up starting with a frenzied look,
 His clenched hand the Baron shook:
 'Is Hell at work? or dost thou rave,
 Or darrest thou palter with me, slave!
 Perchance thou wot'st not, Barnard's towers
 Have racks, of strange and ghastly powers.'
 Denzil, who well his safety knew,
 Firmly rejoind, 'I tell thee true.
 Thy racks could give thee but to know
 The proofs, which I, untortured, show.—
 It chanced upon a winter night,
 When early snow made Stanmore white,
 That very night, when first of all
 Redmond O'Neale saw Rokeyby-hall,
 It was my goodly lot to gain
 A reliquary and a chain,
 Twisted and chased of massive gold.
 —Demand not how the prize I hold!
 It was not given, nor lent, nor sold.—
 Gilt tablets to the chain were hung,
 With letters in the Irish tongue.
 I hid my spoil, for there was need
 That I should leave the land with speed;
 Nor then I deem'd it safe to bear
 On mine own person gems so rare.
 Small heed I of the tablets took,
 But since have spell'd them by the book,
 When some sojourn in Erin's land
 Of their wild speech had given command.
 But darkling was the sense; the phrase
 And language those of other days,
 Involved of purpose, as to foil
 An interloper's prying toil.
 The words, but not the sense, I knew,
 Till fortune gave the guiding clew.

XIV.

“Three days since, was that clew reveal'd.
 In Thorsgill as I lay conceal'd,
 And heard at full when Rokeyby's Maid
 Her uncle's history display'd;

And now I can interpret well
 Each syllable the tablets tell.
 Mark, then : Fair Edith was the joy
 Of old O'Neale of Clandeboy;
 But from her sire and country fled,
 In secret Mortham's Lord to wed.
 O'Neale, his first resentment o'er,
 Despatch'd his son to Greta's shore,
 Enjoining he should make him known
 (Until his farther will were shown)
 To Edith, but to her alone.
 What of their ill-starr'd meeting fell,
 Lord Wycliffe knows, and none so well.

XV.

“ ‘ O'Neale it was, who, in despair,
 Robb'd Mortham of his infant heir,
 He bred him in their nurture wild,
 And call'd him murder'd Connell's child.
 Soon died the nurse ; the Clan believed
 What from their Chieftain they received.
 His purpose was, that ne'er again
 The boy should cross the Irish main ;
 But, like his mountain sires, enjoy
 The woods and wastes of Clandeboy.
 Then on the land wild troubles came,
 And stronger Chieftains urged a claim,
 And wrested from the old man's hands
 His native towers, his father's lands.
 Unable then, amid the strife,
 To guard young Redmond's rights or life,
 Late and reluctant he restores
 The infant to his native shores,
 With goodly gifts and letters stored,
 With many a deep conjuring word,
 To Mortham and to Rokeby's Lord.
 Nought knew the clod of Irish earth,
 Who was the guide, of Redmond's birth ;
 But deem'd his Chief's commands were laid
 On both, by both to be obey'd.
 How he was wounded by the way,
 I need not, and I list not say.'—

XVI.

“ ‘ A wondrous tale ! and, grant it true,
 What,' Wycliffe answer'd, ' might I do ?
 Heaven knows, as willingly as now
 I raise the bonnet from my brow,
 Would I my kinsman's manors fair,
 Restore to Mortham, or his heir ;
 But Mortham is distraught—O'Neale
 Has drawn for tyranny his steel,
 Malignant to our rightful cause,
 And train'd in Rome's delusive laws.

Hark thee apart!—They whisper'd long,
 Till Denzil's voice grew bold and strong:—
 'My proofs! I never will,' he said,
 'Show mortal man where they are laid.
 Nor hope discovery to foreclose—
 By giving me to feed the crows;
 For I have mates at large, who know
 Where I am wont such toys to stow.
 Free me from peril and from band,
 These tablets are at thy command;
 Nor were it hard to form some train,
 To wile old Mortham o'er the main.
 Then, lunatic's nor Papist's hand
 Should wrest from thine the goodly land.'—
 —'I like thy wit,' said Wycliffe, 'well;
 But here in hostage shalt thou dwell.
 Thy son, unless my purpose err,
 May prove the trustier messenger.
 A scroll to Mortham shall he bear
 From me, and fetch these tokens rare.
 Gold shalt thou have, and that good store,
 And freedom, his commission o'er;
 But if his faith should chance to fail,
 The gibbet frees thee from the jail.'—

XVII.

"Mesh'd in the net himself had twined,
 What subterfuge could Denzil find?
 He told me, with reluctant sigh,
 That hidden here the tokens lie;
 Conjured my swift return and aid,
 By all he scoff'd and disobey'd,
 And look'd as if the noose were tied,
 And I the priest who left his side.
 This scroll for Mortham Wycliffe gave,
 Whom I must seek by Greta's wave;
 Or in the hut where chief he hides,
 Where Thorsgill's forester resides.
 (Thence chanced it, wandering in the glade,
 That he descried our ambuscade.)
 I was dismiss'd as evening fell,
 And reach'd but now this rocky cell."—
 "Give Oswald's letter."—Bertram read,
 And tore it fiercely, shred by shred:—
 "All lies and villany! to blind
 His noble kinsman's generous mind,
 And train him on from day to day,
 Till he can take his life away.—
 And now, declare thy purpose, youth,
 Nor dare to answer, save the truth;
 If aught I mark of Denzil's art,
 I'll tear the secret from thy heart!"—

XVIII.

"It needs not. I renounce," he said,
 "My tutor and his deadly trade.

Fix'd was my purpose to declare
 To Mortham, Redmond is his heir ;
 To tell him in what risk he stands,
 And yield these tokens to his hands.
 Fix'd was my purpose to atone,
 Far as I may, the evil done ;
 And fix'd it rests—if I survive
 This night, and leave this cave alive."—
 " And Denzil ?"—" Let them ply the rack,
 Even till his joints and sinews crack !
 If Oswald tear him limb from limb,
 What ruth can Denzil claim from him,
 Whose thoughtless youth he led astray,
 And damn'd to this unhallow'd way ?
 He school'd me, faith and vows were vain ;
 Now let my master reap his gain."—
 " True," answer'd Bertram, "'tis his meed ;
 There's retribution in the deed.
 But thou—thou art not for our course,
 Hast fear, hast pity, hast remorse :
 And he, with us the gale who braves,
 Must heave such cargo to the waves,
 Or lag with overloaded prore,
 While barks unburden'd reach the shore.'

XIX.

He paused, and, stretching him at length,
 Seem'd to repose his bulky strength.
 Communing with his secret mind,
 As half he sat, and half reclined,
 One ample hand his forehead press'd,
 And one was dropp'd across his breast.
 The shaggy eyebrows deeper came
 Above his eyes of swarthy flame ;
 His lip of pride a while forbore
 The haughty curve till then it wore ;
 The unalter'd fierceness of his look
 A shade of darken'd sadness took,—
 For dark and sad a presage press'd
 Resistlessly on Bertram's breast,—
 And when he spoke, his wonted tone,
 So fierce, abrupt, and brief, was gone.
 His voice was steady, low, and deep,
 Like distant waves when breezes sleep ;
 And sorrow mix'd with Edmund's fear,
 Its low unbroken depth to hear.

XX.

" Edmund, in thy sad tale I find
 The woe that warp'd my patron's mind :
 'Twould wake the fountains of the eye
 In other men, but mine are dry.
 Mortham must never see the fool,
 That sold himself base Wycliffe's tool :

Yet less from thirst of sordid gain,
 Than to avenge supposed disdain.
 Say, Bertram rues his fault;—a word,
 Till now, from Bertram never heard :
 Say, too, that Mortham's Lord he prays
 To think but on their former days ;
 On Quariana's beach and rock,
 On Cayo's bursting battle-shock,
 On Darien's sands and deadly dew,
 And on the dart Tlatzeca threw ;—
 Perchance my patron yet may hear
 More that may grace his comrade's bier.
 My soul hath felt a secret weight,
 A warning of approaching fate :
 A priest had said, ' Return, repent !'
 As well to bid that rock be rent.
 Firm as that flint I face mine end ;
 My heart may burst, but cannot bend.

XXI.

" The dawning of my youth, with awe
 And prophecy, the Dalesmen saw ;
 For over Redesdale it came,
 As bodeful as their beacon-flame.
 Edmund, thy years were scarcely mine,
 When, challenging the Clans of Tyne
 To bring their best my brand to prove,
 O'er Hexham's altar hung my glove ;
 But Tynedale, nor in tower nor town,
 Held champion meet to take it down.
 My noontide, India may declare ;
 Like her fierce sun, I fired the air !
 Like him, to wood and cave bade fly
 Her natives, from mine angry eye.
 Panama's maids shall long look pale
 When Risingham inspires the tale ;
 Chili's dark matrons long shall tame
 The froward child with Bertram's name.
 And now, my race of terror run,
 Mine be the eve of tropic sun !
 No pale gradations quench his ray,
 No twilight dews his wrath allay ;
 With disk like battle-target red,
 He rushes to his burning bed,
 Dyes the wide wave with bloody light,
 Then sinks at once—and all is night.—

XXII.

" Now to thy mission, Edmund. Fly,
 Seek Mortham out, and bid him hie
 To Richmond, where his troops are laid,
 And lead his force to Redmond's aid.
 Say, till he reaches Eglistone,
 A friend will watch to guard his son.

Now, fare-thee-well ; for night draws on,
 And I would rest me here alone."
 Despite his ill-dissembled fear,
 There swam in Edmund's eye a tear ;
 A tribute to the courage high,
 Which stoop'd not in extremity,
 But strove, irregularly great,
 To triumph o'er approaching fate !
 Bertram beheld the dewdrop start,
 It almost touch'd his iron heart :—
 " I did not think there lived," he said,
 " One, who would tear for Bertram shed."
 He loosen'd then his baldrick's hold,
 A buckle broad of massive gold ;—
 " Of all the spoil that paid his pains,
 But this with Risingham remains ;
 And this, dear Edmund, thou shalt take,
 And wear it long for Bertram's sake.
 Once more—to Mortham speed amain ;
 Farewell ! and turn thee not again."

XXIII.

The night has yielded to the morn,
 And far the hours of prime are worn.
 Oswald, who, since the dawn of day,
 Had cursed his messenger's delay,
 Impatient question'd now his train,
 " Was Denzil's son return'd again ?"
 It chanced there answer'd of the crew,
 A menial, who young Edmund knew ;
 " No son of Denzil this," he said ;
 " A peasant boy from Winston glade,
 For song and minstrelsy renown'd,
 And knavish pranks, the hamlets round."
 " Not Denzil's son !—from Winston vale !—
 Then it was false, that specious tale ;
 Or, worse—he hath despatch'd the youth
 To show to Mortham's Lord its truth.
 Fool that I was !—but 'tis too late ;—
 This is the very turn of fate !—
 The tale, or true or false, relies
 On Denzil's evidence !—He dies !—
 Ho ! Provost-Marshal ! instantly
 Lead Denzil to the gallows-tree !
 Allow him not a parting word ;
 Short be the shrift, and sure the cord !
 Then let his gory head appal
 Marauders from the Castle-wall.
 Lead forth thy guard, that duty done,
 With best despatch to Eglistone.—
 —Basil, tell Wilfrid he must straight
 Attend me at the Castle-gate."

XXIV.

Alas !" the old domestic said,
 And shook his venerable head.

" Alas ! my Lord, full ill to-day
 May my young master brook the way !
 The leech has spoke with grave alarm,
 Of unseen hurt, of secret harm,
 Of sorrow lurking at the heart,
 That mars and lets his healing art."—
 " Tush ! tell not me !—Romantic boys
 Pine themselves sick for airy toys,
 I will find cure for Wilfrid soon ;
 Bid him for Eglistone be boune,
 And quick !—I hear the dull death-drum
 Tell Denzil's hour of fate is come."
 He paused with scornful smile, and then
 Resumed his train of thought agen.
 " Now comes my fortune's crisis near !
 Entreaty boots not—instant fear,
 Nought else, can bend Matilda's pride,
 Or win her to be Wilfrid's bride.
 But when she sees the scaffold placed,
 With axe and block and headsman graced,
 And when she deems, that to deny
 Dooms Redmond and her sire to die,
 She must give way.—Then, were the line
 Of Rokeby once combined with mine,
 I gain the weather-gage of fate !
 If Mortham come, he comes too late,
 While I, allied thus and prepared,
 Bid him defiance to his beard.—
 —If she prove stubborn, shall I dare
 To drop the axe ?—Soft ! pause we there.
 Mortham still lives—yon youth may tell
 His tale—and Fairfax loves him well ;—
 Else, wherefore should I now delay
 To sweep this Redmond from my way ?—
 But she to piety perforce
 Must yield.—Without there ! Sound to horse !

XXV.

'Twas bustle in the court below,—
 " Mount, and march forward !"—Forth they go ;
 Steeds neigh and trample all around,
 Steel rings, spears glimmer, trumpets sound.—
 Just then was sung his parting hymn ;
 And Denzil turn'd his eyeballs dim,
 And, scarcely conscious what he sees,
 Follows the horsemen down the Tees ;
 And scarcely conscious what he hears,
 The trumpets tingle in his ears.
 O'er the long bridge they're sweeping now,
 The van is hid by greenwood bough ;
 But ere the rearward had pass'd o'er,
 Guy Denzil hard and saw no more !
 One stroke, upon the Castle bell,
 To Oswald rung his dying knell.

XXVI.

O for that pencil, erst profuse
 Of chivalry's emblazon'd hues,
 That traced of old, in Woodstock bower
 The pageant of the Leaf and Flower,
 And bodied forth the tourney high,
 Held for the hand of Emily !
 Then might I paint the tumult broad,
 That to the crowded abbey flow'd,
 And pour'd, as with an ocean's sound,
 Into the church's ample bound !
 Then might I show each varying mien
 Exulting, woeful, or serene ;
 Indifference, with his idiot stare,
 And Sympathy, with anxious air,
 Paint the dejected Cavalier,
 Doubtful, disarm'd, and sad of cheer,
 And his proud foe, whose formal eye
 Claim'd conquest now and mastery ;
 And the brute crowd, whose envious zeal
 Huzzas each turn of Fortune's wheel,
 And loudest shouts when lowest lie
 Exalted worth and station high.
 Yet what may such a wish avail ?
 'Tis mine to tell an onward tale,
 Hurrying, as best I can, along,
 The hearers and the hasty song ;—
 Like traveller when approaching home,
 Who sees the shades of evening come,
 And must not now his course delay,
 Or choose the fair, but winding way ;
 Nay, scarcely may his pace suspend,
 Where o'er his head the wildings bend,
 To bless the breeze that cools his brow,
 Or snatch a blossom from the bough.

XXVII.

The reverend pile lay wild and waste,
 Profaned, dishonour'd, and defaced.
 Through storied lattices no more
 In soften'd light the sunbeams pour,
 Gilding the Gothic sculpture rich
 Of shrine, and monument, and niche.
 The Civil fury of the time
 Made sport of sacrilegious crime ;
 For dark Fanaticism rent
 Altar, and screen, and ornament,
 And peasant hands the tombs o'erthrew
 Of Bowes, of Rokeby, and Fitz-Hugh.
 And now was seen, unwonted sight,
 In holy walls a scaffold dight !
 Where once the priest, of grace divine,
 Dealt to his flock the mystic sign ;

There stood the block display'd, and there
 The headsman grim his hatchet bare ;
 And for the word of Hope and Faith,
 Resounded loud a doom of death.
 Thrice the fierce trumpet's breath was heard,
 And echo'd thrice the herald's word,
 Dooming, for breach of martial laws,
 And treason to the Commons' cause,
 The Knight of Rokeby and O'Neale
 To stoop their heads to block and steel
 The trumpets flourish'd high and shrill,
 Then was a silence dead and still ;
 And silent prayers to heaven were cast,
 And stifled sobs were bursting fast,
 Till from the crowd begun to rise
 Murmurs of sorrow or surprise,
 And from the distant aisles there came
 Deep-mutter'd threats, with Wycliffe's name.

XXVIII.

But Oswald, guarded by his band,
 Powerful in evil, waved his hand,
 And bade Sedition's voice be dead,
 On peril of the murmurer's head.
 Then first his glance sought Rokeby's Knight ;
 Who gazed on the tremendous sight,
 As calm as if he came a guest
 To kindred Baron's feudal feast,
 As calm as if that trumpet-call
 Were summons to the banner'd hall ;
 Firm in his loyalty he stood,
 And prompt to seal it with his blood.
 With downcast look drew Oswald nigh,—
 He durst not cope with Rokeby's eye !—
 And said, with low and faltering breath,
 " Thou know'st the terms of life and death."
 The Knight then turn'd, and sternly smiled,
 " The maiden is mine only child,
 Yet shall my blessing leave her head,
 If with a traitor's son she wed."
 Then Redmond spoke : " The life of one
 Might thy malignity atone,
 On me be flung a double guilt !
 Spare Rokeby's blood, let mine be spilt !"
 Wycliffe had listen'd to his suit,
 But dread prevail'd, and he was mute.

XXIX.

And now he pours his choice of fear
 In secret on Matilda's ear :
 " An union form'd with me and mine,
 Easures the faith of Rokeby's line.
 Consent, and all this dread array,
 Like morning dream, shall pass away

Refuse, and, by my duty press'd,
 I give the word—thou know'st the rest."
 Matilda, still and motionless,
 With terror heard the dread address,
 Pale as the sheeted maid who dies
 To hopeless love a sacrifice ;
 Then wrung her hands in agony,
 And round her cast bewilder'd eye—
 Now on the scaffold glanced, and now
 On Wycliffe's unrelenting brow.
 She veil'd her face, and, with a voice
 Scarce audible,—“ I make my choice !
 Spare but their lives !—for aught beside,
 Let Wilfrid's doom my fate decide.
 He once was generous ! ”—As she spoke,
 Dark Wycliffe's joy in triumph broke :—
 “ Wilfrid, where loiter'd ye so late ?
 Why upon Basil rest thy weight ?—
 Art spell-bound by enchanter's wand ?—
 Kneel, kneel, and take her yielded hand ;
 Thank her with raptures, simple boy !
 Should tears and trembling speak thy joy ? ”
 “ Oh, hush, my sire ! To prayer and tear
 Of mine thou hast refused thine ear ;
 But now the awful hour draws on,
 When truth must speak in loftier tone.”

XXX.

He took Matilda's hand :—“ Dear maid,
 Couldst thou so injure me,” he said,
 “ Of thy poor friend so basely deem,
 As blend with him this barbarous scheme ?
 Alas ! my efforts made in vain,
 Might well have saved this added pain.
 But now, bear witness earth and heaven,
 That ne'er was hope to mortal given,
 So twisted with the strings of life,
 As this—to call Matilda wife !
 I bid it now for ever part,
 And with the effort bursts my heart.”
 His feeble frame was worn so low,
 With wounds, with watching, and with woe.
 That nature could no more sustain
 The agony of mental pain.
 He kneel'd—his lip her hand had press'd,
 Just then he felt the stern arrest.
 Lower and lower sunk his head,—
 They raised him,—but the life was fled !
 Then, first alarm'd, his sire and train
 Tried every aid, but tried in vain.
 The soul, too soft its ills to bear,
 Had left our mortal hemisphere,
 And sought in better world the meed,
 To blameless life by Heaven decreed.

XXXI.

The wretched sire beheld, aghast,
 With Wilfrid all his projects past;—
 All turn'd and centred on his son,
 On Wilfrid all—and he was gone.
 “And I am childless now,” he said;
 “Childless, through that relentless maid!
 A lifetime's arts, in vain essay'd,
 Are bursting on their artist's head!—
 Here lies my Wilfrid dead—and there
 Comes hated Mortham for his heir,
 Eager to knit in happy band
 With Rokeby's heiress Redmond's hand.
 And shall their triumph soar o'er all
 The schemes deep-laid to work their fall?
 No!—deeds, which prudence might not dare,
 Appal not vengeance and despair.
 The murd'ress weeps upon his bier—
 I'll change to real that feigned tear!
 They all shall share destruction's shock;—
 Ho! lead the captives to the block!”
 But ill his Provost could divine
 His feelings, and forbore the sign.
 “Slave! to the block!—or I, or they,
 Shall face the judgment-seat this day!”

XXXII.

The outmost crowd have heard a sound,
 Like horse's hoof on harden'd ground;
 Nearer it came, and yet more near,—
 The very death's-men paused to hear.
 'Tis in the churchyard now—the tread
 Hath waked the dwelling of the dead!
 Fresh sod, and old sepulchral stone,
 Return the tramp in varied tone.
 All eyes upon the gateway hung,
 When through the Gothic arch there sprung
 A horseman arm'd, at headlong speed—
 Sable his cloak, his plume, his steed.
 Fire from the flinty floor was spurn'd,
 The vaults unwonted clang return'd!—
 One instant's glance around he threw,
 From saddlebow his pistol drew.
 Grimly determined was his look!
 His charger with the spurs he strook—
 All scatter'd backward as he came,
 For all knew Bertram Risingham!
 Three bounds that noble courser gave;
 The first has reach'd the central nave,
 The second clear'd the chancel wide,
 The third—he was at Wycliffe's side.
 Full levell'd at the Baron's head,
 Rang the report—the bullet sped—

And to his long account, and last,
Without a groan, dark Oswald past !
All was so quick, that it might seem
A flash of lightning, or a dream.

XXXIII.

While yet the smoke the deed conceals,
Bertram his ready charger wheels ;
But flounder'd on the pavement-floor
The steed, and down the rider bore,
And, bursting in the headlong sway,
The faithless saddle-girths gave way.
'Twas while he toil'd him to be freed,
And with the rein to raise the steed,
That from amazement's iron trance
All Wycliffe's soldiers waked at once.
Sword, halberd, musket-butt, their blows
Hail'd upon Bertram as he rose ;
A score of pikes, with each a wound,
Bore down and pinn'd him to the ground ;
But still his struggling force he rears,
'Gainst hacking brands and stabbing spears ;
Thrice from assailants shook him free,
Once gain'd his feet, and twice his knee.
By tenfold odds oppress'd at length,
Despite his struggles and his strength,
He took a hundred mortal wounds,
As mute as fox 'mougt mangling hounds ;
And when he died, his parting groan
Had more of laughter than of moan !
—They gazed, as when a lion dies,
And hunters scarcely trust their eyes,
But bend their weapons on the slain,
Lest the grim king should rouse again !
Then blow and insult some renew'd,
And from the trunk, the head had hew'd,
But Basil's voice the deed forbade ;
A mantle o'er the corpse he laid :—
“ Fell as he was in act and mind,
He left no bolder heart behind :
Then give him, for a soldier meet,
A soldier's cloak for winding sheet.”

XXXIV.

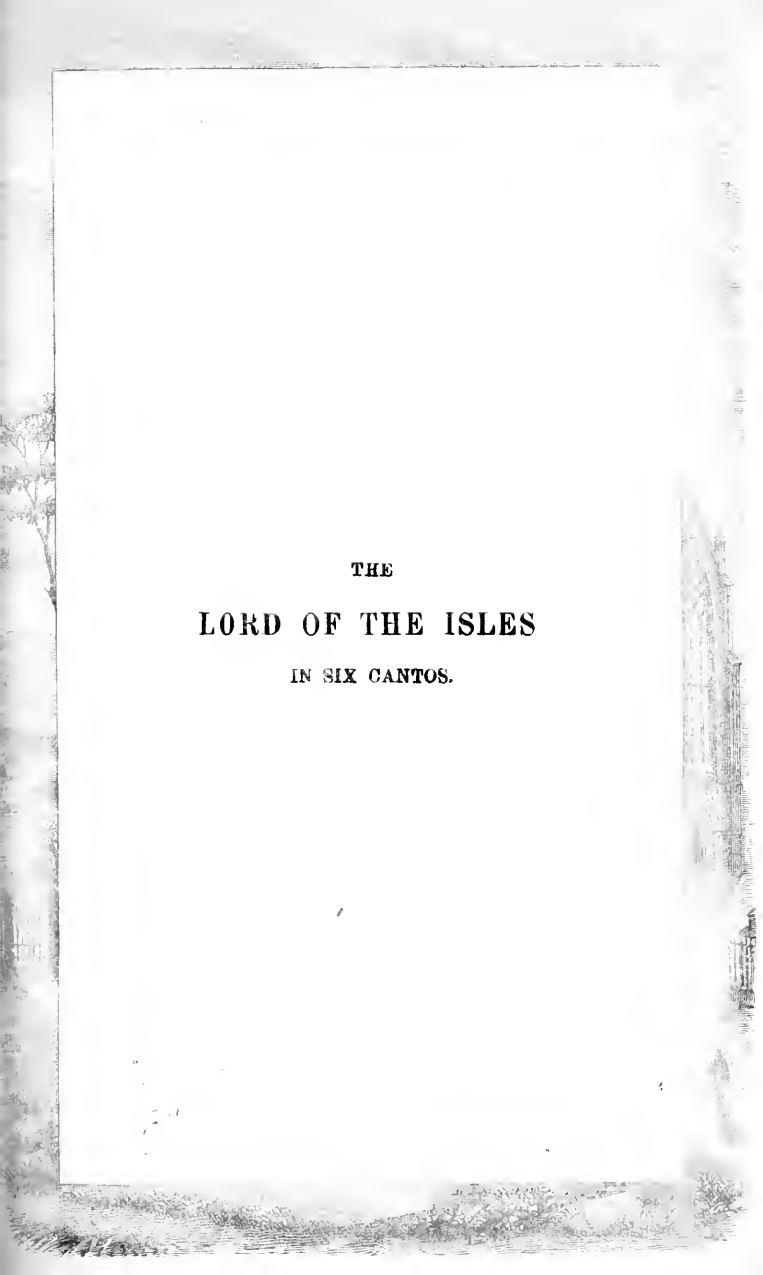
No more of death and dying pang,
No more of trump and bugle clang,
Though through the sounding woods there come
Banner and bugle, trump and drum.
Arm'd with such powers as well had freed
Young Redmond at his utmost need,
And back'd with such a band of horse,
As might less ample powers enforce ;
Possess'd of every proof and sign
That gave an heir to Northam's line.

And yielded to a father's arms
 An image of his Edith's charms,—
 Mortham is come, to hear and see
 Of this strange morn the history.
 What saw he?—not the church's floor,
 Cumber'd with dead and stain'd with gore;
 What heard he?—not the clamorous crowd,
 That shout their gratulations loud:
 Redmond he saw and heard alone,
 Clasp'd him, and sobb'd—“My son! my son!”

XXXV.

This chanced upon a summer morn,
 When yellow waved the heavy corn:
 But when brown August o'er the land
 Call'd forth the reaper's busy band,
 A gladsome sight the silvan road
 From Eglistone to Mortham show'd.
 A while the hardy rustic leaves
 The task to bind and pile the sheaves;
 And maids their sickles fling aside,
 To gaze on bridegroom and on bride;
 And childhood's wondering group draws near,
 And from the gleaner's hands the ear
 Drops, while she folds them for a prayer
 And blessing on the lovely pair.
 'Twas then the Maid of Rokeby gave
 Her plighted troth to Redmond brave;
 And Teesdale can remember yet
 How Fate to Virtue paid her debt,
 And, for their troubles, bade them prove
 A lengthen'd life of peace and love.

Time and Tide had thus their sway,
 Yielding, like an April day,
 Smiling noon for sullen morrow,
 Years of joy for hours of sorrow.



THE
LORD OF THE ISLES
IN SIX CANTOS.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE scene of this Poem lies, at first, in the Castle of Artornish, on the coast of Argyleshire; and, afterwards, in the Islands of Skye and Arran, and upon the coast of Ayrshire. Finally, it is laid near Stirling. The story opens in the spring of the year 1307, when Bruce, who had been driven out of Scotland by the English, and the Barons who adhered to that foreign interest, returned from the Island of Rathlin on the coast of Ireland, again to assert his claims to the Scottish crown. Many of the personages and incidents introduced are of historical celebrity. The authorities used are chiefly those of the venerable Lord Hailes, as well entitled to be called the restorer of Scottish history, as Bruce the restorer of Scottish monarchy; and of Archdeacon Barbour, a correct edition of whose *Metrical History of Robert Bruce* will soon, I trust, appear under the care of my learned friend, the Rev. Dr Jamieson.

ABBOTSFORD, four December 1814

THE
LORD OF THE ISLES

CANTO FIRST.

AUTUMN departs—but still his mantle's fold
Rests on the groves of noble Somerville ;
Beneath a shroud of russet dropp'd with gold,
Tweed and his tributaries mingle still ;
Hoarser the wind, and deeper sounds the rill,
Yet lingering notes of sylvan music swell,
The deep-toned cushat, and the redbreast shrill ;
And yet some tints of summer splendour tell
When the broad sun sinks down on Ettrick's western fell.

Autumn departs— from Gala's fields no more
Come rural sounds, our kindred banks to cheer ;
Blent with the stream, and gale that wafts it o'er,
No more the distant reaper's mirth we hear.
The last blithe shout hath died upon our ear,
And harvest-home hath hush'd the clanging wain,
On the waste hill no forms of life appear,
Save where, sad laggard of the autumnal train,
Some age-struck wanderer gleans few ears of scatter'd grain.

Deem'st thou these sadden'd scenes have pleasure still,
Lovest thou through Autumn's fading realms to stray,
To see the heath-flower wither'd on the hill,
To listen to the wood's expiring lay,
To note the red leaf shivering on the spray,
To mark the last bright tints the mountain stain,
On the waste fields to trace the gleaner's way,
And moralise on mortal joy and pain ?—
O ! if such scenes thou lovest, scorn not the minstrel strain.

No ! do not scorn, although its hoarser note
Scarce with the cushat's homely song can vie,
Though faint its beauties as the tints remote
That gleam through mist in autumn's evening sky.

And few as leaves that tremble, sear and dry,
 When wild November hath his bugle wound ;
 Nor mock my toil—a lonely gleaner I,
 Through fields time-wasted, on sad inquest bound,
 Where happier bards of yore have richer harvest found.

So shalt thou list, and haply not unmoved,
 To a wild tale of Albyn's warrior day ;
 In distant lands, by the rough West reprov'd,
 Still live some relics of the ancient lay.
 For, when on Coolin's hills the lights decay,
 With such the Seer of Skye the eve beguiles ;
 'Tis known amid the pathless wastes of Reay,
 In Harries known, and in Iona's piles,
 Where rest from mortal coil the Mighty of the Isles.

I.

“ WAKE, Maid of Lorn ! ” the Minstrels sung.—
 Thy rugged halls, Artornish ! rung,
 And the dark seas, thy towers that lave,
 Heaved on the beach a softer wave,
 As 'mid the tuneful choir to keep
 The diapason of the Deep.
 Lull'd were the winds on Inninmore,
 And green Loch-Alline's woodland shore,
 As if wild woods and waves had pleasure
 In listening to the lovely measure.
 And ne'er to symphony more sweet
 Gave mountain echoes answer meet,
 Since, met from mainland and from isle,
 Ross, Arran, Islay, and Argyle,
 Each minstrel's tributary lay
 Paid homage to the festal day.
 Dull and dishonour'd were the bard,
 Worthless of guerdon and regard,
 Deaf to the hope of minstrel fame,
 Or lady's smiles, his noblest aim.
 Who on that morn's resistless call
 Were silent in Artornish hall.

II.

“ Wake, Maid of Lorn ! ”—'twas thus they sung.
 And yet more proud the descant rung,
 “ Wake, Maid of Lorn ! high right is ours,
 To charm dull sleep from Beauty's bowers ;
 Earth, Ocean, Air, have nought so shy
 But owns the power of minstrelsy.
 In Lettermore the timid deer
 Will pause, the harp's wild chime to hear ;
 Rude Heiskar's seal, through surges dark,
 Will long pursue the minstrel's bark ;
 To list his notes, the eagle proud
 Will poise him on Ben-Cailliach's cloud :

Then let not Maiden's ear disdain
 The summons of the minstrel train,
 But, while our harps wild music make,
 Edith of Lorn, awake, awake !

III.

"O wake, while Dawn, with dewy shine,
 Wakes Nature's charms to vie with thine !
 She bids the mottled thrush rejoice
 To mate thy melody of voice ;
 The dew that on the violet lies
 Mocks the dark lustre of thine eyes ;
 But, Edith, wake, and all we see
 Of sweet and fair shall yield to thee !"
 "She comes not yet," grey Ferrand cried ;
 "Brethren, let softer spell be tried,
 Those notes prolong'd, that soothing theme,
 Which best may mix with Beauty's dream,
 And whisper, with their silvery tone,
 The hope she loves, yet fears to own."
 He spoke, and on the harp-strings died
 The strains of flattery and of pride ;
 More soft, more low, more tender fell
 The lay of love he bade them tell.

IV.

"Wake, Maid of Lorn ! the moments fly,
 Which yet that maiden-name allow ;
 Wake, Maiden, wake ! the hour is nigh,
 When love shall claim a plighted vow.
 By Fear, thy bosom's fluttering guest,
 By Hope, that soon shall fears remove,
 We bid thee break the bonds of rest,
 And wake thee at the call of Love !

"Wake, Edith, wake ! in yonder bay
 Lies many a galley gaily mann'd,
 We hear the merry pibroch's play,
 We see the streamers' silken band.
 What Chieftain's praise these pibrochs swell,
 What crest is on these banners wove,
 The harp, the minstrel, dare not tell—
 The riddle must be read by Love."

V.

Retired her maiden train among,
 Edith of Lorn received the song,
 But tamed the minstrel's pride had been
 That had her cold demeanour seen ;
 For not upon her cheek awoke
 The glow of pride when Flattery spoke,
 Nor could their tenderest numbers bring
 One sigh responsive to the string.
 As vainly had her maidens vied
 In skill to deck the princely bride.

Her locks, in dark-brown length array'd,
 Cathleen of Ulne, 'twas thine to braid ;
 Young Eva with meet reverence drew
 On the light foot the silken shoe,
 While on the ankle's slender round
 Those strings of pearl fair Bertha wound,
 That, bleach'd Lochryan's depths within,
 Seem'd dusky still on Edith's skin.
 But Einion, of experience old,
 Had weightiest task—the mantle's fold
 In many an artful plait she tied,
 To shew the form it seem'd to hide,
 Till on the floor descending roll'd
 Its waves of crimson blent with gold.

VI.

O ! lives there now so cold a maid,
 Who thus in beauty's pomp array'd,
 In beauty's proudest pitch of power,
 And conquest won—the bridal hour—
 With every charm that wins the heart,
 By Nature given, enhanced by Art,
 Could yet the fair reflection view,
 In the bright mirror pictured true,
 And not one dimple on her cheek
 A tell-tale consciousness bespeak ?—
 Lives still such maid !—Fair damsels, say,
 For further vouches not my lay,
 Save that such lived in Britain's isle,
 When Lorn's bright Edith scorn'd to smile,

VII.

But Morag, to whose fostering care
 Proud Lorn had given his daughter fair,
 Morag, who saw a mother's aid
 By all a daughter's love repaid,
 (Strict was that bond—most kind of all—
 Inviolate in Highland hall)—
 Grey Morag sate a space apart,
 In Edith's eyes to read her heart.
 In vain the attendant's fond appeal
 To Morag's skill, to Morag's zeal ;
 She mark'd her child receive their care,
 Cold as the image sculptured fair,
 (Form of some sainted patroness,)
 Which cloister'd maids combine to dress ;
 She mark'd—and knew her nursling's heart
 In the vain pomp took little part.
 Wistful a while she gazed—then press'd
 The maiden to her anxious breast
 In finish'd loveliness—and led
 To where a turret's airy head,
 Slender and steep, and battled round,
 O'erlook'd dark Mull ! thy mighty Sound,
 Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
 Part thy swarth hills from Morven's shore.

VIII.

"Daughter," she said, "these seas behold,
 Round twice a hundred islands roll'd,
 From Hirt, that hears their northern roar,
 To the green Islay's fertile shore ;
 Or mainland turn, where many a tower
 Owns thy bold brother's feudal power,
 Each on its own dark cape reclined,
 And listening to its own wild wind,
 From where Mingarry, sternly placed,
 O'erawes the woodland and the waste,
 To where Dunstaffnage hears the raging
 Of Connal with its rocks engaging.
 Thinkst thou, amid this ample round,
 A single brow but thine has frown'd,
 To sadden this auspicious morn,
 That bids the daughter of high Lorn
 Impledge her spousal faith to wed
 The heir of mighty Somerled ?
 Ronald, from many a hero sprung,
 The fair, the valiant, and the young,
 LORD OF THE ISLES, whose lofty name
 A thousand bards have given to fame,
 The mate of monarchs, and allied
 On equal terms with England's pride.—
 From Chieftain's tower to bondsman's cot,
 Who hears the tale, and triumphs not ?
 The damsel dons her best attire,
 The shepherd lights his beltane fire,
 Joy ! joy ! each warder's horn hath sung,
 Joy ! joy ! each matin bell hath rung ;
 The holy priest says grateful mass,
 Loud shouts each hardy galla-glass,
 No mountain den holds outcast boor,
 Of heart so dull, of soul so poor,
 But he hath flung his task aside,
 And claim'd this morn for holy-tide ;
 Yet, empress of this joyful day,
 Edith is sad while all are gay."—

IX.

Proud Edith's soul came to her eye,
 Resentment check'd the struggling sigh.
 Her hurrying hand indignant dried
 The burning tears of injured pride—
 "Morag, forbear ! or lend thy praise
 To swell yon hireling harpers' lays ;
 Make to yon maids thy boast of power,
 That they may waste a wondering hour,
 Telling of banners proudly borne,
 Of pealing bell and bugle horn,
 Or, theme more dear, of robes of price,
 Crownlets and gauds of rare device.
 But thou, experienced as thou art,
 Thinkst thou with these to cheat the heart.

That, bound in strong affection's chain,
Looks for return and looks in vain?
No! sum thine Edith's wretched lot
In these brief words—He loves her not!

X.

“ Debate it not—too long I strove
To call his cold observance love,
All blinded by the league that stiled
Edith of Lorn,—while yet a child,
She tripp'd the heath by Morag's side—
The brave Lord Ronald's destined bride.
Ere yet I saw him, while afar
His broadsword blazed in Scotland's war,
Train'd to believe our fates the same,
My bosom throbb'd when Ronald's name
Came gracing Fame's heroic tale,
Like perfume on the summer gale.
What pilgrim sought our halls, nor told
Of Ronald's deeds in battle bold;
Who touch'd the harp to heroes' praise,
But his achievements swell'd the lays?
Even Morag—not a tale of fame
Was hers but closed with Ronald's name.
He came; and all that had been told
Of his high worth seem'd poor and cold.
Tame, lifeless, void of energy,
Unjust to Ronald and to me!

XI.

“ Since then, what thought had Edith's heart
And gave not plighted love its part?—
And what requital? cold delay—
Excuse that shunn'd the spousal day.—
It dawns, and Ronald is not here!—
Hunts he Bentalla's nimble deer,
Or loiters he in secret dell
To bid some lighter love farewell,
And swear that though he may not scorn
A daughter of the House of Lorn,
Yet, when those formal rites are o'er,
Again they meet, to part no more?”

XII.

—“ Hush, daughter, hush! thy doubts remove,
More nobly think of Ronald's love.
Look, where beneath the castle grey
His fleet unmoor from Aros bay!
See'st not each galley's topmast bend,
As on the yards the sails ascend?
Hiding the dark-blue land, they rise
Like the white clouds on April skies;
The shouting vassals man the oars,
Behind them sink Mull's mountain shores,
Onward their merry course they keep,
Through whistling breeze and foaming deep.

And mark the headmost, seaward cast,
 Stoop to the freshening gale her mast
 As if she veil'd its banner'd pride,
 To greet afar her Prince's bride!
 Thy Ronald comes, and while in speed
 His galley mates the flying steed,
 He chides her sloth!"—Fair Edith sigh'd,
 Blush'd, sadly smiled, and thus replied:—

XIII.

"Sweet thought, but vain!—No, Morag! mark,
 Type of his course, yon lonely bark,
 That oft hath shifted helm and sail,
 To win its way against the gale.
 Since peep of morn my vacant eyes
 Have view'd by fits the course she tries;
 Now, though the darkening scud comes on,
 And dawn's fair promises be gone,
 And though the weary crew may see
 Our sheltering haven on their lee,
 Still closer to the rising wind
 They strive her shivering sail to bind,
 Still nearer to the shelves' dread verge
 At every tack her course they urge,
 As if they fear'd Artornish more
 Than adverse winds and breakers' roar."

XIV.

Sooth spoke the maid.—Amid the tide
 The skiff she mark'd lay tossing sore,
 And shifted oft her stooping side,
 In weary tack from shore to shore.
 Yet on her destined course no more
 She gain'd, of forward way,
 Than what a minstrel may compare
 To the poor meed which peasants share,
 Who toil the livelong day;
 And such the risk her pilot braves,
 That oft, before she wore,
 Her boltsprit kiss'd the broken waves,
 Where in white foam the ocean raves
 Upou the shelving shore.
 Yet, to their destined purpose true,
 Undaunted toil'd her hardy crew,
 Nor look'd where shelter lay,
 Nor for Artornish Castle drew,
 Nor steer'd for Aros bay.

XV.

Thus while they strove with wind and seas,
 Borne onward by the willing breeze,
 Lord Ronald's fleet swept by,
 Streamer'd with silk, and trick'd with gold,
 Mann'd with the noble and the bold
 Of island chivalry.

Around their prows the ocean roars,
 And chafes beneath their thousand oars,
 Yet bears them on their way :
 So chafes the war-horse in his night,
 That fieldward bears some valiant knight,
 Champs, till both bit and boss are white,
 But, foaming, must obey.
 On each gay deck they might behold
 Lances of steel and crests of gold,
 And hauberks with their burnish'd fold,
 That shimmer'd fair and free ;
 And each proud galley, as she pass'd,
 To the wild cadence of the blast
 Give wilder minstrelsy.
 Full many a shrill triumphant note
 Saline and Scallastle bade float
 Their misty shores around ;
 And Morven's echoes answer'd well,
 And Duart heard the distant swell
 Come down the darksome Sound.

XVI.

So bore they on with mirth and pride,
 And if that labouring bark they spied,
 'Twas with such idle eye
 As nobles cast on lowly boor,
 When, toiling in his task obscure,
 They pass him careless by.
 Let them sweep on with heedless eyes !
 But, had they known what mighty prize
 In that frail vessel lay,
 The famish'd wolf, that prowls the wold,
 Had scatheless pass'd the unguarded fold,
 Ere, drifting by these galleys bold,
 Unchallenged were her way !
 And thou, Lord Ronald, sweep thou on,
 With mirth, and pride, and minstrel tone
 But hadst thou known who sail'd so nigh,
 Far other glance were in thine eye !
 Far other flush were on thy brow,
 That, shaded by the bonnet, now
 Assumes but ill the blithesome cheer
 Of bridegroom when the bride is near !

XVII.

Yes, sweep they on !—We will not leave,
 For them that triumph, those who grieve
 With that armada gay
 Be laughter loud and jocund shout,
 And bards to cheer the wassail route,
 With tale, romance, and lay ;
 And of wild mirth, each clamorous art.
 Which, if it cannot cheer the heart,
 May stupify and stun its smart.
 For one loud busy day.

Yes, sweep they on!—But with that skiff
 Abides the minstrel tale,
 Where there was dread of surge and cliff
 Labour that strain'd each sinew stiff,
 And one sad Maiden's wail.

XVIII.

All day with fruitless strife they toil'd,
 With eve the ebbing currents boil'd
 More fierce from strait and lake;
 And midway through the channel met
 Conflicting tides that foam and fret,
 And high their mingled billows jet,
 As spears, that, in the battle set,
 Spring upward as they break.
 Then, too, the lights of eve were past,
 And louder sung the western blast
 On rocks of Inninmore;
 Rent was the sail, and strain'd the mast,
 And many a leak was gaping fast,
 And the pale steersman stood aghast,
 And gave the conflict o'er.

XIX.

'Twas then that One, whose lofty lock
 Nor labour dull'd nor terror shook,
 Thus to the Leader spoke:—
 "Brother, how hopest thou to abide
 The fury of this wilder'd tide,
 Or how avoid the rock's rude side,
 Until the day has broke?
 Didst thou not mark the vessel reel,
 With quivering planks, and groaning keel
 At the last billow's shock?
 Yet how of better counsel tell,
 Though here thou see'st poor Isabel
 Half dead with want and fear;
 For look on sea, or look on land,
 Or yon dark sky—on every hand
 Despair and death are near.
 For her alone I grieve,—on me
 Danger sits light, by land and sea,
 I follow where thou wilt;
 Either to bide the tempest's lour,
 Or wend to yon unfriendly tower,
 Or rush amid their naval power,
 With war-cry wake their wassail-hour
 And die with hand on hilt."—

XX.

That elder Leader's calm reply
 In steady voice was given—
 "In man's most dark extremity
 Oft succour dawns from Heaven.
 Edward, trim thou the shatter'd sail,
 The helm be mine, and down the gale
 Let our free course be driven;

So shall we 'scape the western bay,
 The hostile fleet, the unequal fray,
 So safely hold our vessel's way
 Beneath the Castle wall;
 For if a hope of safety rest,
 'Tis on the sacred name of guest,
 Who seeks for shelter, storm-distress'd,
 Within a chieftain's hall.
 If not—it best beseems our worth,
 Our name, our right, our lofty birth,
 By noble hands to fall."

XXI.

The helm, to his strong arm consign'd,
 Gave the reef'd sail to meet the wind,
 And on her alter'd way,
 Fierce bounding, forward sprung the ship
 Like greyhound starting from the slip
 To seize his flying prey.
 Awaked before the rushing prow,
 The mimic fires of ocean glow,
 Those lightnings of the wave;
 Wild sparkles crest the broken tides,
 And, flashing round, the vessel's sides
 With elvish lustre lave,
 While, far behind, their livid light
 To the dark billows of the night
 A gloomy splendour gave.
 It seems as if old Ocean shakes
 From his dark brow the lucid flakes
 In envious pageantry,
 To match the meteor-light that streaks
 Grim Hecla's midnight sky.

XXII.

Nor lack'd they steadier light to keep
 Their course upon the darken'd deep:—
 Artornish, on her frowning steep
 'Twixt cloud and ocean hung,
 Glanced with a thousand lights of glee,
 And landward far, and far to sea,
 Her festal radiance flung.
 By that blithe beacon-light they steer'd,
 Whose lustre mingled well
 With the pale beam that now appear'd,
 As the cold moon her head uprear'd
 Above the eastern fell.

XXIII.

Thus guided, on their course they bore,
 Until they near'd the mainland shore:
 When frequent on the hollow blast
 Wild shouts of merriment were cast
 And wind and wave and sea-birds cry
 With wassail sounds in concert vie,

Like funeral shrieks with revelry,
 Or like the battle-shout
 By peasants heard from cliffs on high,
 When Triumph, Rage, and Agony,
 Madden the fight and rout.
 Now nearer yet, through mist and storm
 Dimly arose the Castle's form,
 And deepen'd shadow made,
 Far lengthen'd on the main below,
 Where, dancing in reflected glow,
 A hundred torches play'd,
 Spangling the wave with lights as vain
 As pleasures in this vale of pain,
 That dazzle as they fade.

XXIV.

Beneath the Castle's sheltering lee,
 They staid their course in quiet sea.
 Hewn in the rock, a passage there
 Sought the dark fortress by a stair,
 So straight, so high, so steep,
 With peasant's staff one valiant hand
 Might well the dizzy pass have mann'd,
 'Gainst hundreds arm'd with spear and brand,
 And plunged them in the deep.
 His bugle then the helmsman wound ;
 Loud answer'd every echo round,
 From turret, rock, and bay ;
 The postern hinges crash and groan,
 And soon the Warder's cresset shone
 On those rude steps of slippery stone,
 To light the upward way.
 " Thrice welcome, holy Sire ! " he said ;
 " Full long the spousal train have staid,
 And, vex'd at thy delay,
 Fear'd lest, amidst these wildering seas,
 The darksome night and freshening breeze
 Had driven thy bark astray. " —

XXV.

" Warder," the younger stranger said,
 " Thine erring guess some mirth had made
 In mirthful hour ; but nights like these,
 When the rough winds wake western seas,
 Brook not of glee. We crave some aid
 And needful shelter for this maid
 Until the break of day ;
 For to ourselves, the deck's rude plank
 Is easy as the mossy bank
 That's breathed upon by May.
 And for our storm-toss'd skiff we seek
 Short shelter in this leeward creek,
 Prompt when the dawn the east shall streak
 Again to bear away. " —
 Answered the Warder, — " In what name
 Assert ye hospitable claim ?

Whence come, or whither bound?
 Hath Erin seen your parting sails,
 Or come ye on Norwayan gales?
 And seek ye England's fertile vales,
 Or Scotland's mountain ground?"

XXVI.

'Warriors—for other title none
 For some brief space we list to own,
 Bound by a vow—warriors are we;
 In strife by land, and storm by sea.
 We have been known to fame;
 And these brief words have import dear,
 When sounded in a noble ear,
 To harbour safe, and friendly cheer,
 That gives us rightful claim.
 Grant us the trivial boon we seek,
 And we in other realms will speak
 Fair of your courtesy;
 Deny—and be your niggard Hold
 Scorn'd by the noble and the bold,
 Shunn'd by the pilgrim on the wold,
 And wanderer on the lea!"—

XXVII.

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

XXVIII.

To land these two bold brethren leapt,
 (The weary crew their vessel kept,)
 And, lighted by the torches' flare,
 That seaward flung their smoky glare,
 The younger knight that maiden bare
 Half lifeless up the rock;
 On his strong shoulder lean'd her head.
 And down her long dark tresses shed,
 As the wild vine, in tendrils spread,
 Droops from the mountain oak.

* Sir William Wallace

Him follow'd close that elder Lord,
 And in his hand a sheathed sword,
 Such as few arms could wield ;
 But when he boun'd him to such task,
 Well could it cleave the strongest casque,
 And rend the surest shield.

XXIX.

The raised portcullis' arch they pass,
 The wicket with its bars of brass,
 The entrance long and low,
 Flank'd at each turn by loop-holes strait,
 Where bowmen might in ambush wait,
 (If force or fraud should burst the gate,)
 To gall an entering foe.
 But every jealous post of ward
 Was now defenceless and unbarr'd,
 And all the passage free
 To one low-brow'd and vaulted room,
 Where squire and yeoman, page and groom,
 Plied their loud revelry.

XXX.

And "Rest ye here," the Warder bade,
 "Till to our Lord your suit is said. —
 And, comrades, gaze not on the maid,
 And on these men who ask our aid,
 As if ye ne'er had seen
 A damsel tired of midnight bark,
 Or wanderers of a moulding stark,
 And bearing martial mien."
 But not for Eachin's reproof
 Would page or vassal stand aloof,
 But crowded on to stare,
 As men of courtesy untaught,
 Till fiery Edward roughly caught,
 From one the foremost there,
 His chequer'd plaid, and in its shroud,
 To hide her from the vulgar crowd,
 Involved his sister fair.
 His brother, as the clansman bent
 His sullen brow in discontent,
 Made brief and stern excuse ;—
 "Vassal, were thine the cloak of pall
 That decks thy lord in bridal hall,
 'Twere honour'd by her use."

XXXI.

Proud was his tone, but calm ; his eye
 Had that compelling dignity,
 His mien that bearing haught and high,
 Which common spirits fear !
 Needed nor word nor signal more,
 Nod, wink, and laughter, all were o'er ;
 Upon each other back they bore,
 And gazed like startled deer.

But now appear'd the Seneschal,
 Commission'd by his lord to call
 The strangers to the Baron's hall,
 Where feasted fair and free
 That Island Prince in nuptial tide,
 With Edith there his lovely bride,
 And her bold brother by her side,
 And many a chief, the flower and pride
 Of Western land and sea.

Here pause we, gentles, for a space :
 And, if our tale hath won your grace,
 Grant us brief patience, and again
 We will renew the minstrel strain.

CANTO SECOND.

I.

FILL the bright goblet, spread the festive board !
 Summon the gay, the noble, and the fair !
 Through the loud hall, in joyous concert pour'd
 Let mirth and music sound the dirge of Care !
 But ask thou not if Happiness be there,
 If the loud laugh disguise convulsive throes,
 Or if the brow the heart's true livery wear ;
 Lift not the festal mask !—enough to know,
 No scene of mortal life but teems with mortal woe.

II.

With beakers' clang, with harpers' lay,
 With all that olden time deem'd gay,
 The Island Chieftain feasted high ;
 But there was in his troubled eye
 A gloomy fire, and on his brow,
 Now sudden flush'd, and faded now,
 Emotions such as draw their birth
 From deeper source than festal mirth.
 By fits he paused, and harper's strain
 And jester's tale went round in vain,
 Or fell but on his idle ear
 Like distant sounds which dreamers hear.
 Then would he rouse him, and employ
 Each art to aid the clamorous joy,
 And call for pledge and lay,
 And, for brief space, of all the crowd
 As he was loudest of the loud,
 Seem gayest of the gay.

III.

Yet nought amiss the bridal throng
 Mark'd in brief mirth, or musing long :

The vacant brow, the unlistening ear,
 They gave to thoughts of raptures near,
 And his fierce starts of sudden glee
 Seem'd bursts of bridegroom's ecstasy.
 Nor thus alone misjudged the crowd,
 Since lofty Lorn, suspicious, proud,
 And jealous of his honour'd line,
 And that keen knight, De Argentine,
 (From England sent on errand high,
 The western league more firm to tie,
 Both deem'd in Ronald's mood to find
 A lover's transport-troubled mind.
 But one sad heart, one tearful eye,
 Pierced deeper through the mystery,
 And watch'd, with agony and fear,
 Her wayward bridegroom's varied cheer.

IV.

She watch'd—yet fear'd to meet his glance,
 And he shunn'd hers;—till when by chance
 They met, the point of foeman's lance
 Had given a milder pang!
 Beneath the intolerable smart
 He writhed—then sternly mann'd his heart
 To play his hard but destined part,
 And from the table sprang.
 “ Fill me the mighty cup ! ” he said,
 “ Erst own'd by royal Somerled :
 Fill it, till on the studded brim
 In burning gold the bubbles swim,
 And every gem of varied shine
 Glow doubly bright in rosy wine !
 To you, brave lord, and brother mine.
 Of Lorn, this pledge I drink—
 The Union of Our House with thine.
 By this fair bridal-link ! ”—

V.

“ Let it pass round ! ” quoth He of Lorn,
 “ And in good time—that winded horn
 Must of the Abbot tell ;
 The laggard monk is come at last.”
 Lord Ronald heard the bagle-blast,
 And on the floor at random cast,
 The untasted goblet fell.
 But when the Warder in his ear
 Tells other news, his blither cheer
 Returns like sun of May,
 When through a thunder-cloud it beams !
 Lord of two hundred isles, he seems
 As glad of brief delay,
 As some poor criminal might feel,
 When, from the gibbet or the wheel,
 Respited for a day.

VI.

"Brother of Lorn," with hurried voice
 He said, "And you, fair lords, rejoice!
 Here, to augment our glee,
 Come wandering knights from travel far,
 Well proved, they say, in strife of war,
 And tempest on the sea.—
 Ho! give them at your board such place
 As best their presences may grace,
 And bid them welcome free!"
 With solemn step, and silver wand,
 The Seneschal the presence scann'd
 Of these strange guests; and well he knew
 How to assign their rank its due;
 For though the costly furs
 That erst had deck'd their caps were torn,
 And their gay robes were over-worn,
 And soil'd their gilded spurs,
 Yet such a high commanding grace
 Was in their mien and in their face,
 As suited best the princely dais,
 And royal canopy;
 And there he marshall'd them their place,
 First of that company.

VII.

Then lords and ladies spake aside,
 And angry looks the error chide,
 That gave to guests unnamed, unknown.
 A place so near their prince's throne;
 But Owen Erraught said—
 "For forty years a seneschal,
 To marshal guests in bower and hall
 Has been my honour'd trade.
 Worship and birth to me are known,
 By look, by bearing, and by tone,
 Not by furr'd robe or broider'd zone;
 And 'gainst an oaken bough
 I'll gage my silver wand of state,
 That these three strangers oft have sate
 In higher place than now."—

VIII.

"I, too," the aged Ferrand said,
 "Am qualified by minstrel trade
 Of rank and place to tell;—
 Mark'd ye the younger stranger's eye,
 My mates, how quick, how keen, how high
 How fierce its flashes fell,
 Glancing among the noble rout
 As if to seek the noblest out,
 Because the owner might not brook
 On any save his peers to look?
 And yet it moves me more,
 That steady, calm, majestic brow.

With which the elder chief even now
 Scann'd the gay presence o'er,
 Like being of superior kind,
 In whose high-toned impartial mind
 Degrees of mortal rank and state
 Seem objects of indifferent weight.
 The lady too—though, closely tied,
 The mantle veil both face and eye,
 Her motions' grace it could not hide,
 Nor could her form's fair symmetry.

IX.

Suspicious doubt and lordly scorn
 Lour'd on the haughty front of Lorn.
 From underneath his brows of pride,
 The stranger guests he sternly eyed,
 And whisper'd closely what the ear
 Of Argentine alone might hear;
 Then question'd, high and brief,
 If, in their voyage, aught they knew
 Of the rebellious Scottish crew,
 Who to Rath-Erin's shelter drew,
 With Carrick's outlaw'd Chief!
 And if, their winter's exile o'er,
 They harbour'd still by Ulster's shore,
 Or launch'd their galleys on the main,
 To vex their native land again?

X.

That younger stranger, fierce and high,
 At once confronts the Chieftain's eye
 With look of equal scorn;—
 "Of rebels have we nought to show;
 But if of royal Bruce thou'dst know,
 I warn thee he has sworn,
 Ere thrice three days shall come and go,
 His banner Scottish winds shall blow,
 Despite each mean or mighty foe,
 From England's every bill and bow,
 To Allaster of Lorn."
 Kindled the mountain Chieftain's ire,
 But Ronald quench'd the rising fire;—
 "Brother, it better suits the time
 To chase the night with Ferrand's rhyme,
 Than wake, 'midst mirth and wine, the jars
 That flow from these unhappy wars."
 "Content," said Lorn, and spoke apart
 With Ferrand, master of his art,
 Then whisper'd Argentine,—
 "The lay I named will carry smart
 To these bold strangers' haughty heart,
 If right this guess of mine."
 He ceased, and it was silence all,
 Until the minstrel waked the hall.

XI.

The Brooch of Lorn.

“ Whence the brooch of burning gold,
That clasps the Chieftain’s mantle-fold,
Wrought and chased with rare device,
Studded fair with gems of price,
On the varied tartans beaming,
As, through night’s pale rainbow gleaming,
Fainter now, now seen afar,
Fitful shines the northern star ?

“ Gem ! ne’er wrought on Highland mountain,
Did the fairy of the fountain,
Or the mermaid of the wave,
Frame thee in some coral cave ?
Did, in Iceland’s darksome mine,
Dwarf’s swart hands thy metal twine ?
Or mortal-moulded, comest thou here,
From England’s love, or France’s fear !

XII.

Song continued.

“ No !—thy splendours nothing tell
Foreign art or faëry spell.
Moulded thou for monarch’s use,
By the overweening Bruce,
When the royal robe he tied
O’er a heart of wrath and pride ;
Thence in triumph wert thou torn,
By the victor hand of Lorn !

“ When the gem was won and lost,
Widely was the war cry toss’d !
Rung aloud Bendourish fell,
Answer’d Douchart’s sounding dell,
Fled the deer from wild Teyndrum,
When the homicide, o’ercome,
Hardly ’scaped, with scathe and scorn,
Left the pledge with conquering Lorn !

XIII.

Song concluded.

“ Vain was then the Douglas brand,
Vain the Campbell’s vaunted hand,
Vain Kirkpatrick’s bloody dirk,
Making sure of murder’s work ;
Barendown fled fast away,
Fled the Fiery de la Haye,
When this brooch, triumphant borne,
Beam’d upon the breast of Lorn !

“Farthest fled its former Lord,
Left his men to brand and cord,
Bloody brand of Highland steel,
English gibbet, axe, and wheel,
Let him fly from coast to coast,
Dogg'd by Comyn's vengeful ghost,
While his spoils, in triumph worn,
Long shall grace victorious Lorn !”

XIV.

As glares the tiger on his foes,
Hemm'd in by hunters, spears, and bows,
And, ere he bounds upon the ring,
Selects the object of his spring,—
Now on the Bard, now on his Lord,
So Edward glared and grasp'd his sword—
But stern his brother spoke,—“Be still.
What ! art thou yet so wild of will,
After high deeds and sufferings long,
To chafe thee for a menial's song ?—
Well hast thou framed, Old Man, thy strains,
To praise the hand that pays thy pains !
Yet something might thy song have told
Of Lorn's three vassals, true and bold,
Who rent their Lord from Bruce's hold,
As underneath his knee he lay,
And died to save him in the fray.
I've heard the Bruce's cloak and clasp
Was clench'd within their dying grasp,
What time a hundred foemen more
Rush'd in, and back the victor bore,
Long after Lorn had left the strife,
Full glad to 'scape with limb and life.—
Enough of this—And, Minstrel, hold,
As minstrel-hire, this chain of gold,
For future lays a fair excuse,
To speak more nobly of the Bruce.”—

XV.

“Now, by Columba's shrine, I swear,
And every saint that's buried there,
'Tis he himself !” Lorn sternly cries,
“And for my kinsman's death he dies.”
As loudly Ronald calls—“Forbear !
Not in my sight while brand I wear,
O'ermatch'd by odds, shall warrior fall,
Or blood of stranger stain my hall !
This ancient fortress of my race
Shall be misfortune's resting-place,
Shelter and shield of the distress'd,
No slaughter-house for shipwreck'd guest.
“Talk not to me,” fierce Lorn replied,
“Of odds or match !—when Comyn died,
Three daggers clash'd within his side !

Talk not to me of sheltering hall—
 The Church of God saw Comyn fall !
 On God's own altar stream'd his blood,
 While o'er my prostrate kinsman stood
 The ruthless murderer—e'en as now—
 With armed hand and scornful brow !—
 Up, all who love me ! blow on blow !
 And lay the outlaw'd felons low !”

XVI.

Then up sprang many a mainland Lord,
 Obedient to their Chieftain's word.
 Barcaldine's arm is high in air,
 And Kinloch-Alline's blade is bare,
 Black Murthok's dirk has left its sheath,
 And clench'd is Dermid's hand of death,
 Their mutter'd threats of vengeance swell
 Into a wild and warlike yell ;
 Onward they press with weapons high,
 The affrighted females shriek and fly,
 And, Scotland, then thy brightest ray
 Had darken'd ere its noon of day,—
 But every chief of birth and fame,
 That from the Isles of Ocean came,
 At Ronald's side that hour withstood
 Fierce Lorn's relentless thirst for blood.

XVII.

Brave Torquil from Dunvegan high,
 Lord of the misty hills of Skye,
 Mac-Niel, wild Bara's ancient thane,
 Duart, of bold Clan-Gillian's strain,
 Fergus, of Canna's castled bay,
 Mac-Duffiith, Lord of Colonsay,
 Soon as they saw the broadswords glance,
 With ready weapons rose at once,
 More prompt, that many an ancient feud,
 Full oft suppress'd, full oft renew'd,
 Glow'd 'twixt the chieftains of Argyle,
 And many a lord of ocean's isle.
 Wild was the scene—each sword was bare,
 Back stream'd each chieftain's shaggy hair,
 In gloomy opposition set,
 Eyes, hands, and brandish'd weapons met :
 Blue gleaming o'er the social board,
 Flash'd to the torches many a sword ;
 And soon those bridal lights may shine
 On purple blood for rosy wine.

XVIII.

While thus for blows and death prepared,
 Each heart was up, each weapon bared,
 Each foot advanced,—a surly pause
 Still revered hospitable laws.
 All menaced violence, but alike
 Reluctant each the first to strike,

(For aye accursed in minstrel line
 Is he who brawls 'mid song and wine,)
 And, match'd in numbers and in might,
 Doubtful and desperate seem'd the fight.
 Thus threat and murmur died away,
 Till on the crowded hall there lay
 Such silence, as the deadly still,
 Ere bursts the thunder on the hill.
 With blade advanced, each Chieftain bold
 Shew'd like the Swordsman's form of old,
 As wanting still the torch of life,
 To wake the marble into strife.

XIX.

That awful pause the stranger maid,
 And Edith, seized to pray for aid.
 As to De Argentine she clung,
 Away her veil the stranger flung,
 And, lovely 'mid her wild despair,
 Fast stream'd her eyes, wide flow'd her hair :—
 " O thou, of knighthood once the flower,
 Sure refuge in distressful hour,
 Thou, who in Judah well hast fought
 For our dear faith, and oft has sought
 Renown in knightly exercise,
 When this poor hand has dealt the prize,
 Say, can thy soul of honour brook
 On the unequal strife to look,
 When, butcher'd thus in peaceful hall,
 Those once thy friends, my brethren, fall
 To Argentine she turn'd her word,
 But her eye sought the Island Lord.
 A flush like evening's setting flame
 Glow'd on his cheek ; his hardy frame.
 As with a brief convulsion, shook :
 With hurried voice and eager look,—
 " Fear not," he said, " my Isabel !
 What said I—Edith !—all is well—
 Nay, fear not—I will well provide
 The safety of my lovely bride—
 My bride?"—but there the accents clung
 In tremor to his faltering tongue.

XX.

Now rose De Argentine, to claim
 The prisoners in his sovereign's name,
 To England's crown, who, vassals sworn,
 'Gainst their liege lord had weapon borne—
 (Such speech, I ween, was but to hide
 His care their safety to provide ;
 For knight more true in thought and deed
 Than Argentine, ne'er spur'd a steed)—
 And Ronald, who his meaning guess'd,
 Seem'd half to sanction the request.

This purpose fiery Torquil broke :—
 “ Somewhat we’ve heard of England’s yoke,”
 He said, “ and, in our islands, Fame
 Hath whisper’d of a lawful claim,
 That calls the Bruce fair Scotland’s Lord,
 Though dispossest’d by foreign sword.
 This craves reflection—but though right
 And just the charge of England’s Knight,
 Let England’s crown her rebels seize
 Where she has power ;—in towers like these
 ’Midst Scottish Chieftains summon’d here
 To bridal mirth and bridal cheer,
 Be sure, with no consent of mine,
 Shall either Lorn or Argentine
 With chains or violence, in our sight,
 Oppress a brave and banish’d Knight.”

XXI.

Then waked the wild debate again,
 With brawling threat and clamour vain.
 Vassals and menials, thronging in,
 Lent their brute rage to swell the din ;
 When, far and wide, a bugle-clang
 From the dark ocean upward rang.
 “ The Abbot comes ! ” they cry at once,
 “ The holy man, whose favour’d glance
 Hath sainted visions known ;
 Angels have met him on the way,
 Beside the blessed martyr’s bay,
 And by Columba’s stone.
 His monks have heard their hymnings high
 Sound from the summit of Dun-Y,
 To cheer his penance lone,
 When at each cross, on girth and wold,
 (Their number thrice a hundred-fold,)
 His prayer he made, his beads he told,
 With Aves many a one—
 He comes our feuds to reconcile,
 A sainted man from sainted isle ;
 We will his holy doom abide,
 The Abbot shall our strife decide.”

XXII.

Scarcely this fair accord was o’er,
 When through the wide revolving door
 The black-stol’d brethren wind ;
 Twelve sandall’d monks, who relics bore.
 With many a torch-bearer before,
 And many a cross behind.
 Then sunk each fierce uplifted hand,
 And dagger bright and flashing brand
 Dropp’d swiftly at the sight ;
 They vanish’d from the Churchman’s eye.
 As shooting stars, that glance and die,
 Dart from the vault of night.

XXIII.

The Abbot on the threshold stood,
 And in his hand the holy rood ;
 Back on his shoulders flow'd his hood,
 The torch's glaring ray
 Shew'd in its red and flashing light
 His wither'd cheek and amice white,
 His blue eye glistening cold and bright,
 His tresses scant and gray.
 " Fair Lords," he said, " Our Lady's love
 And peace be with you from above,
 And Benedicite !—
 —But what means this ?—no peace is here !
 Do dirks unsheathed suit bridal cheer ?
 Or are these naked brands
 A seemly show for Churchman's sight,
 When he comes summon'd to unite
 Betrothed hearts and hands ?"

XXIV.

Then, cloaking hate with fiery zeal,
 Proud Lord first answer'd the appeal ; —
 " Thou comest, O holy Man,
 True sons of blessed Church to greet,
 But little deeming here to meet
 A wretch, beneath the ban
 Of Pope and Church, for murder done
 Even on the sacred altar-stone—
 Well mayst thou wonder we should know
 Such miscreant here, nor lay him low,
 Or dream of greeting, peace, or truce,
 With excommunicated Bruce !
 Yet well I grant, to end debate,
 Thy sainted voice decide his fate."

XXV.

Then Ronald pled the stranger's cause,
 And knighthood's oath and honour's laws ;
 And Isabel, on bended knee,
 Brought pray'rs and tears to back the plea :
 And Edith lent her generous aid,
 And wept, and Lorn for mercy pray'd.
 " Hence," he exclaimed, " degenerate maid !
 Was't not enough, to Ronald's bower
 I brought thee, like a paramour,
 Or bondmaid at her master's gate,
 His careless cold approach to wait ?—
 But the bold Lord of Cumberland,
 The gallant Clifford, seeks thy hand ;
 His it shall be—Nay, no reply !
 Hence ! till those rebel eyes be dry." ..
 With grief the Abbot heard and saw,
 Yet nought relax'd his brow of awe.

XXVI.

Then Argentine, in England's name,
 So highly uræd his sovereign's claim

He waked a spark, that, long suppress'd,
 Had smoulder'd in Lord Ronald's breast;
 And now, as from the flint the fire,
 Flash'd forth at once his generous ire.
 "Enough of noble blood," he said,
 "By English Edward had been shed,
 Since matchless Wallace first had been
 In mock'ry crown'd with wreaths of green
 And done to death by felon hand,
 For guarding well his father's land.
 Where's Nigel Bruce? and De la Haye,
 And valiant Seton—where are they?
 Where Somerville, the kind and free?
 And Fraser, flower of chivalry?
 Have they not been on gibbet bound,
 Their quarters flung to hawk and hound,
 And hold we here a cold debate.
 To yield more victims to their fate?
 What! can the English Leopard's mood
 Never be gorged with northern blood?
 Was not the life of Athole shed,
 To soothe the tyrant's sicken'd bed:
 And must his word, till dying day,
 Be nought but quarter, hang, and slay!—
 Thou frownst, De Argentine,—My gage
 Is prompt to prove the strife I wage."—

XXVII.

"Nor deem," said stout Dunvegan's knight,
 "That thou shalt brave alone the fight!
 By saints of isle and mainland both,
 By Woden wild, (my grandsire's oath,)
 Let Rome and England do their worst,
 Howe'er attainted or accursed,
 If Bruce shall e'er find friends again,
 Once more to brave a battle-plain,
 If Douglas couch again his lance,
 Or Randolph dare another chance,
 Old Torquil will not be to lack
 With twice a thousand at his back.—
 Nay, chafe not at my bearing bold,
 Good Abbot! for thou know'st of old,
 Torquil's rude thought and stubborn will
 Smack of the wild Norwegian still;
 Nor will I barter Freedom's cause
 For England's wealth, or Rome's applause

XXVIII.

The Abbot seem'd with eye severe
 The hardy Chieftain's speech to hear;
 Then on the Monarch turn'd the Monk,
 But twice his courage came and sunk,
 Confronted with the hero's look;
 Twice fell his eye, his accents shook:

At length, resolved in tone and brow,
 Sternly he question'd him—" And thou,
 Unhappy! what hast thou to plead,
 Why I denounce not on thy deed
 That awful doom which canons tell
 Shuts paradise, and opens hell ;
 Anathema of power so dread,
 It blends the living with the dead,
 Bids each good angel soar away,
 And every ill one claim his prey ;
 Expels thee from the Church's care,
 And deafens Heaven against thy prayer ;
 Arms every hand against thy life,
 Bans all who aid thee in the strife,
 Nay, each whose succour, cold and scant,
 With meanest alms relieves thy want ;
 Haunts thee while living,—and, when dead,
 Dwells on thy yet devoted head,
 Rends Honour's scutcheon from thy hearse,
 Stills o'er thy bier the holy verse,
 And spurns thy corpse from hallow'd ground,
 Flung like vile carrion to the hound ;
 Such is the dire and desperate doom
 For sacrilege, decreed by Rome ;
 And such the well-deserved meed
 Of thine unhallow'd, ruthless deed."—

XXIX.

" Abbot!" The Bruce replied, " thy charge
 It boots not to dispute at large.
 This much, howe'er, I bid thee know,
 No selfish vengeance dealt the blow,
 For Comyn died his country's foe.
 Nor blame I friends whose ill-timed speed
 Fulfill'd my soon-repent'd deed,
 Nor censure those from whose stern tongue
 The dire anathema has rung.
 I only blame mine own wild ire,
 By Scotland's wrongs incensed to fire.
 Heaven knows my purpose to atone,
 Far as I may, the evil done,
 And hears a penitent's appeal
 From papal curse and prelate's zeal.
 My first and dearest task achieved,
 Fair Scotland from her thrall relieved
 Shall many a priest in cope and stole
 Say requiem for Red Comyn's soul,
 While I the blessed cross advance,
 And expiate this unhappy chance
 In Palestine, with sword and lance.
 But, while content the Church should know
 My conscience owns the debt I owe,
 Unto De Argentine and Lorn
 The name of traitor I return.

Bid them defiance stern and high,
 And give them in their throats the lie !
 These brief words spoke, I speak no more.
 Do what thou wilt ; my shrift is o'er."

XXX.

Like man by prodigy amazed,
 Upon the King the Abbot gazed ;
 Then o'er his pallid features glance,
 Convulsions of ecstatic trance.
 His breathing came more thick and fast,
 And from his pale blue eyes were cast
 Strange rays of wild and wandering light ;
 Uprise his locks of silver white,
 Flush'd is his brow, through every vein
 In azure tide the currents strain,
 And undistinguish'd accents broke
 The awful silence ere he spoke.

XXXI.

" De Bruce ! I rose with purpose dread
 To speak my curse upon thy head,
 And give thee as an outcast o'er
 To him who burns to shed thy gore ;—
 But, like the Midianite of old,
 Who stood on Zophim, heaven-controll'd,
 I feel within mine aged breast
 A power that will not be repress'd.
 It prompts my voice, it swells my veins,
 It burns, it maddens, it constrains !—
 De Bruce, thy sacrilegious blow
 Hath at God's altar slain thy foe :
 O'er-master'd yet by high behest,
 I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd !"
 He spoke, and o'er the astonish'd throng
 Was silence, awful, deep, and long.

XXXII.

Again that light has fired his eye,
 Again his form swells bold and high,
 The broken voice of age is gone,
 'Tis vigorous manhood's lofty tone :—
 " Thrice vanquish'd on the battle-plain,
 Thy followers slaughter'd, fled, or ta'en,
 A hunted wanderer on the wild,
 On foreign shores a man exiled,
 Disown'd, deserted, and distress'd,
 I bless thee, and thou shalt be bless'd !
 Bless'd in the hall and in the field,
 Under the mantle as the shield.
 Avenger of thy country's shame,
 Restorer of her injured fame,
 Bless'd in thy sceptre and thy sword,
 De Bruce, fair Scotland's rightful Lord.
 Bless'd in thy deeds and in thy fame,
 What lengthen'd honours wait thy name !

In distant ages, sire to son
 Shall tell thy tale of freedom won,
 And teach his infants, in the use
 Of earliest speech, to falter Bruce.
 Go, then, triumphant! sweep along
 Thy course, the theme of many a song!
 The Power, whose dictates swell my breast,
 Hath bless'd thee, and thou shalt be bless'd . . .
 Enough—my short-lived strength decays,
 And sinks the momentary blaze.—
 Heaven hath our destined purpose broke,
 Not here must nuptial vow be spoke;
 Brethren, our errand here is o'er,
 Our task discharged—Unmoor, unmoor!"
 His priests received the exhausted Monk,
 As breathless in their arms he sunk.
 Punctual his orders to obey,
 The train refused all longer stay,
 Embark'd, raised sail, and bore away.

CANTO THIRD.

I.

HAST thou not mark'd, when o'er thy startled head
 Sudden and deep the thunder-peal has roll'd,
 How, when its echoes fell, a silence dead
 Sunk on the wood, the meadow, and the wold?
 The rye-grass shakes not on the sod-built fold,
 The rustling aspen's leaves are mute and still,
 The wallflower waves not on the ruin'd hold,
 Till, murmuring distant first, then near and shrill,
 The savage whirlwind wakes, and sweeps the groaning hill.

II.

Artornish! such a silence sunk
 Upon thy halls, when that gray Monk
 His prophet-speech had spoke;
 And his obedient brethren's sail
 Was stretch'd to meet the southern gale
 Before a whisper woke.
 Then murmuring sounds of doubt and fear,
 Close pour'd in many an anxious ear,
 The solemn stillness broke;
 And still they gazed with eager guess,
 Where, in an oriel's deep recess,
 The Island Prince seem'd bent to press
 What Lorn, by his impatient cheer,
 And gesture fierce, scarce deign'd to hear.

III.

Starting at length, with frowning look,
 His hand he clench'd, his head he shook,

And sternly flung apart ;—
 “ And deem'st thou me so mean of mood,
 As to forget the mortal feud,
 And clasp the hand with blood imbrued
 From my dear Kinsman's heart ?
 Is this thy rede ?—a due return
 For ancient league and friendship sworn !
 But well our mountain proverb shows
 The faith of Islesmen ebbs and flows.
 Be it even so—believe, ere long,
 He that now bears shall wreak the wrong.—
 Call Edith—call the Maid of Lorn !
 My sister, slaves !—for further scorn
 Be sure nor she nor I will stay.—
 Away, De Argentine, away !—
 We nor ally nor brother know,
 In Bruce's friend, or England's foe.”

IV.

But who the Chieftain's rage can tell,
 When, sought from lowest dungeon cell
 To highest tower the castle round,
 No Lady Edith was there found !
 He shouted—“ Falsehood !—treachery !
 Revenge and blood !—a lordly meed
 To him that will avenge the deed !
 A Baron's lands !”—His frantic mood
 Was scarcely by the news withstood,
 That Morag shared his sister's flight,
 And that, in hurry of the night,
 'Scaped noteless, and without remark,
 Two strangers sought the Abbot's bark.—
 “ Man every galley—fly—pursue !
 The priest his treachery shall rue !
 Ay, and the time shall quickly come,
 When we shall hear the thanks that Rome
 Will pay his feigned prophecy !”
 Such was fierce Lorn's indignant cry ;
 And Cormac Doil in haste obey'd,
 Hoisted his sail, his anchor weigh'd,
 (For, glad of each pretext for spoil,
 A pirate sworn was Cormac Doil.)
 But others, lingering, spoke apart,—
 “ The Maid has given her maiden heart
 To Ronald of the Isles,
 And, fearful lest her brother's word
 Bestow her on that English Lord,
 She seeks Iona's piles,
 And wisely deems it best to dwell
 A votaress in the holy cell,
 Until these feuds so fierce and fell
 The Abbot reconciles.”

V.

As, impotent of ire, the hall
 Echo'd to Lorn's impotent call—

" My horse, my mantle, and my train !
 Let none who honours Lorn remain !"—
 Courteous, but stern, a bold request
 To Bruce De Argentine express'd :—
 " Lord Earl," he said, " I cannot chuse
 But yield such title to the Bruce,
 Though name and earldom both are gone,
 Since he braced rebel's armour on—
 But, Earl or Serf, rude phrase was thine
 Of late, and launch'd at Argentine ;
 Such as compels me to demand
 Redress of honour at thy hand.
 We need not to each other tell,
 That both can wield their weapons well ;
 Then do me but the soldier grace,
 This glove upon thy helm to place
 Where we may meet in fight ;
 And I will say, as still I've said,
 Though by ambition far misled,
 Thou art a noble knight."—

VI.

" And I," the princely Bruce replied,
 " Might term it stain on knighthood's pride,
 That the bright sword of Argentine
 Should in a tyrant's quarrel shine ;
 But, for your brave request,
 Be sure the honour'd pledge you gave
 In every battle-field shall wave
 Upon my helmet-crest ;
 Believe, that if my hasty tongue
 Hath done thine honour causeless wrong,
 It shall be well redress'd.
 Not dearer to my soul was glove,
 Bestow'd in youth by lady's love,
 Than this which thou hast given !
 Thus, then, my noble foe I greet ;
 Health and high fortune till we meet,
 And then—what pleases Heaven."

VII.

Thus parted they—for now, with sound
 Like waves roll'd back from rocky ground,
 The friends of Lorn retire ;
 Each mainland chieftain, with his train,
 Draws to his mountain towers again,
 Pondering how mortal schemes prove vain,
 And mortal hopes expire.
 But through the castle double guard,
 By Ronald's charge, kept wakeful ward,
 Wicket and gate were trebly barr'd,
 By beam and bolt and chain ;
 Then of the guests, in courteous sort,
 He pray'd excuse for mirth broke short.
 And bade them in Artornish fort
 In confidence remain.

Now torch and menial tendance led
 Chieftain and knight to bower and bed,
 And beads were told, and Aves said,
 And soon they sunk away
 Into such sleep as wont to shed
 Oblivion on the weary head,
 After a toilsome day.

VIII.

But soon aroused, the Monarch cried
 To Edward slumbering by his side—
 “Awake, or sleep for aye!
 Even now there jarr’d a secret door—
 A taper-light gleams on the floor—
 Up, Edward! up, I say!
 Some one glides in like midnight ghost—
 Nay, strike not! ’tis our noble Host.”
 Advancing then his taper’s flame,
 Ronald stepped forth, and with him came
 Dunvegan’s chief—each bent the knee
 To Bruce in sign of fealty,
 And proffer’d him his sword,
 And hail’d him, in a monarch’s style.
 As king of mainland and of isle,
 And Scotland’s rightful lord.
 “And O,” said Ronald, “Own’d of Heaven!
 Say, is my erring youth forgiven,
 By falsehood’s arts from duty driven,
 Who rebel falchion drew,
 Yet ever to thy deeds of fame,
 Even while I strove against thy claim,
 Paid homage just and true?”—
 “Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time,”
 Answer’d the Bruce, “must bear the crime,
 Since guiltier far than you,
 Even I”—he paused; for Falkirk’s woes
 Upon his conscious soul arose.
 The Chieftain to his breast he press’d,
 And in a sigh conceal’d the rest.

IX.

They proffer’d aid, by arms and might.
 To repossess him in his right;
 But well their counsels must be weigh’d,
 Ere banners raised and musters made,
 For English hire and Lorn’s intrigues
 Bound many chiefs in southern leagues.
 In answer, Bruce his purpose bold
 To his new vassals frankly told:—
 “The winter worn in exile o’er,
 I long’d for Carrick’s kindred shore.
 I thought upon my native Ayr,
 And long’d to see the burly fare
 That Clifford makes, whose lordly call
 Now echoes through my father’s hall.

But first my course to Arran led,
 Where valiant Lennox gathers head,
 And on the sea, by tempest toss'd,
 Our barks dispersed, our purpose cross'd.
 Mine own, a hostile sail to shun,
 Far from her destined course had run,
 When that wise will, which masters ours,
 Compell'd us to your friendly towers."

X.

Then Torquil spoke:—"The time craves speed,
 We must not linger in our deed,
 But instant pray our Sovereign Liege,
 To shun the perils of a siege.
 The vengeful Lorn, with all his powers,
 Lies but too near Artornish towers,
 And England's light-arm'd vessels ride,
 Not distant far, the waves of Clyde,
 Prompt at these tidings to unmoor,
 And sweep each strait, and guard each shore.
 Then, till this fresh alarm pass by,
 Secret and safe my Liege must lie
 In the far bounds of friendly Skye,
 Torquil thy pilot and thy guide."
 "Not so, brave Chieftain," Ronald cried;
 "Myself will on my Sovereign wait,
 And raise in arms the men of Sleate,
 Whilst thou, renown'd where chiefs debate,
 Shalt sway their souls by counsel sage,
 And awe them by thy locks of age."
 —"And if my words in weight shall fail,
 This ponderous sword shall turn the scale."

XI.

—"The scheme," said Bruce, "contents me well,
 Meantime, 'twere best that Isabel
 For safety, with my bark and crew,
 Again to friendly Erin drew.
 There, Edward, too, shall with her wend,
 In need to cheer her and defend,
 And muster up each scatter'd friend."—
 Here seem'd it as Lord Ronald's ear
 Would other counsel gladlier hear;
 But, all achieved as soon as plann'd,
 Both barks in secret arm'd and mann'd,
 From out the haven bore;
 On different voyage forth they ply,
 This for the coast of winged Skye,
 And that for Erin's shore.

XII.

With Bruce and Ronald bides the tale,—
 To favouring winds they gave the sail,
 Till Mull's dark headlands scarce they knew
 And Ardnamurchan's hills were blue.
 But then the squalls blew close and hard,
 And, fain to strike the galley's yard,

And take them to the oar,
 With these rude seas, in weary plight,
 They strove the livelong day and night,
 Nor till the dawning had a sight
 Of Skye's romantic shore.
 Where Coolin stoops him to the west,
 They saw upon his shiver'd crest
 The sun's arising gleam ;
 But such the labour and delay,
 Ere they were moor'd in Scavigh bay,
 (For calmer heaven compell'd to stay,)
 He shot a western beam.
 Then Ronald said—" If true mine eye,
 These are the savage wilds that lie
 North of Strathnardill and Dunskye ;
 No human foot comes here,
 And, since these adverse breezes blow,
 If my good Liege love hunter's bow,
 What hinders that on land we go,
 And strike a mountain-deer ?
 Allan, my page, shall with us wend ;
 A bow full deftly can he bend,
 And, if we meet a herd, may send
 A shaft shall mend our cheer."

Then each took bow and bolts in hand,
 Their row-boat launch'd, and leapt to land,
 And left their skiff and train,
 Where a wild stream with headlong shock,
 Came brawling down its bed of rock,
 To mingle with the main.

XIII.

A while their route they silent made,
 As men who stalk for mountain-deer,
 Till the good Bruce to Ronald said,—
 " Saint Mary ! what a scene is here !
 I've traversed many a mountain-strand,
 Abroad, and in my native land,
 And it has been my lot to tread
 Where safety more than pleasure led ;
 Thus, many a waste I've wander'd o'er,
 Clombe many a crag, cross'd many a moor,
 But, by my halidome,
 A scene so rude, so wild as this,
 Yet so sublime in barrenness,
 Ne'er did my wandering footsteps press,
 Where'er I happ'd to roam."

XIV.

No marvel thus the Monarch spake ;
 For rarely human eye has known
 A scene so stern as that dread lake,
 With its dark ledge of barren stone.
 Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
 Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way

Through the rude bosom of the bill,
 And that each naked precipice,
 Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
 Tells of the outrage still.
 The wildest glen, but this, can show
 Some touch of Nature's genial glow ;
 On high Benmore green mosses grow,
 And heath-bells bud in deep Glencroc,
 And copse on Cruchan-Ben ;
 But here,—above, around, below,
 On mountain or in glen,
 Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
 Nor ought of vegetative power,
 The weary eye may ken.
 For all is rocks at random thrown,
 Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
 As if were here denied
 The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,
 That clothe with many a varied hue
 The bleakest mountain-side.

XV.

And wilder, forward as they wound,
 Were the proud cliffs and lake profound.
 Huge terraces of granite black
 Afforded rude and cumber'd track ;
 For from the mountain hoar,
 Hurl'd headlong in some night of fear,
 When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,
 Loose crags had toppled o'er ;
 And some, chance-poised and balanced, lay,
 So that a stripling arm might sway
 A mass no host could raise,
 In Nature's rage at random thrown,
 Yet trembling like the Druid's stone
 On its precarious base.
 The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
 Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,
 Now left their foreheads bare,
 And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,
 Or on the sable waters curl'd,
 Or on the eddy breezes whirl'd,
 Dispersed in middle air.
 And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
 When, brief and fierce, the mountain shower
 Pours like a torrent down,
 And when return the sun's glad beams,
 Whiten'd with foam, a thousand streams
 Leap from the mountain's crown.

XVI.

“ This lake,” said Bruce, “ whose barriers drear
 Are precipices sharp and sheer,
 Yielding no track for goat or deer,

Save the black shelves we tread,
 How term you its dark waves? and how
 Yon northern mountain's pathless brow,
 And yonder peak of dread,
 That to the evening sun uplifts
 The grisly gulfs and slaty rifts,
 Which seam its shiver'd head?"

"Coriskin call the dark lake's name
 Coolin the ridge, as bards proclaim,
 From old Cuchullin, chief of fame.
 But bards, familiar in our isles
 Rather with Nature's frowns than smiles,
 Full oft their careless humours please
 By sportive names from scenes like these.
 I would old Torquil were to show
 His maidens with their breasts of snow,
 Or that my noble Liege were nigh
 To hear his Nurse sing lullaby!
 (The Maids—tall cliffs with breakers white,
 The Nurse—a torrent's roaring might,)
 Or that your eye could see the mood
 Of Corryvrekin's whirlpool rude,
 When dons the Hag her whiten'd hood—
 'Tis thus our islesmen's fancy frames,
 For scenes so stern, fantastic names."

XVII.

Answer'd the Bruce—"And musing mind
 Might here a graver moral find.
 These mighty cliffs, that heave on high
 Their naked brows to middle sky,
 Indifferent to the sun or snow,
 Where nought can fade, and nought can blow,
 May they not mark a Monarch's fate,—
 Raised high 'mid storms of strife and state,
 Beyond life's lowlier pleasures placed,
 His soul a rock, his heart a waste?
 O'er hope and love and fear aloft
 High rears his crowned head—But soft!
 Look, underneath yon jutting crag
 Are hunters and a slaughtered stag.
 Who may they be? But late you said
 No steps these desert regions tread?"—

XVIII.

"So said I—and believed in sooth,"
 Ronald replied, "I spoke the truth.
 Yet now I spy, by yonder stone,
 Five men—they mark us, and come on;
 And by their badge on bonnet borne,
 I guess them of the land of Lorn,
 Foes to my Liege."—"So let it be;
 I've faced worse odds than five to three—
 But the poor page can little aid;
 Then be our battle thus array'd,

If our free passage they contest,
 Cope thou with two, I'll match the rest."—
 "Not so, my Liege—for, by my life,
 This sword shall meet the treble strife;
 My strength, my skill in arms, more small
 And less the loss should Ronald fall.
 But islesmen soon to soldiers grow—
 Allan has sword as well as bow,
 And were my Monarch's orders given,
 Two shafts should make our number even."—
 "No! not to save my life!" he said;
 "Enough of blood rests on my head,
 Too rashly spill'd—we soon shall know,
 Whether they come as friend or foe."

XIX.

Nigh came the strangers, and more nigh;—
 Still less they pleased the Monarch's eye.
 Men were they all of evil mien,
 Down-look'd, unwilling to be seen;
 They moved with half-resolved pace,
 And bent on earth each gloomy face
 The foremost two were fair array'd,
 With brogue and bonnet, trews and plaid,
 And bore the arms of mountaineers
 Daggers and broadswords, bows and spears.
 The three, that lagg'd small space behind,
 Seem'd serfs of more degraded kind;
 Goat-skins or deer-hides o'er them cast,
 Made a rude fence against the blast;
 Their arms and feet and heads were bare,
 Matted their beards, unshorn their hair;
 For arms, the caitiffs bore in hand
 A club, an axe, a rusty brand.

XX.

Onward still mute, they kept the track;—
 "Tell who ye be, or else stand back,"
 Said Bruce;—"In deserts when they meet,
 Men pass not as in peaceful street."
 Still, at his stern command, they stood,
 And proffer'd greeting brief and rude,
 But acted courtesy so ill,
 As seem'd of fear, and not of will:—
 "Wanderers we are, as you may be—
 Men hither driven by wind and sea,
 Who, if you list to taste our cheer,
 Will share with you this fallow deer."—
 "If from the sea, where lies your bark?"—
 "Ten fathom deep in ocean dark!
 Wreck'd yesternight: but we are men,
 Who little sense of peril ken.
 The shades come down—the day is shut—
 Will you go with us to our hut!"—

“ Our vessel waits us in the bay ;
 Thanks for your proffer—have good-day.”—
 “ Was that your galley, then, which rode
 Not far from shore when evening glow’d ? ”—
 “ It was.”—“ Then spare your needless pain,
 There will she now be sought in vain.
 We saw her from the mountain head,
 When, with St George’s blazon red,
 A southern vessel bore in sight,
 And yours raised sail, and took to flight.”

XXI.

“ Now, by the rood, unwelcome news ! ”
 Thus with Lord Ronald communed Bruce :
 “ Nor rests there light enough to show
 If this their tale be true or no.
 The men seem bred of churlish kind,
 Yet mellow nuts have hardest rind ;
 We will go with them—food and fire
 And sheltering roof our wants require.
 Sure guard ’gainst treachery will we keep,
 And watch by turns our comrades’ sleep.—
 Good fellows, thanks ; your guests we’ll be.
 And well will pay the courtesy.
 Come, lead us where your lodging lies,—
 Nay, soft ! we mix not companies.—
 Shew us the path o’er crag and stone,
 And we will follow you ;—lead on.”

XXII.

They reach’d the dreary cabin, made
 Of sails against a rock display’d,
 And there, on entering, found
 A slender boy, whose form and mien
 Ill suited with such savage scene,
 In cap and cloak of velvet green,
 Low seated on the ground.
 His garb was such as minstrels wear,
 Dark was his hue, and dark his hair,
 His youthful cheek was marr’d by care,
 His eyes in sorrow drown’d.
 “ Whence this poor boy ? ”—As Ronald spoke,
 The voice his trance of anguish broke ;
 As if awaked from ghastly dream,
 He raised his head with start and scream,
 And wildly gazed around ;
 Then to the wall his face he turn’d,
 And his dark neck with blushes burn’d.

XXIII.

“ Whose is the boy ? ” again he said.—
 “ By chance of war our captive made ;
 He may be yours, if you should hold
 That music hath more charms than gold ;
 For, though from earliest childhood mute,
 The lad can deftly touch the lute,

And on the rote and viol play,
 And well can drive the time away
 For those who love such glee :
 For me, the favouring breeze, when loud
 It pipes upon the galley's shroud,
 Makes blither melody."—

"Hath he, then, sense of spoken sound?"—

"Ay; so his mother bade us know,
 A crone in our late shipwreck drown'd,
 And hence the silly stripling's woe.

More of the youth I cannot say,
 Our captive but since yesterday;
 When wind and weather wax'd so grim,
 We little listed think of him.—

But why waste time in idle words?
 Sit to your cheer—unbelt your swords."

Sudden the captive turn'd his head,
 And one quick glance to Ronald sped.
 It was a keen and warning look,
 And well the Chief the signal took.

XXIV.

"Kind host," he said, "our needs require
 A separate board and separate fire;

For know, that on a pilgrimage
 Wend I, my comrade, and this page.

And, sworn to vigil and to fast,
 Long as this hallow'd task shall last,

We never doff the plaid or sword,
 Or feast us at a stranger's board;

And never share one common sleep,
 But one must still his vigil keep.

Thus, for our separate use, good friend,
 We'll hold this hut's remoter end."—

"A churlish vow," the elder said,
 "And hard, methinks, to be obey'd.

How say you, if, to wreak the scorn
 That pays our kindness harsh return,

We should refuse to share our meal?"—

"Then say we, that our swords are steel!
 And our vow binds us not to fast,

Where gold or force may buy repast."—
 Their host's dark brow grew keen and fell.

His teeth are clenched, his features swell;
 Yet sunk the felon's moody ire

Before Lord Ronald's glance of fire,
 Nor could his craven courage brook
 The Monarch's calm and dauntless look.

With laugh constrain'd—"Let every man
 Follow the fashion of his clan!

Each to his separate quarters keep,
 And feed or fast, or wake or sleep."

XXV

Their fire at separate distance burns,
 By turns they eat, keep guard by turns

For evil seem'd that old man's eye,
 Dark and designing, fierce yet shy.
 Still he avoided forward look,
 But slow and circumspectly took
 A circling, never-ceasing glance,
 By doubt and cunning mark'd at once,
 Which shot a mischief-boding ray,
 From under eyebrows shagg'd and gray.
 The younger, too, who seem'd his son,
 Had that dark look the timid shun ;
 The half-clad serfs behind them sate,
 And scowl'd a glare 'twixt fear and hate—
 Till all, as darkness onward crept,
 Couch'd down, and seem'd to sleep, or slept.
 Nor he, that boy, whose powerless tongue
 Must trust his eyes to wail his wrong,
 A longer watch of sorrow made,
 But stretch'd his limbs to slumber laid.

XXVI.

Not in his dangerous host confides
 The King, but wary watch provides.
 Ronald keeps watch till midnight past,
 Then wakes the King, young Allan last ;
 Thus rank'd, to give the youthful page
 The rest required by tender age.
 What is Lord Ronald's wakeful thought,
 To chase the languor toil had brought ?
 (For deem not that he deign'd to throw
 Much care upon such coward foe,)—
 He thinks of lovely Isabel,
 When at her foeman's feet she fell,
 Nor less when, placed in princely selle,
 She glanced on him with favouring eyes,
 At Woodstocke when he won the prize.
 Nor, fair in joy, in sorrow fair,
 In pride of place, as 'mid despair,
 Must she alone engross his care.
 His thoughts to his betrothed bride,
 To Edith, turn—O how decide,
 When here his love and heart are given,
 And there his faith stands plight to Heaven !
 No drowy ward 'tis his to keep,
 For seldom lovers long for sleep.
 Till sung his midnight hymn the owl,
 Answer'd the dog-fox with his howl,
 Then waked the King—at his request,
 Lord Ronald stretch'd himself to rest.

XXVII.

What spell was good King Robert's, say,
 To drive the weary night away ?
 His was the patriot's burning thought,
 Of Freedom's battle bravely fought.

Of castles storm'd, of cities freed,
 Of deep design and daring deed,
 Of England's roses reft and torn,
 And Scotland's cross in triumph worn,
 Of rout and rally, war and truce,—
 As heroes think, so thought the Bruce.
 No marvel, 'mid such musings high,
 Sleep shunn'd the Monarch's thoughtful eye. —
 Now over Coolin's eastern head
 The grayish light begins to spread,
 The otter to his cavern drew,
 And clamour'd shrill the wakening mew;
 Then watch'd the page—to needful rest
 The King resign'd his anxious breast.

XXVIII.

To Allan's eyes was harder task,
 The weary watch their safeties ask.
 He trimm'd the fire, and gave to shine
 With bickering light the splinter'd pine;
 Then gazed awhile, where silent laid
 Their hosts were shrouded by the plaid.
 But little fear waked in his mind,
 For he was bred of martial kind,
 And, if to manhood he arrive,
 May match the boldest knight alive.
 Then thought he of his mother's tower,
 His little sisters' greenwood bower,
 How there the Easter-gambols pass,
 And of Dan Joseph's lengthen'd mass.
 But still, before his weary eye,
 In rays prolong'd, the blazes die;—
 Again he roused him—on the lake
 Look'd forth, where now the twilight flake
 Of pale cold dawn began to wake.
 On Coolin's cliffs the mist lay furl'd,
 The morning breeze the lake had curl'd,
 The short dark waves heaved to the land,
 With ceaseless plash kiss'd cliff or sand;—
 It was a slumbrous sound—he turn'd
 To tales at which his youth had burn'd,
 Of pilgrim's path by demon cross'd,
 Of sprightly elf or yelling ghost,
 Of the wild witch's baneful cot,
 And mermaid's alabaster grot,
 Who bathes her limbs in sunless well,
 Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.
 Thither in fancy rapt he flies,
 And on his sight the vaults arise;
 That hut's dark walls he sees no more.
 His foot is on the marble floor,
 And o'er his head the dazzling spars
 Gleam like a firmament of stars!—
 Hark! hears he not the sea-nymph speak
 Her anger in that thrilling shriek?—

No!—all too late, with Allan's dream
 Mingled the captive's warning scream.
 As from the ground he strives to start,
 A ruffian's dagger finds his heart!
 Upwards he casts his dizzy eyes, . . .
 Murmurs his master's name, . . . and dies!

XXIX.

Not so awoke the King! his hand
 Snatch'd from the flame a knotted brand,
 The nearest weapon of his wrath;
 With this he cross'd the murderer's path,
 And venged young Allan well!
 The spatter'd brain and bubbling blood
 Hiss'd on the half-extinguish'd wood—
 The miscreant gasp'd and fell!
 Nor rose in peace the Island Lord;
 One caitiff died upon his sword,
 And one beneath his grasp lies prone,
 In mortal grapple overthrown.
 But while Lord Ronald's dagger drank
 The life-blood from his panting flank,
 The Father-ruffian of the band
 Behind him rears a coward hand!
 —O for a moment's aid,
 Till Bruce, who deals no double blow,
 Dash to the earth another foe,
 Above his comrade laid!—
 And it is gain'd—the captive sprung
 On the raised arm, and closely clung,
 And, ere he shook him loose,
 The master'd felon press'd the ground,
 And gasp'd beneath a mortal wound,
 While o'er him stands The Bruce.

XXX.

“ Miscreant! while lasts thy fitting spark,
 Give me to know the purpose dark,
 That arm'd thy hand with murderous knife,
 Against offenceless stranger's life?”—
 “ No stranger thou!” with accent fell,
 Murmur'd the wretch; “ I know thee well;
 And know thee for the foeman sworn
 Of my high Chief, the mighty Lorn.”—
 “ Speak yet again, and speak the truth
 For thy soul's sake!—from whence this youth!
 His country, birth, and name declare,
 And thus one evil deed repair.”—
 “ Vex me no more! . . . my blood runs cold . . .
 No more I know than I have told.
 We found him in a bark we sought
 With different purpose . . . and I thought . . .
 Fate cut him short; in blood and broil,
 As he had lived, died Cormac Doil.

XXXI.

Then resting on his bloody blade,
 The valiant Bruce to Ronald said—
 “ Now shame upon us both !—that boy
 Lifts his mute face to heaven,
 And clasps his hands, to testify
 His gratitude to God on high,
 For strange deliverance given.
 His speechless gesture thanks hath paid,
 Which our free tongues have left unsaid !’
 He raised the youth with kindly word,
 But mark’d him shudder at the sword :
 He cleansed it from its hue of death,
 And plunged the weapon in its sheath.
 “ Alas, poor child ! unfitting part
 Fate doom’d, when with so soft a heart,
 And form so slight as thine,
 She made thee first a pirate’s slave,
 Then, in his stead, a patron gave
 Of wayward lot like mine—
 A landless prince, whose wandering life
 Is but one scene of blood and strife ;
 Yet scant of friends the Bruce shall be.
 But he’ll find resting-place for thee.—
 Come, noble Ronald ! o’er the dead
 Enough thy generous grief is paid,
 And well has Allan’s fate been broke ;
 Come wend we hence—the day has broke.
 Seek we our bark—I trust the tale
 Was false, that she had hoisted sail.’

XXXII.

Yet, ere they left that charnel-cell,
 The Island Lord bade sad farewell
 To Allan :—“ Who shall tell this tale,”
 He said, “ in halls of Donagaile !
 Oh, who his widow’d mother tell,
 That, ere his bloom, her fairest fell !—
 Rest thee, poor youth ! and trust my care
 For mass and knell and funeral prayer ;
 While o’er those caitiffs where they lie,
 The wolf shall snarl, the raven cry !”—
 And now the eastern mountain’s head
 On the dark lake threw lustre red ;
 Bright gleams of gold and purple streak
 Ravine and precipice and peak—
 (So earthly power at distance shows—
 Reveals his splendour, hides his woes.)
 O’er sheets of granite, dark and broad,
 Rent and unequal, lay the road.
 In sad discourse the warriors wind,
 And the mute captive moves behind

CANTO FOURTH.

1.

STRANGER! if e'er thine ardent step hath traced
 The northern realms of ancient Caledon,
 Where the proud Queen of Wilderness hath placed,
 By lake and cataract, her lonely throne;
 Sublime but sad delight thy soul hath known,
 Gazing on pathless glen and mountain high,
 Lasting where from the cliffs the torrents thrown
 Mingle their echoes with the eagle's cry,
 And with the sounding lake, and with the moaning sky.

Yes! 'twas sublime, but sad.—The loneliness
 Loaded thy heart, the desert tired thine eye;
 And strange and awful fears began to press
 Thy bosom with a stern solemnity.
 Then hast thou wish'd some woodman's cottage nigh,
 Something that shew'd of life, though low and mean;
 Glad sight, its curling wreath of smoke to spy—
 Glad sound, its cock's blithe carol would have been,
 Or children whooping wild beneath the willows green.

Such are the scenes, where savage grandeur wakes
 An awful thrill that softens into sighs;
 Such feelings rouse them by dim Rannoch's lakes,
 In dark Glencoe such gloomy raptures rise:
 Or farther, where, beneath the northern skies,
 Chides wild Loch-Eribol his caverns hoar—
 But, be the minstrel judge, they yield the prize
 Of desert dignity to that dread shore,
 That sees grim Coolin rise, and hears Coriskin roar.

II.

Through such wild scenes the champion pass'd,
 When bold halloo and bugle-blast
 Upon the breeze came loud and fast.
 "There," said the Bruce, "rung Edward's horn.
 What can have caused such brief return?
 And see, brave Ronald,—see him dart
 O'er stock and stone like hunted hart,
 Precipitate, as is the use,
 In war or sport, of Edward Bruce.
 He marks us, and his eager cry
 Will tell his news ere he be nigh."

III.

Loud Edward shouts—"What make ye here,
 Warring upon the mountain-deer,
 When Scotland wants her King?
 A bark from Lennox cross'd our track,
 With her in speed I hurried back,
 The joyful news to bring—

The Stuart stirs in Teviotdale,
 And Douglas wakes his native vale;
 Thy storm-toss'd fleet hath won its way
 With little loss to Brodick-Bay,
 And Lennox, with a gallant band,
 Waits but thy coming and command
 To waft them o'er to Carrick strand.
 There are blithe news!—but mark the close!
 Edward, the deadliest of our foes,
 As with his host he northward pass'd,
 Hath on the borders breathed his last."

IV.

Still stood the Bruce—his steady cheek
 Was little wont his joy to speak,
 But then his colour rose:—
 "Now, Scotland! shortly shalt thou see,
 With God's high will, thy children free,
 And vengeance on thy foes!
 Yet to no sense of selfish wrongs,
 Bear witness with me, Heaven, belongs
 My joy o'er Edward's bier;
 I took my knighthood at his hand,
 And lordship held of him, and land,
 And well may vouch it here,
 That, blot the story from his page,
 Of Scotland ruin'd in his rage,
 You read a monarch brave and sage,
 And to his people dear."—
 'Let London's burghers mourn her Lord,
 And Croydon monks his praise record,"
 The eager Edward said;
 "Eternal as his own, my hate
 Surmounts the bounds of mortal fate,
 And dies not with the dead
 Such hate was his on Solway's strand,
 When vengeance clench'd his palsied hand,
 That pointed yet to Scotland's land,
 As his last accents pray'd
 Disgrace and curse upon his heir,
 If he one Scottish head should spare.
 Till stretch'd upon the bloody lair
 Each rebel corpse was laid!
 Such hate was his, when his last breath
 Renounced the peaceful house of death,
 And bade his bones to Scotland's coast
 Be borne by his remorseless host,
 As if his dead and stony eye
 Could still enjoy her misery!
 Such hate was his—dark, deadly, long;
 Mine,—as enduring, deep, and strong!"—

V.

"Let women, Edward, war with words,
 With curses monks, but men with swords

Nor doubt of living foes to sate,
 Deepest revenge and deadliest hate. —
 Now to the sea! Behold the beach,
 And see the galley's pendants stretch
 Their fluttering length down favouring gale!
 Aboard, aboard! and hoist the sail!
 Hold we our way for Arran first,
 Where meet in arms our friends dispersed—
 Lennox the loyal, De la Haye,
 And Boyd the bold in battle fray.
 I long the hardy band to head,
 And see once more my standard spread.—
 Does noble Ronald share our course,
 Or stay to raise his island force?"—
 "Come weal, come woe, by Bruce's side,"
 Replied the Chief, "will Ronald bide.
 And since two galleys yonder ride,
 Be mine, so please my liege, dismiss'd
 To wake to arms the clans of Uist.
 And all who hear the Minche's roar,
 On the Long Island's lonely shore.
 The nearer Isles, with slight delay,
 Ourselves may summon in our way;
 And soon on Arran's shore shall meet.
 With Torquil's aid, a gallant fleet,
 If aught avails their Chieftain's hest
 Among the islesmen of the west."

VI.

Thus was their venturous counsel said.
 But, ere their sails the galley spread,
 Coriskin dark and Coolin high
 Echoed the dirge's doleful cry.
 Along that sable lake pass'd slow,—
 Fit scene for such a sight of woe,—
 The sorrowing islesmen, as they bore
 The murder'd Allan to the shore.
 At every pause, with dismal shout,
 Their coronach of grief rung out,
 And ever, when they moved again,
 The pipes resumed their clamorous strain,
 And with the pibroch's shrilling wail,
 Mourn'd the young heir of Donagaile.
 Round and around from cliff to cave,
 His answer stern old Coolin gave,
 Till high upon his misty side
 Languish'd the mournful notes, and died,
 For never sounds, by mortal made,
 Attain'd his high and haggard head,
 That echoes but the tempest's moan,
 Or the deep thunder's rending groan.

VII.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark
 She bounds before the gale,

The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch
 Is joyous in her sail!
 With fluttering sound like laughter hoarse,
 The cords and canvas strain,
 The waves, divided by her force,
 In rippling eddies chased her course,
 As if they laugh'd again.
 Not down the breeze more blithely flew,
 Skimming the wave, the light sea-mew,
 Than the gay galley bore
 Her course upon that favouring wind.
 And Coolin's crest has sunk behind,
 And Slapin's cavern'd shore.
 'Twas then that warlike signals wake
 Dunscaith's dark towers and Eisdor's lake,
 And soon, from Cavilgarrigh's head,
 Thick wreaths of eddying smoke were spread—
 A summons these of war and wrath
 To the brave clans of Sleat and Strath—
 And, ready at the sight,
 Each warrior to his weapon sprung,
 And targe upon his shoulder flung,
 Impatient for the fight.
 Mac-Kinnon's chief, in warfare gray,
 Had charge to muster their array,
 And guide their barks to Brodick-Bay.

VIII.

Signal of Ronald's high command,
 A beacon gleam'd o'er sea and land,
 From Canna's tower, that, steep and gray,
 Like falcon-nest o'erhangs the bay.
 Seek not the giddy crag to climb,
 To view the turret scathed by time;
 It is a task of doubt and fear
 To aught but goat or mountain-deer.
 But rest thee on the silver beach,
 And let the aged herdsman teach
 His tale of former day;
 His cur's wild clamour he shall chide,
 And for thy seat by ocean's side,
 His varied plaid display;
 Then tell, how with their Chieftain came,
 In ancient times, a foreign dame
 To yonder turret gray.
 Stern was her Lord's suspicious mind,
 Who in so rude a jail confined
 So soft and fair a thrall!
 And oft, when moon on ocean slept,
 That lovely lady sate and wept
 Upon the castle-wall,
 And turn'd her eye to southern climes,
 And thought perchance of happier times,
 And touch'd her lute by fits, and sung
 Wild ditties in her native tongue.

And still, when on the cliff and bay
 Placid and pale the moonbeams play,
 And every breeze is mute,
 Upon the lone Hebridean's ear
 Steals a strange pleasure mix'd with fear
 While from that cliff he seems to hear
 The murmur of a lute,
 And sounds, as of a captive lone,
 That mourns her woes in tongue unknown.—
 Strange is the tale—but all too long
 Already hath it staid the song—
 Yet who may pass them by,
 That crag and tower in ruins gray,
 Nor to their hapless tenant pay
 The tribute of a sigh!

IX.

Merrily, merrily bounds the bark
 O'er the broad ocean driven,
 Her path by Ronin's mountains dark
 The steersman's hand hath given.
 And Ronin's mountains dark have sent
 Their hunters to the shore,
 And each his ashen bow unbent,
 And gave his pastime o'er,
 And at the Island Lord's command,
 For hunting spear took warrior's brand.
 On Scoreigg next a warning light
 Summon'd her warriors to the fight;
 A numerous race, ere stern MacLeod
 O'er their bleak shores in vengeance strode.
 When all in vain the ocean cave
 Its refuge to his victims gave.
 The Chief, relentless in his wrath,
 With blazing heath blockades the path;
 In dense and stifling volumes roll'd,
 The vapour fill'd the cavern'd hold!
 The warrior-threat, the infant's plain,
 The mother's screams, were heard in vain;
 The vengeful Chief maintains his fires,
 Till in the vault a tribe expires!
 The bones which strew that cavern's gloom,
 Too well attest their dismal doom.

X.

Merrily, merrily, goes the bark
 On a breeze from the northward free;
 So shoots through the morning sky the lark
 Or the swan through the summer sea.
 The shores of Mull on the eastward lay,
 And Ulva dark, and Colonsay,
 And all the group of islets gay
 That guard famed Staffa round.
 Then all unknown its columns rose,
 Where dark and undisturbed repose
 The cormorant had found.

And the shy seal had quiet home,
 And welter'd in that wondrous dome,
 Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
 By skill of earthly architect,
 Nature herself, it seem'd, would raise
 A Minster to her Maker's praise !
 Not for a meaner use ascend
 Her columns, or her arches bend ;
 Nor of a theme less solemn tells
 That mighty surge that ebbs and swells.
 And still, between each awful pause,
 From the high vault an answer draws,
 In varied tone prolong'd and high,
 That mocks the organ's melody.
 Nor doth its entrance front in vain
 To old Iona's holy fane,
 That Nature's voice might seem to say,
 " Well hast thou done, frail Child of clay !
 Thy humble powers that stately shrine
 Task'd high and hard—but witness mine ! "

XI.

Merrily, merrily goes the bark—
 Before the gale she bounds ;
 So darts the dolphin from the shark,
 Or the deer before the hounds.
 They left Loch-Tua on their lee,
 And they waken'd the men of the wild Tیره,
 And the Chief of the sandy Coll ;
 They paused not at Columba's isle,
 Though peal'd the bells from the holy pile
 With long and measured toll ;
 No time for matin or for mass,
 And the sounds of the holy summons pass
 Away in the billows' roll.
 Lochbuie's fierce and warlike Lord
 Their signal saw, and grasp'd his sword,
 And verdant Islay call'd her host,
 And the clans of Jura's rugged coast
 Lord Ronald's call obey,
 And Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
 Still rings to Corrievreken's roar,
 And lonely Colonsay ;
 —Scenes sung by him who sings no more !
 His bright and brief career is o'er,
 And mute his tuneful strains ;
 Quench'd is his lamp of varied lore,
 That loved the light of song to pour ;—
 A distant and a deadly shore
 Has LEYDEN'S cold remains !

XII.

Ever the breeze blows merrily,
 But the galley ploughs no more the sea

Lest, rounding wild Cantyre, they meet
 The southern foeman's watchful fleet,
 They held unwonted way ;—
 Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
 Then dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er,
 As far as Kilmacannel's shore,
 Upon the eastern bay.
 It was a wondrous sight to see
 Topmast and pennon glitter free,
 High raised above the greenwood tree,
 As on dry land the galley moves,
 By cliff and copse, and alder groves.
 Deep import from that selcouth sign,
 Did many a mountain Seer divine ;
 For ancient legends told the Gael,
 That when a royal bark should sail
 O'er Kilmacannel moss,
 Old Albyn should in fight prevail,
 And every foe should faint and quail
 Before her silver Cross.

XIII.

Now launched once more, the inland sea
 They furrow with fair augury,
 And steer for Arran's isle ;
 The sun, ere yet he sunk behind
 Ben-Ghoil, "the Mountain of the Wind,
 Gave his grim peaks a greeting kind,
 And bade Loch Ranza smile.
 Thither their destined course they drew :
 It seem'd the isle her Monarch knew,
 So brilliant was the landward view,
 The ocean so serene ;
 Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd
 O'er the calm deep, where hues of gold
 With azure strove and green.
 The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
 Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,
 The beach was silver sheen,
 The wind breathed soft as lover's sigh,
 And, oft renew'd, seem'd oft to die,
 With breathless pause between.
 O who, with speech of war and woes,
 Would wish to break the soft repose
 Of such enchanting scene !

XIV.

Is it of war Lord Ronald speaks ?—
 The blush that dyes his manly cheeks,
 The timid look and downcast eye,
 And faltering voice, the theme deny.
 And good King Robert's brow express'd.
 He ponder'd o'er some high request.

As doubtful to approve ;
 Yet in his eye and lip the while,
 Dwelt the half-pitying glance and smile,
 Which manhood's graver mood beguile,
 When lovers talk of love.
 Anxious his suit Lord Ronald pled ;—
 " And for my bride betrothed," he said,
 " My Liege has heard the rumour spread
 Of Edith from Artornish fled.
 Too hard her fate—I claim no right
 To blame her for her hasty flight ;
 Be joy and happiness her lot !—
 But she hath fled the bridal-knot,
 And Lorn recall'd his promised plight,
 In the assembled chieftains' sight.—
 When, to fulfil our fathers' band,
 I proffer'd all I could—my hand—
 I was repulsed with scorn ;
 Mine honour I should ill assert,
 And worse the feelings of my heart,
 If I should play a suitor's part
 Again, to pleasure Lorn."

XV.

" Young Lord," the Royal Bruce replied,
 " That question must the Church decide.
 Yet seems it hard, since rumours state
 Edith takes Clifford for her mate,
 The very tie, which she hath broke,
 To thee should still be binding yoke.
 But, for my sister Isabel—
 The mood of woman who can tell ?
 I guess the Champion of the Rock,
 Victorious in the tourney shock,
 That knight unknown, to whom the prize
 She dealt,—had favour in her eyes ;
 But since our brother Nigel's fate,
 Our ruin'd house and hapless state,
 From worldly joy and hope estranged,
 Much is the hapless mourner changed.
 Perchance," here smiled the noble King,
 " This tale may other musings bring.
 Soon shall we know—yon mountains hide
 The little convent of Saint Bride ;
 There, sent by Edward, she must stay
 Till fate shall give more prosperous day ;
 And thither will I bear thy suit,
 Nor will thine advocate be mute."

XVI.

As thus they talk'd in earnest mood,
 That speechless boy beside them stood.
 He stoop'd his head against the mast,
 And bitter sobs came thick and fast

A grief that would not be repress'd,
 But seem'd to burst his youthful breast.
 His hands, against his forehead held,
 As if by force his tears repell'd,
 But through his fingers, long and slight,
 Fast trill'd the drops of crystal bright.
 Edward, who walk'd the deck apart,
 First spied this conflict of the heart.
 Thoughtless as brave, with bluntness kind
 He sought to cheer the sorrower's mind ;
 By force the slender hand he drew
 From those poor eyes that stream'd with dew.
 As in his hold the stripling strove,—
 ('Twas a rough grasp, though meant in love,)
 Away his tears the warrior swept,
 And bade shame on him that he wept.
 " I would to Heaven thy helpless tongue
 Could tell me who hath wrought thee wrong ;
 For, were he of our crew the best,
 The insult went not unredress'd.
 Come, cheer thee!—thou art now of age
 To be a warrior's gallant page ;
 Thou shalt be mine!—a palfrey fair
 O'er hill andholt my boy shall bear,
 To hold my bow in hunting grove,
 Or speed on errand to my love ;
 For well I wot thou wilt not tell
 The temple where my wishes dwell."

XVII.

Bruce interposed,—“ Gay Edward, no,
 This is no youth to hold thy bow,
 To fill thy goblet, or to bear
 Thy message light to lighter fair.
 Thou art a patron all too wild
 And thoughtless, for this orphan child.
 See'st thou not how apart he steals,
 Keeps lonely couch, and lonely meals?
 Fitter by far in yon calm cell
 To tend our sister Isabel,
 With Father Augustine to share
 The peaceful change of convent prayer,
 Than wander wild adventures through,
 With such a reckless guide as you.”—
 “ Thanks, brother !” Edward answer'd gay,
 “ For the high land thy words convey !
 But we may learn some future day,
 If thou or I can this poor boy
 Protect the best, or best employ.
 Mean while, our vessel nears the strand :
 Launch we the boat, and seek the land.”

XVIII.

To land King Robert lightly sprung,
 And thrice aloud his bugle rung

With note prolong'd and varied strain,
 Till bold Ben-Ghoil replied again.
 Good Douglas then, and De la Haye,
 Had in a glen a hart at bay,
 And Lennox cheer'd the laggard hounds,
 When waked that horn the greenwood bounds.
 "It is the foe!" cried Boyd, who came
 In breathless haste, with eye of flame,—
 "It is the foe!—Each valiant lord
 Fling by his bow, and grasp his sword! —
 "Not so," replied the good Lord James,
 "That blast no English bugle claims.
 Oft have I heard it fire the fight,
 Cheer the pursuit, or stop the flight.
 Dead were my heart, and deaf mine ear
 If Bruce should call, nor Douglas hear!
 Each to Loch Ranza's margin spring;
 That blast was winded by the King!"

XIX.

Fast to their mates the tidings spread,
 And fast to shore the warriors sped.
 Bursting from glen and greenwood tree,
 High waked their loyal jubilee!
 Around the royal Bruce they crowd,
 And clasp'd his hands, and wept aloud.
 Veterans of early fields were there,
 Whose helmets press'd their hoary hair,
 Whose swords and axes bore a stain
 From life-blood of the red-hair'd Dane;
 And boys whose hands scarce brook'd to wield
 The heavy sword or bossy shield.
 Men, too, were there, that bore the scars
 Impress'd in Albyn's woful wars,
 At Falkirk's fierce and fatal fight,
 Teyndrum's dread rout, and Methven's flight;
 The might of Douglas there was seen,
 There Lennox with his graceful mien;
 Kirkpatrick, Closeburn's dreaded Knight;
 The Lindsay, fiery, fierce, and light;
 The Heir of murder'd De la Haye,
 And Boyd the grave, and Seton gay.
 Around their King regain'd they press'd,
 Wept, shouted, clasp'd him to their breast,
 And young and old, and serf and lord,
 And he who ne'er unsheathed a sword,
 And he in many a peril tried,
 Alike resolved the brunt to bide,
 And live or die by Bruce's side!

XX.

Oh, War! thou hast thy fierce delight,
 Thy gleams of joy, intensely bright!

Such gleams as from thy polish'd shield
 Fly dazzling o'er the battle-field !
 Such transports wake, severe and high,
 Amid the pealing conquest cry ;
 Scarce less, when, after battle lost,
 Muster the remnants of a host,
 And as each comrade's name they tell,
 Who in the well-fought conflict fell,
 Knitting stern brow o'er flashing eye,
 Vow to avenge them or to die !—
 Warriors !—and where are warriors found,
 If not on martial Britain's ground ?
 And who, when waked with note of fire,
 Love more than they the British lyre ?—
 Know ye not,—hearts to honour dear !
 That joy, deep-thrilling, stern, severe,
 At which the heartstrings vibrate high,
 And wake the fountains of the eye ?
 And blame ye, then, the Bruce, if trace
 Of tear is on his manly face,
 When, scanty relics of the train
 That hail'd at Scone his early reign,
 This patriot band around him hung,
 And to his knees and bosom clung ?—
 Blame ye the Bruce ?—His brother blamed
 But shared the weakness, while ashamed,
 With haughty laugh his head he turn'd,
 And dash'd away the tear he scorn'd.

XXI.

'Tis morning, and the Convent bell
 Long time had ceased its matin knell,
 Within thy walls, Saint Bride !
 An aged Sister sought the cell
 Assign'd to Lady Isabel,
 And hurriedly she cried,
 " Haste, gentle Lady, haste !—there waits
 A noble stranger at the gates ;
 Saint Bride's poor vot'ress ne'er has seen
 A Knight of such a princely mien ;
 His errand, as he bade me tell,
 Is with the Lady Isabel."
 The Princess rose,—for on her knee
 Low bent she told her rosary,—
 " Let him by thee his purpose teach ;
 I may not give a stranger speech."—
 " Saint Bride forefend, thou royal Maid !
 The portress cross'd herself and said ;—
 " Not to be Prioress might I
 Debate his will, his suit deny."—
 " Has earthly show, then, simple fool,
 Power o'er a sister of thy rule ?
 And art thou, like the worldly train,
 Subdued by splendours light and vain ?"

XXII.

" No, Lady! in old eyes like mine,
 Gauds have no glitter, gems no shine;
 Nor grace his rank attendants vain,
 One youthful page is all his train.
 It is the form, the eye, the word,
 The bearing of that stranger Lord;
 His stature, manly, bold, and tall,
 Built like a castle's battled wall,
 Yet moulded in such just degrees,
 His giant-strength seems lightsome ease
 Close as the tendrils of the vine,
 His locks upon his forehead twine,
 Jet-black, save where some touch of gray
 Has ta'en the youthful hue away.
 Weather and war their rougher trace
 Have left on that majestic face;—
 But 'tis his dignity of eye!
 There, if a suppliant, would I fly,
 Secure, 'mid danger, wrongs, and grief,
 Of sympathy, redress, relief—
 That glance, if guilty, would I dread
 More than the doom that spoke me dead!"—
 " Enough, enough," the Princess cried,
 " 'Tis Scotland's hope, her joy, her pride!
 To meaner front was ne'er assign'd
 Such mastery o'er the common mind—
 Bestow'd thy high designs to aid,
 How long, O Heaven! how long delay'd!
 Haste, Mona, haste, to introduce
 My darling brother, royal Bruce!"

XXIII.

They met like friends who part in pain,
 And meet in doubtful hope again.
 But when subdued that fitful swell,
 The Bruce surveyed the humble cell;—
 " And this is thine, poor Isabel!—
 That pallet-couch, and naked wall,
 For room of state and bed of pall;
 For costly robes and jewels rare,
 A string of beads and zone of hair;
 And for the trumpet's sprightly call
 To sport or banquet, grove or hall,
 The bell's grim voice divides thy care,
 'Twixt hours of penitence and prayer!—
 O ill for thee, my royal claim
 From the First David's sainted name!
 O woe for thee, that while he sought
 His right, thy brother feebly fought!"—

XXIV.

" Now lay these vain regrets aside,
 And be the unshaken Bruce!" she cried
 " For more I glory to have shared
 The woes thy venturous spirit dared.

When raising first thy valiant band
 In rescue of thy native land,
 Than had fair Fortune set me down
 The partner of an empire's crown.
 And grieve not that on Pleasure's stream
 No more I drive in giddy dream,
 For Heaven the erring pilot knew,
 And from the gulf the vessel drew,
 Tried me with judgments stern and great,
 My house's ruin, thy defeat,
 Poor Nigel's death—till, tamed, I own,
 My hopes are fix'd on Heaven alone,
 Nor e'er shall earthly prospects win
 My heart to this vain world of sin."—

XXV.

"Nay, Isabel, for such stern choice
 First wilt thou wait thy brother's voice;
 Then ponder if in convent scene
 No softer thoughts might intervene—
 Say they were of that unknown Knight,
 Victor in Woodstock's tourney-fight—
 Nay, if his name such blush you owe,
 Victorious o'er a fairer foe!"
 Truly his penetrating eye
 Hath caught that blush's passing dye,—
 Like the last beam of evening thrown
 On a white cloud,—just seen and gone.
 Soon with calm cheek and steady eye,
 The Princess made composed reply:—
 "I guess my brother's meaning well;
 For not so silent is the cell,
 But we have heard the islesmen all
 Arm in thy cause at Ronald's call
 And mine eye proves that Knight unknown
 And the brave Island Lord are one.—
 Had then his suit been earlier made
 In his own name, with thee to aid,
 (But that his plighted faith forbade,)
 I know not But thy page so near
 This is no tale for menial's ear."

XXVI.

Still stood that page, as far apart
 As the small cell would space afford;
 With dizzy eye and bursting heart,
 He leant his weight on Bruce's sword,
 The Monarch's mantle, too, he bore,
 And drew the fold his visage o'er.
 "Fear not for him—in murderous strife,"
 Said Bruce, "his warning saved my life;
 Full seldom parts he from my side,
 And in his silence I confide,
 Since he can tell no tale again.
 He is a boy of gentle strain,
 And I have purposed he shall dwell

In Augustine the chaplain's cell,
 And wait on thee, my Isabel.—
 Mind not his tears ; I've seen them flow
 As in the thaw dissolves the snow.
 'Tis a kind youth, but fanciful,
 Unfit against the tide to pull,
 And those that with the Bruce would sail,
 Must learn to strive with stream and gale. —
 But forward, gentle Isabel—
 My answer for Lord Ronald tell.”—

XXVII.

“This answer be to Ronald given—
 The heart he asks is fix'd on Heaven.
 My love was like a summer flower,
 That wither'd in the wintry hour,
 Born but of vanity and pride,
 And with these sunny visions died.
 If further press his suit—then say,
 He should his plighted troth obey,
 Troth plighted both with ring and word,
 And sworn on crucifix and sword.—
 Oh, shame thee, Robert ! I have seen
 Thou hast a woman's guardian been !
 Even in extremity's dread hour,
 When press'd on thee the Southern power,
 And safety, to all human sight,
 Was only found in rapid flight,
 Thou heardest a wretched female plain
 In agony of travail-pain,
 And thou didst bid thy little band
 Upon the instant turn and stand,
 And dare the worst the foe might do
 Rather than, like a knight untrue,
 Leave to pursuers merciless
 A woman in her last distress.
 And wilt thou now deny thine aid
 To an oppress'd and injured maid,
 Even plead for Ronald's perfidy,
 And press his fickle faith on me?—
 So witness Heaven, as true I vow,
 Had I those earthly feelings now,
 Which could my former bosom move
 Ere taught to set its hopes above,
 I'd spurn each proffer he could bring,
 Till at my feet he laid the ring,
 The ring and spousal contract both,
 And fair acquittal of his oath,
 By her who brooks his perjured scorn—
 The ill-requited Maid of Lorn !”

XXVIII.

With sudden impulse forward sprung
 The page, and on her neck he hung ;

Then, recollected instantly,
 His head he stoop'd, and bent his knee
 Kiss'd twice the hand of Isabel,
 Arose, and sudden left the cell.—
 The Princess, loosen'd from his hold
 Blush'd angry at his bearing bold ;
 But good King Robert cried,
 "Chafe not—by signs he speaks his mind :
 He heard the plan my care design'd,
 Nor could his transports hide.—
 But, sister, now bethink thee well :
 No easy choice the convent cell ;
 Trust, I shall play no tyrant part,
 Either to force thy hand or heart,
 Or suffer that Lord Ronald scorn,
 Or wrong for thee, the Maid of Lorn.
 But think,—not long the time has been,
 That thou wert wont to sigh unseen,
 And wouldst the ditties best approve,
 That told some lay of hapless love.
 Now are thy wishes in thy power,
 And thou art bent on cloister bower !
 O ! if our Edward knew the change,
 How would his busy satire range,
 With many a sarcasm varied still
 On woman's wish, and woman's will !" —

XXIX.

"Brother, I well believe," she said,
 "Even so would Edward's part be play'd
 Kindly in heart, in word severe,
 A foe to thought, and grief, and fear,
 He holds his humour uncontroll'd ;
 But thou art of another mould.
 Say then to Ronald, as I say,
 Unless before my feet he lay
 The ring which bound the faith he swore,
 By Edith freely yielded o'er,
 He moves his suit to me no more.
 Nor do I promise, even if now
 He stood absolved of spousal vow,
 That I would change my purpose made,
 To shelter me in holy shade.—
 Brother, for little space, farewell !
 To other duties warns the bell." —

XXX.

"Lost to the world," King Robert said
 When he had left the royal Maid,
 "Lost to the world by lot severe,
 O what a gem lies buried here,
 Nipp'd by misfortune's cruel frost.
 The buds of fair affection lost !
 But what have I with love to do ?
 Far sterner cares my lot ursuc

Pent in this isle we may not lie,
 Nor would it long our wants supply.
 Right opposite, the mainland towers
 Of my own Turnberry court our powers—
 Might not my father's beadsman hoar,
 Cuthbert, who dwells upon the shore,
 Kindle a signal-flame, to show
 The time propitious for the blow?
 It shall be so—some friend shall bear
 Our mandate with despatch and care;
 Edward shall find the messenger.
 That fortress ours, the island fleet
 May on the coast of Carrick meet.—
 O Scotland! shall it e'er be mine
 To wreak thy wrongs in battle-line,
 To raise my victor-head, and see
 Thy hills, thy dales, thy people free,—
 That glance of bliss is all I crave,
 Betwixt my labours and my grave!"
 Then down the hill he slowly went,
 Oft pausing on the steep descent,
 And reach'd the spot where his bold train
 Held rustic camp upon the plain.

 CANTO FIFTH.

I.

ON fair Loch-Ranza stream'd the early day,
 Thin wreaths of cottage-smoke are upward curl'd
 From the lone hamlet, which her inland bay
 And circling mountains sever from the world.
 And there the fisherman his sail unfurl'd,
 The goat-herd drove his kids to steep Ben-Ghoil,
 Before the hut the dame her spindle twirl'd,
 Courting the sunbeam as she plied her toil,—
 For, wake where'er he may, Man wakes to care and toil :

But other duties call'd each convent maid,
 Roused by the summons of the moss-grown bell;
 Sung were the matins, and the mass was said,
 And every sister sought her separate cell,
 Such was the rule, her rosary to tell.
 And Isabel has knelt in lonely prayer;
 The sunbeam, through the narrow lattice, fell
 Upon the snowy neck and long dark hair,
 As stoop'd her gentle head in meek devotion there

II.

She raised her eyes, that duty done,
 When glanced upon the pavement-stone.

Gemm'd and enchased, a golden ring,
 Bound to a scroll with silken string,
 With few brief words inscribed to tell,
 "This for the Lady Isabel."
 Within the writing farther bore, —
 "'Twas with this ring his plight he swore,
 With this his promise I restore;
 To her who can the heart command,
 Well may I yield the plighted hand.
 And O! for better fortune born,
 Grudge not a passing sigh to mourn
 Her who was Edith once of Lorn!"
 One single flash of glad surprise
 Just glanced from Isabel's dark eyes,
 But vanish'd in the blush of shame,
 That, as its penance, instant came.
 "O thought unworthy of my race!
 Selfish, ungenerous, mean, and base,
 A moment's throb of joy to own,
 That rose upon her hopes o'erthrown! —
 Thou pledge of vows too well believed,
 Of man ingrate, and maid deceived,
 Think not thy lustre here shall gain
 Another heart to hope in vain!
 For thou shalt rest, thou tempting gaud,
 Where worldly thoughts are overawed,
 And worldly splendour sink debased."
 Then by the cross the ring she placed.

III.

Next rose the thought, — its owner far,
 How came it here through bolt and bar? —
 But the dim lattice is ajar. —
 She looks abroad, the morning dew
 A light short step had brush'd anew,
 And there were foot-prints seen
 On the carved buttress rising still,
 Till on the mossy window-sill
 Their track effaced the green.
 The ivy twigs were torn and fray'd,
 As if some climber's steps to aid. —
 But who the hardy messenger,
 Whose venturous path these signs infer? —
 Strange doubts are mine! — "Mona, draw nigh; —
 Nought 'scapes old Mona's curious eye —
 What strangers, gentle mother, say,
 Have sought these holy walls to-day?" —
 "None, Lady — none of note or name;
 Only your brother's foot-page came
 At peep of dawn — I pray'd him pass
 To chapel where they said the mass
 But like an arrow he shot by,
 And tears seem'd bursting from his eye."

IV.

The truth at once on Isabel,
 As darted by a sunbeam, fell :—
 " 'Tis Edith's self !—her speechless woo,
 Her form, her looks, the secret show
 Instant, good Mona, to the bay,
 And to my royal brother say,
 I do conjure him seek my cell,
 With that mute page he loves so well."—
 " What ! know'st thou not his warlike host
 At break of day has left our coast ?
 My old eyes saw them from the tower.
 At eve they couch'd in greenwood bower,
 At dawn a bugle signal, made
 By their bold Lord, their ranks array'd ;
 Up sprung the spears through bush and tree,
 No time for benedicite !
 Like deer, that, rousing from their lair,
 Just shake the dew-drops from their hair,
 And toss their armed crest aloft,
 Such matins theirs !"—" Good mother, soft
 Where does my brother bend his way ?"—
 " As I have heard, for Brodick Bay
 Across the isle—of barks a score
 Lie there, 'tis said, to waft them o'er,
 On sudden news, to Carrick shore."—
 " If such their purpose, deep the need,"
 Said anxious Isabel, " of speed !
 Call Father Augustine, good dame."—
 The nun obey'd, the Father came.

V.

" Kind Father, hie without delay,
 Across the hills to Brodick Bay.
 This message to the Bruce be given :
 I pray him, by his hopes of Heaven,
 That, till he speak with me, he stay !
 Or, if his haste brook no delay,
 That he deliver, on my suit,
 Into thy charge that stripling mute.
 Thus prays his sister Isabel,
 For causes more than she may tell—
 Away, good Father ! and take heed,
 That life and death are on thy speed."—
 His cowl the good old priest did on,
 Took his piked staff and sandall'd shoon,
 And, like a palmer bent by eld,
 O'er moss and moor his journey held,

VI.

Heavy and dull the foot of age,
 And rugged was the pilgrimage ;
 But none were there beside, whose care
 Might such important message bear.

Through birchen copse he wander'd slow,
 Stunted and sapless, thin and low ;
 By many a mountain stream he pass'd,
 From the tall cliffs in tumult cast,
 Dashing to foam their waters dun,
 And sparkling in the summer sun,
 Round his gray head the wild curlew
 In many a fearless circle flew.
 O'er chasms he pass'd, where fractures wide
 Craved wary eye and ample stride ;
 He cross'd his brow beside the stone
 Where Druids erst heard victims groan,
 And at the cairns upon the wild,
 O'er many a heathen hero piled,
 He breathed a timid prayer for those
 Who died ere Shiloh's sun arose.
 Beside Macfarlane's Cross he staid,
 There told his hours within the shade,
 And at the stream his thirst allay'd.
 Thence onward journeying slowly still,
 As evening closed he reach'd the hill,
 Where, rising through the woodland green
 Old Brodick's Gothic towers were seen—
 From Hastings, late their English lord,
 Douglas had won them by the sword.
 The sun that sunk behind the isle,
 Now tinged them with a parting smile.

VII.

But though the beams of light decay,
 'Twas bustle all in Brodick Bay.
 The Bruce's followers crowd the shore,
 And boats and barges some unmoor,
 Some raise the sail, some seize the oar ;
 Their eyes oft turn'd where glimmer'd far
 What might have seem'd an early star
 On heaven's blue arch, save that its light
 Was all too flickering, fierce, and bright.
 Far distant in the south, the ray
 Shone pale amid retiring day,
 But as, on Carrick shore,
 Dim seen in outline faintly blue,
 The shades of evening closer drew,
 It kindled more and more.
 The Monk's slow steps now press the sands,
 And now amid a scene he stands,
 Full strange to churchman's eye ;
 Warriors, who, arming for the fight,
 Rivet and clasp their harness light,
 And twinkling spears, and axes bright,
 And helmets flashing high.
 Oft, too, with unaccustom'd ears,
 A language much unmeet he hears.

While, hastening all on board,
 As stormy as the swelling surge
 That mix'd its roar, the leaders urge
 Their followers to the ocean verge,
 With many a haughty word.

VIII.

Through that wild throng the Father pass'd,
 And reach'd the Royal Bruce at last.
 He leant against a stranded boat,
 That the approaching tide must float,
 And counted every rippling wave,
 As higher yet her sides they lave,
 And oft the distant fire he eyed,
 And closer yet his hauberk tied,
 And loosen'd in his sheath his brand.
 Edward and Lennox were at hand ;
 Douglas and Ronald had the care
 The soldiers to the barks to share.—
 The Monk approach'd, and homage paid ;
 "And art thou come," King Robert said,
 "So far, to bless us ere we part?"—
 "My Liege, and with a loyal heart!—
 But other charge I have to tell,"—
 And spoke the best of Isabel.
 "Now by Saint Giles," the Monarch cried,
 "This moves me much!—this morning tide,
 I sent the stripling to Saint Bride,
 With my commandment there to bide."—
 "Thither he came, the portress show'd,
 But there, my Liege, made brief abode."—

IX.

"'Twas I," said Edward, "found employ
 Of nobler import for the boy.
 Deep pondering in my anxious mind,
 A fitting messenger to find,
 To bear thy written mandate o'er
 To Cuthbert on the Carrick shore,
 I chanced, at early dawn, to pass
 The chapel gate to snatch a mass.
 I found the stripling on a tomb
 Low-seated, weeping for the doom
 That gave his youth to convent gloom.
 I told my purpose, and his eyes
 Flash'd joyful at the glad surprise.
 He bounded to the skiff, the sail
 Was spread before a prosperous gale,
 And well my charge he hath obey'd ;
 For, see! the ruddy signal made,
 That Clifford, with his merry-men all,
 Guards carelessly our father's hall."—

X.

"O wild of thought, and hard of heart!"
 Answer'd the Monarch, "on a part

Of such deep danger to employ
 A mute, an orphan, and a boy!
 Unfit for flight, unfit for strife,
 Without a tongue to plead for life!
 Now, were my right restored by Heaven,
 Edward, my crown I would have given,
 Ere, thrust on such adventure wild,
 I peril'd thus the helpless child."—
 Offended half, and half submiss,—
 "Brother and Liege, of blame like this,"
 Edward replied, "I little dream'd.
 A stranger messenger, I deem'd,
 Might safest seek the beadsman's cell,
 Where all thy squires are known so well.
 Noteless his presence, sharp his sense,
 His imperfection his defence.
 If seen, none can his errand guess;
 If ta'en, his words no tale express—
 Methinks, too, yonder beacon's shine
 Might expiate greater fault than mine."—
 "Rash," said King Robert, "was the deed—
 But it is done.—Embark with speed!—
 Good Father, say to Isabel
 How this unhappy chance befell;
 If well we thrive on yonder shore,
 Soon shall my care her page restore.
 Our greeting to our sister bear,
 And think of us in mass and prayer."

XI.

"Ay!" said the Priest,—“while this poor hand
 Can chalice raise or cross command,
 While my old voice has accents' use,
 Can Augustine forget the Bruce?”
 Then to his side Lord Ronald press'd,
 And whisper'd—“Bear thou this request
 That when by Bruce's side I fight,
 For Scotland's crown and Freedom's right,
 The Princess grace her knight to bear
 Some token of her favouring care;
 It shall be shewn where England's best
 May shrink to see it on my crest.
 And for the boy—since weightier care
 For Royal Bruce the times prepare,
 The helpless youth is Ronald's charge,
 His couch my plaid, his fence my targe.”
 He ceased; for many an eager hand
 Had urged the barges from the strand.
 Their number was a score and ten,
 They bore thrice threescore chosen men.
 With such small force did Bruce at last
 The die for death or empire cast!

XII.

Now on the darkening main afloat,
 Ready and mann'd, rocks every boat:

Beneath their oars the ocean's might
Was dash'd to sparks of glimmering light.
Faint and more faint, as off they bore,
Their armour glanced against the shore,
And, mingled with the dashing tide,
Their murmuring voices distant died.—
“God speed them!” said the Priest, as dark
On distant billows glides each bark;
“O Heaven! when swords for freedom shine,
And monarch's right, the cause is thine!
Edge doubly every patriot blow!
Beat down the banners of the foe!
And be it to the nations known,
That Victory is from God alone!”
As up the hill his path he drew,
He turn'd, his blessings to renew—
Oft turn'd, till on the darken'd coast
All traces of their course were lost;
Then slowly bent to Brodick tower,
To shelter for the evening hour.

XIII.

In night the fairy prospects sink,
Where Cumray's isles, with verdant link,
Close the fair entrance of the Clyde;
The woods of Bute, no more descried,
Are gone; and on the placid sea
The rowers ply their task with glee,
While hands that knightly lances bore
Impatient aid the labouring oar.
The half-faced moon shone dim and pale,
And glanced against the whiten'd sail;
But on that ruddy beacon-light
Each steersman kept the helm aright,
And oft—for such the King's command,
That all at once might reach the strand—
From boat to boat loud shout and hail
Warn'd them to crowd or slacken sail.
South and by west the armada bore,
And near at length the Carrick shoro.
As less and less the distance grows,
High and more high the beacon rose;
The light, that seem'd a twinkling star,
Now blazed portentous, fierce, and far.
Dark-red the heaven above it glow'd,
Dark-red the sea beneath it flow'd,
Red rose the rocks on ocean's brim,
In blood-red light her islets swim;
Wild scream the dazzled sea-fowl gave,
Dropp'd from their crags on plashing wave.
The deer to distant covert drew,
The blackcock deem'd it day, and crew.
Like some tall castle given to flame,
O'er half the land the lustre came.

“Now, good my Liege, and brother sage,
 What think ye of mine elfin page?”—
 “Row on!” the noble King replied,
 “We’ll learn the truth, whate’er betide;
 Yet sure the beadsman and the child
 Could ne’er have waked that beacon wild.”

XIV.

With that the boats approach’d the land,
 But Edward’s grounded on the sand;
 The eager Knight leap’d in the sea
 Waist-deep, and first on shore was he,
 Though every barge’s hardy band
 Contended which should gain the land,
 When that strange light, which, seen afar,
 Seem’d steady as the polar star,
 Now, like a prophet’s fiery chair,
 Seem’d travelling the realms of air.
 Wide o’er the sky the splendour glows,
 As that portentous meteor rose;
 Helm, axe, and falchion glitter’d bright,
 And in the red and dusky light
 His comrade’s face each warrior saw,
 Nor marvell’d it was pale with awe;
 Then high in air the beams were lost,
 And darkness sunk upon the coast.—
 Ronald to Heaven a prayer address’d,
 And Douglas cross’d his dauntless breast;
 “Saint James protect us!” Lennox cried;
 But reckless Edward spoke aside—
 “Deem’st thou, Kirkpatrick, in that flame
 Red Comyn’s angry spirit came,
 Or would thy dauntless heart endure
 Once more to make assurance sure?”—
 “Hush!” said the Bruce, “we soon shall know
 If this be sorcerer’s empty show,
 Or stratagem of southern foe.
 The moon shines out—upon the sand
 Let every leader rank his band.”

XV.

Faintly the moon’s pale beams supply
 That ruddy light’s unnatural dye;
 The dubious cold reflection lay
 On the wet sands and quiet bay.
 Beneath the rocks King Robert drew
 His scatter’d files to order due,
 Till shield compact and serried spear
 In the cool light shone blue and clear.
 Then down a path that sought the tide,
 That speechless page was seen to glide;
 He knelt him lowly on the sand,
 And gave a scroll to Robert’s hand.
 “A torch,” the Monarch cried—“What, ho!
 Now shall we Cuthbert’s tidings know.”

But evil news the letters bear,—
 The Clifford's force was strong and ware,
 Augmented, too, that very morn,
 By mountaineers who came with Lorn.
 Long harrow'd by oppressor's hand,
 Courage and faith had fled the land,
 And over Carrick, dark and deep,
 Had sunk dejection's iron sleep.
 Cuthbert had seen that beacon flame,
 Unwitting from what source it came.
 Doubtful of perilous event,
 Edward's mute messenger he sent,
 If Bruce deceived should venture o'er,
 To warn him from the fatal shore.

XVI.

As round the torch the leaders crowd,
 Bruce read these chilling news aloud.
 "What counsel, nobles, have we now?—
 To ambush us in greenwood bough,
 And take the chance which fate may send
 To bring our enterprise to end?
 Or shall we turn us to the main
 As exiles, and embark again?"—
 Answer'd fierce Edward—"Hap what may,
 In Carrick, Carrick's Lord must stay.
 I would not minstrels told the tale,
 Wildfire or meteor made us quail."—
 Answer'd the Douglas—"If my Liege
 May win you walls by storm or siege,
 Then were each brave and patriot heart
 Kindled of new for loyal part."—
 Answer'd Lord Ronald—"Not for shame
 Would I that aged Torquil came,
 And found, for all our empty boast,
 Without a blow we fled the coast.
 I will not credit that this land,
 So famed for warlike heart and hand,
 The nurse of Wallace and of Bruce,
 Will long with tyrants hold a truce."—
 "Prove we our fate—the brunt we'll bide!"
 So Boyd and Haye and Lennox cried;
 So said, so vow'd the leaders all;
 So Bruce resolved:—"And in my hall
 Since the bold Southeru make their home,
 The hour of payment soon shall come,
 When with a rough and rugged host
 Clifford may reckon to his cost.
 Meantime, through well-known bosk and dell,
 I'll lead where we may shelter well."

XVII.

Now ask you whence that wondrous light,
 Whose fairy glow beguil'd their sight?—

It ne'er was known—yet gray-hair'd eld
 A superstitious credence held,
 That never did a mortal hand
 Wake its broad glare on Carrick strand;
 Nay, and that on the self-same night
 When Bruce cross'd o'er, still gleams the light.
 Yearly it gleams o'er mount and moor,
 And glittering wave and crimson'd shore—
 But whether beam celestial, lent
 By Heaven to aid the King's descent,
 Or fire hell-kindled from beneath,
 To lure him to defeat and death,
 Or were it but some meteor strange,
 Of such as oft through midnight range,
 Startling the traveller late and lone,
 I know not—and it ne'er was known.

XVIII.

Now up the rocky pass they drew,
 And Ronald, to his promise true,
 Still made his arm the stripling's stay,
 To aid him on the rugged way.
 "Now cheer thee, simple Amadine!
 Why throbs that silly heart of thine?"—
 That name the pirates to their slave
 (In Gaelic 'tis the Changeling) gave—
 "Dost thou not rest thee on my arm?
 Do not my plaid-folds hold thee warm?
 Hath not the wild bull's treble hide
 This targe for thee and me supplied?
 Is not Clan-Colla's sword of steel?
 And, trembler, canst thou terror feel?
 Cheer thee, and still that throbbing heart;
 From Ronald's guard thou shalt not part."
 Oh! many a shaft, at random sent,
 Finds mark the archer little meant!
 And many a word, at random spoken,
 May soothe or wound a heart that's broken!
 Half soothed, half grieved, half terrified,
 Close drew the page to Ronald's side;
 A wild delirious thrill of joy
 Was in that hour of agony,
 As up the steepy pass he strove,
 Fear, toil, and sorrow, lost in love!

XIX.

The barrier of that iron shore,
 The rock's steep ledge, is now climb'd o'er
 And from the castle's distant wall,
 From tower to tower the warders call:
 The sound swings over land and sea,
 And marks a watchful enemy.—
 They gain'd the Chase, a wide domain
 Left for the castle's sylvan reign.

(Seek not the scene—the axe, the plough,
 The boor's dull fence, have marr'd it now.)
 But then, soft swept in velvet green
 The plain with many a glade between,
 Whose tangled alleys far invade
 The depth of the brown forest shade.
 Here the tall fern obscured the lawn,
 Fair shelter for the sportive fawn ;
 There, tufted close with copsewood green,
 Was many a swelling hillock seen ;
 And all around was verdure meet
 For pressure of the fairies' feet.
 The glossy holly loved the park,
 The yew-tree lent its shadow dark,
 And many an old oak, worn and bare,
 With all its shiver'd boughs, was there.
 Lovely between, the moonbeams fell
 On lawn and hillock, glade and dell.
 The gallant Monarch sigh'd to see
 These glades so loved in childhood free,
 Bethinking that, as outlaw now,
 He ranged beneath the forest bough.

XX.

Fast o'er the moonlight Chase they sped.
 Well knew the band that measured tread,
 When, in retreat or in advance,
 The serried warriors move at once ;
 And evil were the luck, if dawn
 Descried them on the open lawn.
 Copses they traverse, brooks they cross,
 Strain up the bank and o'er the moss.
 From the exhausted page's brow
 Cold drops of toil are streaming now ;
 With effort faint and lengthen'd pause,
 His weary step the stripling draws.
 "Nay, droop not yet!" the warrior said,
 "Come, let me give thee ease and aid !
 Strong are mine arms, and little care
 A weight so slight as thine to bear. —
 What ! wilt thou not ?—capricious boy !
 Then thine own limbs and strength employ.
 Pass but this night, and pass thy care,
 I'll place thee with a lady fair,
 Where thou shalt tune thy lute to tell
 How Ronald loves fair Isabel !"
 Worn out, dishearten'd, and dismay'd,
 Here Amadine let go the plaid ;
 His trembling limbs their aid refuse,
 He sunk among the midnight dews !

XXI.

What may be done ?—the night is gone—
 The Bruce's band moves swiftly on—

Eternal shame, if at the brunt
 Lord Ronald grace not battle's front !
 " See yonder oak, within whose trunk
 Decay a darken'd cell hath sunk ;
 Enter, and rest thee there a space,
 Wrap in my plaid thy limbs, thy face.
 I will not be, believe me, far ;
 But must not quit the ranks of war.
 Well will I mark the bosky bourne,
 And soon, to guard thee hence, return.—
 Nay, weep not so, thou simple boy !
 But sleep in peace, and wake in joy."
 In sylvan lodging close bestow'd,
 He placed the page, and onward strode
 With strength put forth, o'er moss and brook,
 And soon the marching band o'ertook.

XXII.

Thus strangely left, long sobb'd and wept
 The page, till, wearied out, he slept—
 A rough voice waked his dream—" Nay, here,
 Here by this thicket, pass'd the deer—
 Beneath that oak old Ryno staid—
 What have we here?—a Scottish plaid,
 And in its folds a stripling laid !—
 Come forth ! thy name and business tell !
 What, silence ! then I guess thee well,
 The spy that sought old Cuthbert's cell,
 Wafted from Arran yester morn—
 Come, comrades, we will straight return.
 Our Lord may choose the rack should teach
 To this young lurcher use of speech.
 Thy bowstring, till I bind him fast."—
 " Nay, but he weeps and stands aghast ;
 Unbound we'll lead him, fear it not ;
 'Tis a fair stripling, though a Scot."
 The hunters to the castle sped,
 And there the hapless captive led.

XXIII.

Stout Clifford in the castle-court
 Prepared him for the morning sport ;
 And now with Lorn held deep discourse,
 Now gave command for hound and horse.
 War-steeds and palfreys paw'd the ground,
 And many a deer-dog howl'd around.
 To Amadine, Lorn's well-known word
 Replying to that Southern Lord,
 Mix'd with this clanging din, might seem
 The phantasm of a fever'd dream.
 The tone upon his ringing ears
 Came like the sounds which fancy hears
 When in rude waves or roaring winds
 Some words of woe the musér finds,

Until more loudly and more near,
Their speech arrests the page's ear.

XXIV.

"And was she thus," said Clifford, "lost
The priest should rue it to his cost!
What says the monk?"—"The holy Sire
Owns, that in masquer's quaint attire
She sought his skiff, disguised, unknown
To all except to him alone.
But, says the priest, a bark from Lorn
Laid them aboard that very morn,
And pirates seized her for their prey.
He proffer'd ransom-gold to pay,
And they agreed—but e'er told o'er,
The winds blew loud, the billows roar;
They sever'd, and they met no more.
He deems—such tempest vex'd the coast—
Ship, crew, and fugitive, were lost.
So let it be, with the disgrace
And scandal of her lofty race!
Thrice better she had ne'er been born,
Than brought her infamy on Lorn!"

XXV.

Lord Clifford now the captive spied;
"Whom, Herbert, hast thou there?" he cried.
"A spy we seized within the Chase,
A hollow oak his lurking-place."—
"What tidings can the youth afford?"—
"He plays the mute."—"Then noose a cord—
Unless brave Lorn reverse the doom
For his plaid's sake."—"Clan-Colla's loom,"
Said Lorn, whose careless glances trace
Rather the vesture than the face,
"Clan-Colla's dames such tartans twine;
Wearer nor plaid claims care of mine.
Give him, if my advice you crave,
His own scathed oak; and let him wave
In air, unless by terror wrung,
A frank confession find his tongue.—
Nor shall he die without his rite;
Thou, Angus Roy, attend the sight,
And give Clan-Colla's dirge thy breath,
As they convey him to his death."—
"O brother! cruel to the last!"
Through the poor captive's bosom pass'd
The thought, but, to his purpose true,
He said not, though he sigh'd, "Adieu!"

XXVI.

And will he keep his purpose still,
In sight of that last closing ill,
When one poor breath, one single word,
May freedom, safety, life, afford?

Can he resist the instinctive call,
 For life that bids us barter all?
 Love, strong as death, his heart hath steel'd,
 His nerves hath strung—he will not yield!
 Since that poor breath, that little word,
 May yield Lord Ronald to the sword.—
 Clan-Colla's dirge is pealing wide,
 The griesly headsman's by his side;
 Along the greenwood Chase they bend,
 And now their march has ghastly end!
 That old and shatter'd oak beneath,
 They destine for the place of death.
 What thoughts are his, while all in vain
 His eye for aid explores the plain?
 What thoughts, while, with a dizzy ear,
 He hears the death-prayer mutter'd near?
 And must he die such death accurst,
 Or will that bosom-secret burst?
 Cold on his brow breaks terror's dew,
 His trembling lips are livid blue;
 The agony of parting life
 Has nought to match that moment's strife!

XXVII.

But other witnesses are nigh,
 Who mock at fear, and death defy!
 Soon as the dire lament was play'd,
 It waked the lurking ambuscade.
 The Island Lord look'd forth and spied
 The cause, and loud in fury cried,—
 "By Heaven, they lead the page to die,
 And mock me in his agony!
 They shall abyé it!"—On his arm
 Bruce laid strong grasp—"They shall not harm
 A ringlet of the stripling's hair;
 But, till I give the word, forbear.
 Douglas, lead fifty of our force
 Up yonder hollow water-course,
 And couch thee midway on the wold,
 Between the flyers and their hold:
 A spear above the copse display'd,
 Be signal of the ambush made.
 Edward, with forty spearmen, straight
 Through yonder copse approach the gate,
 And, when thou hear'st the battle-din,
 Rush forward, and the passage win,
 Secure the drawbridge—storm the port,
 And man and guard the castle-court.—
 The rest move slowly forth with me,
 In shelter of the forest-tree,
 Till Douglas at his post I see."

XXVIII.

Like war-horse eager to rush on,
 Compell'd to wait the signal blown,

Hid, and scarce hid, by greenwood bough,
 Trembling with rage, stands Ronald now,
 And in his grasp his sword gleams blue,
 Soon to be dyed with deadlier hue.—
 Meanwhile the Bruce, with steady eye,
 Sees the dark death-train moving by,
 And, heedful, measures oft the space
 The Douglas and his band must trace,
 Ere they can reach their destined ground.
 Now sinks the dirge's wailing sound,
 Now cluster round the direful tree
 That slow and solemn company,
 While hymn mistuned and mutter'd prayer
 The victim for his fate prepare.—
 What glances o'er the greenwood shade;
 The spear that marks the ambushade!—
 "Now, noble Chief! I leave thee loose;—
 Upon them, Ronald!" said the Bruce.

XXIX.

"The Bruce! the Bruce!" to well-known cry
 His native rocks and woods reply.
 "The Bruce! the Bruce!" in that dread word
 The knell of hundred deaths was heard.
 The astonish'd Southern gazed at first,
 Where the wild tempest was to burst,
 That waked in that presaging name.
 Before, behind, around it came!
 Half-arm'd, surprised, on every side
 Hemm'd in, hew'd down, they bled and died.
 Deep in the ring the Bruce engaged,
 And fierce Clan-Colla's broadsword raged!
 Full soon the few who fought were sped,
 Nor better was their lot who fled,
 And met, 'mid terror's wild career,
 The Douglas's redoubted spear!
 Two hundred yeomen on that morn
 The castle left and none return.

XXX.

Not on their flight press'd Ronald's brand.
 A gentler duty claim'd his hand.
 He raised the page, where on the plain
 His fear had sunk him with the slain:
 And twice, that morn, surprise well near
 Betray'd the secret kept by fear:
 Once, when, with life returning, came
 To the boy's lip Lord Ronald's name,
 And hardly recollection drown'd
 The accents in a murmuring sound;
 And once, when scarce he could resist
 The Chieftain's care to loose the vest,
 Drawn tightly o'er his labouring breast.
 But then the Bruce's bugle blew,
 For martial work was yet to do.

XXXI.

A harder task fierce Edward waits.
 Ere signal given, the castle gates
 His fury had assail'd ;
 Such was his wonted reckless mood,
 Yet desperate valour oft made good,
 Even by its daring, venture rude,
 Where prudence might have fail'd.
 Upon the bridge his strength he threw,
 And struck the iron chain in two,
 By which its planks arose ;
 The warder next his axe's edge
 Struck down upon the threshold ledge,
 'Twixt door and post a ghastly wedge !
 The gate they may not close,
 Well fought the Southern in the fray,
 Clifford and Lorn fought well that day,
 But stubborn Edward forced his way
 Against a hundred foes.
 Loud came the cry, " The Bruce ! the Bruce !
 No hope or in defence or truce, —
 Fresh combatants pour in ;
 Mad with success, and drunk with gore,
 They drive the struggling foe before,
 And ward on ward they win.
 Unsparing was the vengeful sword,
 And limbs were lopp'd and life-blood pour'd,
 The cry of death and conflict roar'd,
 And fearful was the din !
 The startling horses plunged and hung,
 Clamour'd the dogs till turrets rung,
 Nor sunk the fearful cry,
 'Till not a foeman was there found
 Alive, save those who on the ground
 Groan'd in their agony !

XXXII.

The valiant Clifford is no more ;
 On Ronald's broadsword stream'd his gore
 But better hap had he of Lorn,
 Who, by the foemen backward borne,
 Yet gain'd with slender train the port,
 Where lay his bark beneath the fort,
 And cut the cable loose.
 Short were his shrift in that debate,
 That hour of fury and of fate,
 If Lorn encounter'd Bruce !
 Then long and loud the victor shout
 From turret and from tower rung out,
 The rugged vaults replied ;
 And from the donjon tower on high,
 The men of Carrick may descry
 Saint Andrew's cross, in blazonry
 Of silver, waving wide !

XXXIII.

The Bruce hath won his father's hall!
 "Welcome, brave friends and comrades all,
 Welcome to mirth and joy!
 The first, the last, is welcome here,
 From lord and chieftain, prince and peer.
 To this poor speechless boy!
 Great God! once more my sire's abode
 Is mine—behold the floor I trod
 In tottering infancy!
 And there the vaulted arch, whose sound
 Echo'd my joyous shout and bound
 In boyhood, and that rung around
 To youth's unthinking glee!
 O first, to thee, all-gracious Heaven,
 Then to my friends, my thanks be given!"—
 He paused a space, his brow he cross'd—
 Then on the board his sword he toss'd,
 Yet steaming hot; with Southern gore
 From hilt to point 'twas crimson'd o'er.

XXXIV.

"Bring here," he said, "the mazers four,
 My noble fathers loved of yore.
 Thrice let them circle round the board,
 The pledge, fair Scotland's rights restored!
 And he whose lip shall touch the wine
 Without a vow as true as mine,
 To hold both lands and life at nought,
 Until her freedom shall be bought,—
 Be brand of a disloyal Scot,
 And lasting infamy his lot!
 Sit, gentle friends!—our hour of glee
 Is brief, we'll spend it joyously!
 Blithest of all the sun's bright beams,
 When betwixt storm and storm he gleams.
 Well is our country's work begun,
 But more, far more, must yet be done.
 Speed messengers the country through;
 Arouse old friends and gather new;
 Warn Lanark's knights to gird their mail;
 Rouse the brave sons of Teviotdale;
 Let Ettrick's archers sharp their darts,
 The fairest forms, the truest hearts!
 Call all, call all! from Reedswair Path
 To the wild confines of Cape Wrath;
 Wide let the news through Scotland ring,—
 The Northern Eagle claps his wing!"

CANTO SIXTH.

I.

O WHO, that shared them, ever shall forget
 The emotions of the spirit-rousing time.

When breathless in the mart the couriers met
 Early and late, at evening and at prime ;
 When the loud cannon and the merry chime
 Hail'd news on news, as field on field was won,
 When Hope, long doubtful, soar'd at length sublime,
 And our glad eyes, awake as day begun,
 Watch'd Joy's broad banner rise, to meet the rising sun !

O these were hours, when thrilling joy repaid
 A long, long course of darkness, doubts, and fears !
 The heart-sick faintness of the hope delay'd,—
 The waste, the woe, the bloodshed, and the tears
 That track'd with terror twenty rolling years,—
 All was forgot in that blithe jubilee !
 Her downcast eye even pale Affliction rears,
 To sigh a thankful prayer. amid the glee
 That hail'd the Despot's fall, and peace and liberty !

Such news o'er Scotland's hills triumphant rode,
 When 'gainst the invaders turn'd the battle's scale,
 When Bruce's banner had victorious flow'd
 O'er Loudoun's mountain, and in Ury's vale ;
 When English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale,
 And fiery Edward routed stout Saint John,
 When Randolph's war-cry swell'd the southern gale,
 And many a fortress, town, and tower, was won,
 And Fame still sounded forth fresh deeds of glory done.

II.

Blithe tidings flew from baron's tower,
 To peasant's cot, to forest-bower,
 And waked the solitary cell,
 Where lone Saint Bride's recluses dwell.
 Princess no more, fair Isabel,

A vot'ress of the order now,
 Say, did the rule that bade thee wear
 Dim veil and woollen scapulaire,
 And reft thy locks of dark-brown hair,
 That stern and rigid vow,
 Did it condemn the transport high,
 Which glisten'd in thy watery eye,
 When minstrel or when palmer told
 Each fresh exploit of Bruce the bold ?—
 And whose the lovely form, that shares
 Thy anxious hopes, thy fears, thy prayers
 No sister she of convent shade ;
 So say these locks in lengthen'd braid,
 So say the blushes and the sighs,
 The tremors that unbidden rise,
 When, mingled with the Bruce's fame,
 The brave Lord Ronald's praises came.

III.

Believe, his father's castle won,
 And his bold enterprise begun,
 That Bruce's earliest cares restore
 The speechless page to Arran's shore ;

Nor think that long the quaint disguise
 Conceal'd her from a sister's eyes ;
 And sister-like in love they dwell
 In that lone convent's silent cell.
 There Bruce's slow assent allows
 Fair Isabel the veil and vows ;
 And there, her sex's dress regain'd,
 The lovely Maid of Lorn remain'd,
 Unnamed, unknown, while Scotland far
 Resounded with the din of war ;
 And many a month, and many a day,
 In calm seclusion wore away.

IV.

These days, these months, to years had worn,
 When tidings of high weight were borne
 To that lone island's shore ;
 Of all the Scottish conquests made
 By the First Edward's ruthless blade,
 His son retain'd no more,
 Northward of Tweed, but Stirling's towers,
 Beleaguer'd by King Robert's powers ;
 And they took term of truce,
 If England's King should not relieve
 The siege ere John the Baptist's eve,
 To yield them to the Bruce.
 England was roused—on every side
 Courier and post and herald hied,
 To summon prince and peer,
 At Berwick-bounds to meet their Liege.
 Prepared to raise fair Stirling's siege,
 With buckler, brand, and spear.
 The term was nigh—they muster'd fast,
 By beacon and by bugle-blast
 Forth marshall'd for the field ;
 There rode each knight of noble name,
 There England's hardy archers came,
 The land they trode seem'd all on flame,
 With banner, blade, and shield !
 And not famed England's powers alone,
 Renown'd in arms, the summons own ;
 For Neustria's knights obey'd,
 Gascoigne hath lent her horsemen good,
 And Cambria, but of late subdued,
 Sent forth her mountain-multitude,
 And Connoght pour'd from waste and wood
 Her hundred tribes, whose sceptre rude
 Dark Eth O'Connor sway'd.

V.

Right to devoted Caledon
 The storm of war rolls slowly on,
 With menace deep and dread ;
 So the dark clouds, with gathering power,
 Suspend awhile the threaten'd shower.

Till every peak and summit lower
 Round the pale pilgrim's head.
 Not with such pilgrim's startled eye
 King Robert mark'd the tempest nigh!
 Resolved the brunt to bide,
 His royal summons warn'd the land,
 That all who own'd their King's command
 Should instant take the spear and brand,
 To combat at his side.
 O who may tell the sons of fame,
 That at King Robert's bidding came,
 To battle for the right!
 From Cheviot to the shores of Ross,
 From Solway-Sands to Marshal's-Moss,
 All boun'd them for the fight.
 Such news the royal courier tells,
 Who came to rouse dark Arran's dells;
 But farther tidings must the ear
 Of Isabel in secret bear.
 These in her cloister walk, next morn,
 Thus shared she with the Maid of Lorn:—

VI.

“ My Edith, can I tell how dear
 Our intercourse of hearts sincere
 Hath been to Isabel?—
 Judge then the sorrow of my heart,
 When I must say the words, We part!
 The cheerless convent-cell
 Was not, sweet maiden, made for thee;
 Go thou where thy vocation free
 On happier fortunes fell.
 Nor, Edith, judge thyself betray'd,
 Though Robert knows that Lorn's high Maid,
 And his poor silent page were one.
 Versed in the fickle heart of man,
 Earnest and anxious hath he look'd
 How Ronald's heart the message brook'd
 That gave him, with her last farewell,
 The charge of Sister Isabel,
 To think upon thy better right,
 And keep the faith his promise plight.
 Forgive him for thy sister's sake,
 At first if vain repinings wake—
 Long since that mood is gone:
 Now dwells he on thy juster claims,
 And oft his breach of faith he blames—
 Forgive him for thine own!”—

VII.

“ No! never to Lord Ronald's bower
 Will I again as paramour”——
 Nay, hush thee, too impatient maid,
 Until my final tale be said!—
 The good King Robert would engage
 Edith once more his elfin page,

By her own heart, and her own eye,
 Her lover's penitence to try—
 Safe in his royal charge, and free,
 Should such thy final purpose be,
 Again unknown to seek the cell,
 And live and die with Isabel.”
 Thus spoke the maid—King Robert's eye,
 Might have some glance of policy ;
 Dunstaffnage had the Monarch ta'en,
 And Lorn had own'd King Robert's reign ;
 Her brother had to England fled,
 And there in banishment was dead ;
 Ample, through exile, death, and flight,
 O'er tower and land was Edith's right ;
 This ample right o'er tower and land
 Were safe in Ronald's faithful hand.

VIII.

Embarrass'd eye and blushing cheek
 Pleasure and shame, and fear bespeak !
 Yet much the reasoning Edith made :—
 “ Her sister's faith she must upbraid,
 Who gave such secret, dark and dear,
 In counsel to another's ear.
 Why should she leave the peaceful cell ?—
 How should she part with Isabel ?—
 How wear that strange attire agen ?—
 How risk herself 'midst martial men ?—
 And how be guarded on the way ?—
 At least she might entreat delay.”
 Kind Isabel, with secret smile,
 Saw and forgave the maiden's wile,
 Reluctant to be thought to move
 At the first call of truant love.

IX.

Oh, blame her not !—when zephyrs wake,
 The aspen's trembling leaves must shake ;
 When beams the sun through April shower,
 It needs must bloom, the violet flower ;
 And Love, how'er the maiden strive,
 Must with reviving hope revive !
 A thousand soft excuses came,
 To plead his cause 'gainst virgin shame.
 Pledged by their sires in earliest youth,
 He had her plighted faith and truth—
 Then 'twas her Liege's strict command,
 And she, beneath his royal hand,
 A ward in person and in land ;—
 And, last, she was resolved to stay
 Only brief space—one little day—
 Close hidden in her safe disguise
 From all, but most from Ronald's eyes—
 But once to see him more !—nor blame
 Her wish—to hear him name her name !

Then, to bear back to solitude
 The thought he had his falsehood rued !—
 But Isabel, who long had seen
 Her pallid cheek and pensive mien,
 And well herself the cause might know,
 Though innocent of Edith's woe,
 Joy'd, generous, that revolving time
 Gave means to expiate the crime.
 High glow'd her bosom as she said—
 " Well shall her sufferings be repaid ! "—
 Now came the parting hour—a band
 From Arran's mountains left the land ;
 Their chief, Fitz-Louis had the care
 The speechless Amadine to bear
 To Bruce, with honour, as behoved
 To page the Monarch dearly loved.

X.

The King had deem'd the maiden bright
 Should reach him long before the fight,
 But storms and fate her course delay.
 It was on eve of battle-day,
 When o'er the Gillie's-hill she rode.
 The landscape like a furnace glow'd,
 And far as e'er the eye was borne,
 The lances waved like autumn-corn.
 In battles four, beneath their eye,
 The forces of King Robert lie.
 And one below the hill was laid,
 Reserved for rescue and for aid ;
 And three, advanced, form'd vaward-line,
 'Twixt Bannock's brook and Ninian's shrine.
 Detach'd was each, yet each so nigh
 As well might mutual aid supply.—
 Beyond, the Southern host appears,
 A boundless wilderness of spears,
 Whose verge or rear the anxious eye
 Strove far, but strove in vain, to spy.
 Thick flashing in the evening beam,
 Glaives, lances, bills, and banners gleam ;
 And where the heaven join'd with the hill,
 Was distant armour flashing still,
 So wide, so far, the boundless host
 Seem'd in the blue horizon lost.

XI.

Down from the hill the maiden pass'd,
 At the wild show of war aghast ;
 And traversed first the rearward host,
 Reserved for aid where needed most.
 The men of Carrick and of Ayr,
 Lennox and Lanark, too, were there,
 And all the western land ;
 With these the valiant of the Isles
 Beneath their Chieftains rank'd their files,
 In many a plaided band.

There, in the centre, proudly raised,
 The Bruce's royal standard blazed,
 And there Lord Ronald's banner bore
 A galley driven by sail and oar.
 A wild, yet pleasing contrast, made
 Warriors in mail and plate array'd,
 With the plumed bonnet and the plaid
 By these Hebrideans worn ;
 But O ! unseen for three long years,
 Dear was the garb of mountaineers
 To the fair Maid of Lorn !
 For one she look'd—but he was far,
 Busied amid the ranks of war—
 Yet with affection's troubled eye
 She mark'd his banner boldly fly,
 Gave on the countless foe a glance,
 And thought on battle's desperate chance.

XII.

To centre of the vaward-line
 Fitz-Louis guided Amadine.
 Arm'd all on foot, that host appears
 A serried mass of glimmering spears.
 There stood the Marchers' warlike band,
 The warriors there of Lodon's land ;
 Ettrick and Liddell bent the yew,
 A band of archers fierce, though few ;
 The men of Nith and Annan's vale,
 And the bold Spears of Teviotdale ;—
 The dauntless Douglas these obey,
 And the young Stuart's gentle sway,
 North-eastward by Saint Ninian's shrine,
 Beneath fierce Randolph's charge, combine
 The warriors whom the hardy North
 From Tay to Sutherland sent forth.
 The rest of Scotland's war-array
 With Edward Bruce to westward lay,
 Where Bannock, with his broken bank
 And deep ravine, protects their flank.
 Behind them, screen'd by sheltering wood,
 The gallant Keith, Lord Marshal, stood :
 His men-at-arms bare mace and lance,
 And plumes that wave, and helms that glance,
 Thus fair divided by the King,
 Centre, and right, and left-ward wing,
 Composed his front ; nor distant far
 Was strong reserve to aid the war.
 And 'twas to front of this array,
 Her guide and Edith made their way.

XIII.

Here must they pause ; for in advance
 As far as one might pitch a lance,
 The Monarch rode along the van,
 The foe's approaching force to scan,
 His line to marshal and to range,

And ranks to square, and fronts to change.
 Alone he rode—from head to heel
 Sheathed in his ready arms of steel ;
 Nor mounted yet on war-horse wight,
 But, till more near the shock of fight,
 Reining a palfrey low and light.
 A diadem of gold was set
 Above his bright steel basinet,
 And clasp'd within its glittering twine
 Was seen the glove of Argentine ;
 Truncheon or leading staff he lacks,
 Bearing, instead, a battle-axe.
 He ranged his soldiers for the fight,
 Accoutred thus, in open sight
 Of either host.—Three bowshots far,
 Paused the deep front of England's war,
 And rested on their arms awhile,
 To close and rank their warlike file,
 And hold high counsel, if that night
 Should view the strife, or dawning light.

XIV.

O gay, yet fearful to behold,
 Flashing with steel and rough with gold,
 And bristled o'er with bills and spears,
 With plumes and pennons waving fair,
 Was that bright battle-front ! for there
 Rode England's King and Peers :
 And who, that saw that Monarch ride,
 His kingdom battled by his side,
 Could then his direful doom foretell ?—
 Fair was his seat in knightly selle,
 And in his sprightly eye was set
 Some spark of the Plantagenet.
 Though light and wandering was his glance,
 It flash'd at sight of shield and lance :—
 " Know'st thou," he said, " De Argentine,
 Yon knight who marshals thus their line ?"—
 " The tokens on his helmet tell
 The Bruce, my Liege : I know him well."
 " And shall the audacious traitor brave
 The presence where our banners wave ?"—
 " So please, my Liege," said Argentine,
 " Were he but horsed on steed like mine,
 To give him fair and knightly chance,
 I would adventure forth my lance."—
 " In battle day," the King replied,
 " Nice tourney rules are set aside.
 Still must the rebel dare our wrath ?
 Set on him—sweep him from our path !"
 And, at King Edward's signal, soon
 Dash'd from the ranks Sir Henry Boun.

XV.

Of Hereford's high blood he came,
 A race renown'd for knightly fame

He burn'd before his Monarch's eye
 To do some deed of chivalry.
 He spurr'd his steed, he couch'd his lance,
 And darted on the Bruce at once.
 As motionless as rocks that bide
 The wrath of the advancing tide,
 The Bruce stood fast.—Each breast beat high
 And dazzled was each gazing eye—
 The heart had hardly time to think,
 The eyelid scarce had time to wink,
 While on the King, like flash of flame,
 Spurr'd to full speed the war-horse came!
 The partridge may the falcon mock,
 If that slight palfrey stand the shock—
 But, swerving from the Knight's career,
 Just as they met, Bruce shunn'd the spear.
 Onward the baffled warrior bore
 His course—but soon his course was o'er!—
 High in his stirrups stood the King,
 And gave his battle-axe the swing.
 Right on De Boune, the whiles he pass'd,
 Fell that stern dint—the first—the last!
 Such strength upon the blow was put,
 The helmet crash'd like hazel-nut;
 The axe-shaft, with its brazen clasp,
 Was shiver'd to the gauntlet grasp.
 Springs from the blow the startled horse,
 Drops to the plain the lifeless corse;
 First of that fatal field, how soon,
 How sudden fell the fierce De Boune!

XVI.

One pitying glance the Monarch sped,
 Where on the field his foe lay dead;
 Then gently turn'd his palfrey's head,
 And, pacing back his sober way,
 Slowly he gain'd his own array.
 There round their King the leaders crowd,
 And blame his recklessness aloud,
 That risk'd 'gainst each adventurous spear,
 A life so valued and so dear.—
 His broken weapon's shaft survey'd
 The King, and careless answer made,—
 "My loss may pay my folly's tax;
 I've broke my trusty battle-axe."
 'Twas then Fitz-Louis, bending low,
 Did Isabel's commission show;
 Edith, disguised, at distance stands,
 And hides her blushes with her hands.
 The Monarch's brow has changed its hue
 Away the gory axe he threw,
 While to the seeming page he drew,
 Clearing war's terrors from his eye.
 Her hand with gentle ease he took,
 With such a kind protecting look.

As to a weak and timid boy
Might speak that elder brother's care
And elder brother's love was there.

XVII.

"Fear not," he said, "young Amadine!"
Then whisper'd—"Still that name be thine
Fate plays her wonted fantasy,
Kind Amadine, with thee and me,
And sends thee here in doubtful hour,
But soon we are beyond her power;
For on this chosen battle-plain,
Victor or vanquish'd, I remain.
Do thou to yonder hill repair;
The followers of our host are there,
And all who may not weapons bear.—
Fitz-Louis, have him in thy care.—
Joyful we meet, if all go well;
If not, in Arran's holy cell
Thou must take part with Isabel;
For brave Lord Ronald, too, hath sworn,
Not to regain the Maid of Lorn,
(The bliss on earth he covets most,
Would he forsake his battle-post,
Or shun the fortune that may fall
To Bruce, to Scotland, and to all.—
But, hark! some news these trumpets tell!
Forgive my haste—farewell!—farewell!"—
And in a lower voice he said,
"Be of good cheer—farewell, sweet maid!"—

XVIII.

"What train of dust, with trumpet-sound,
And glimmering spears, is wheeling round
Our leftward flank?" the Monarch cried,
To Moray's Earl, who rode beside.
"Lo! round thy station pass the foes!
Randolph, thy wreath hath lost a rose."
The Earl his visor closed, and said—
"My wreath shall bloom, or life shall fade.—
Follow, my household!"—And they go
Like lightning on the advancing foe.
"My Liege," said noble Douglas then,
"Earl Randolph has but one to ten:
Let me go forth his band to aid!"—
"Stir not. The error he hath made,
Let him amend it as he may;
I will not weaken mine array."
Then loudly rose the conflict-cry,
And Douglas's brave heart swell'd high,—
"My Liege," he said, "with patient ear
I must not Moray's death-knell hear!"—
"Then go—but speed thee back again."
Forth sprung the Douglas with his train:
But, when they won a rising hill,
He bade his followers hold them still.—

“ See, see ! the routed Southern fly !
 The Earl hath won the victory.
 Lo ! where yon steeds run masterless,
 His banner towers above the press.
 Rein up ; our presence would impair
 The fame we come too late to share.”
 Back to the host the Douglas rode,
 And soon glad tidings are abroad,
 That, Dayncourt by stout Randolph slain,
 His followers died with loosen'd rein.—
 That skirmish closed the busy day,
 And couch'd in battle's prompt array,
 Each army on their weapons lay.

XIX.

It was a night of lovely June,
 High rode in cloudless blue the moon,
 Demayet smiled beneath her ray ;
 Old Stirling's towers arose in light,
 And, twined in links of silver bright,
 Her winding river lay.
 Ah ! gentle planet ! other sight
 Shall greet thee next returning night,
 Of broken arms and banners tore,
 And marshes dark with human gore,
 And piles of slaughter'd men and horse,
 And Forth that floats the frequent corse,
 And many a wounded wretch to plain
 Beneath thy silver light in vain !
 But now, from England's hest, the cry
 Thou hear'st of wassail revelry,
 While from the Scottish legions pass
 The murmur'd prayer, the early mass !—
 Here, numbers had presumption given ;
 There, bands o'ermatch'd sought aid from Heaven

XX.

On Gillie's-hill, whose height commands
 The battle-field, fair Edith stands,
 With serf and page unfit for war,
 To eye the conflict from afar.
 O ! with what doubtful agony
 She sees the dawning tint the sky !—
 New on the Ochils gleams the sun,
 And glistens now Demayet dun ;
 Is it the lark that carols shrill,
 Is it the bittern's early hum ?
 No !—distant, but increasing still,
 The trumpet's sound swells up the hill,
 With the deep murmur of the drum.
 Responsive from the Scottish hest,
 Pipe-clang and bugle sound were toss'd,
 His breast and brow each soldier cross'd,
 And started from the ground ;
 Arm'd and array'd for instant fight,
 Rose archer, spearman, squire, and knight,

And in the pomp of battle bright
The dread battalia frown'd.

XXI.

Now onward, and in open view,
The countless ranks of England drew,
Dark rolling like the ocean-tide,
When the rough west hath chafed his pride,
And his deep roar sends challenge wide
To all that bars his way!
In front the gallant archers trode,
The men-at-arms behind them rode,
And midmost of the phalanx broad
The Monarch held his sway.
Beside him many a war-horse fumes,
Around him waves a sea of plumes,
Where many a knight in battle known,
And some who spurs had first braced on,
And deem'd that fight should see them won
King Edward's hests obey.
De Argentine attends his side,
With stout De Valence, Pembroke's pride,
Selected champions from the train,
To wait upon his bridle-rein.
Upon the Scottish foe he gazed—
At once, before his sight amazed,
Sunk banner, spear, and shield;
Each weapon point is downward sent,
Each warrior to the ground is bent.
"The rebels, Argentine, repent!
For pardon they have kneel'd."—
"Ay!—but they bend to other powers,
And other pardon sue than ours!
See where yon barefoot Abbot stands,
And blesses them with lifted hands!
Upon the spot where they have kneel'd,
These men will die, or win the field."—
"Then prove we if they die or win!
Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin."

XXII.

Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,
Just as the northern ranks arose,
Signal for England's archery
To halt and bend their bows.
Then stepp'd each yeoman forth a pace,
Glanced at the intervening space,
And raised his left hand high;
To the right ear the cords they bring—
At once ten thousand bowstrings ring,
Ten thousand arrows fly!
Nor paused on the devoted Scot
The ceaseless fury of their shot;
As fiercely and as fast,

Forth whistling came the gray goose wing,
As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
Adown December's blast.

Nor mountain targe of tough bull-hide,
Nor lowland mail, that storm may bide
Woe, woe to Scotland's banner'd pride,
If the fell shower may last!

Upon the right, behind the wood,
Each by his steed dismounted, stood
The Scottish chivalry;—

With foot in stirrup, hand on mane,
Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
His own keen heart, his eager train
Until the archers gain'd the plain!

Then, "Mount, ye gallants free!"
He cried; and, vaulting from the ground,
His saddle every horseman found.

On high their glittering crests they toss,
As springs the wildfire from the moss!
The shield hangs down on every breast,
Each ready lance is in the rest.

And loud shouts Edward Bruce—
"Forth, Marshal! on the peasant foe!
We'll tame the terrors of their bow,
And cut the bowstring loose!"

XXIII.

Then spurs were dash'd in chargers' flanks,
They rush'd among the archer ranks,
No spears were there the shock to let,
No stakes to turn the charge were set,
And how shall yeoman's armour slight,
Stand the long lance and mace of might?
Or what may their short swords avail,
'Gainst barbed horse and shirt of mail?
Amid their ranks the chargers sprung,
High o'er their heads the weapons swung,
And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
Give note of triumph and of rout!

Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
Their English hearts the strife made good.
Borne down at length on every side,
Compell'd to flight, they scatter wide.—
Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
And bound the deer of Dallon-Lee!
The broken bows of Bannock's shore
Shall in the greenwood ring no more!
Round Wakefield's merry Maypole now,
The maids may twine the summer bough,
May northward look with longing glance,
For those that wont to lead the dance,
For the blithe archers look in vain!
Broken, dispersed, in flight o'erta'en,
Pierced through, trode down, by thousands slain.
They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.

XXIV.

The King with scorn beheld their flight.
 "Are these," he said, "our yeomen wight?
 Each braggart churl could boast before,
 Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!
 Fitter to plunder chase or park,
 Than make a manly foe their mark—
 Forward, each gentleman and knight!
 Let gentle blood shew generous might,
 And chivalry redeem the fight!"
 To rightward of the wild affray,
 The field shew'd fair and level way;

But, in mid-space, the Bruce's care
 Had bored the ground with many a pit,
 With turf and brushwood hidden yet,

That form'd a ghastly snare.
 Rushing, ten thousand horsemen came,
 With spears in rest, and hearts in flame,
 That panted for the shock!

With blazing crests and banners spread,
 And trumpet-clang and clamour dread,
 The wide plain thunders to their tread,
 As far as Stirling rock.

Down! down! in headlong overthrow,
 Horseman and horse, the foremost go,
 Wild floundering on the field!

The first are in destruction's gorge,
 Their followers wildly o'er them urge;—

The knightly helm and shield,
 The mail, the axon, and the spear,
 Strong hand, high heart, are useless here!
 Loud, from the mass confused, the cry
 Of dying warriors swells on high,
 And steeds that shriek in agony!
 They came like mountain-torrent red,
 That thunders o'er its rocky bed;
 They broke like that same torrent's wave
 When swallow'd by a darksome cave.
 Billows on billows burst and boil,
 Maintaining still the stern turmoil,
 And to their wild and tortured groan
 Each adds new terrors of his own!

XXV.

Too strong in courage and in might
 Was England yet, to yield the fight.

Her noblest all are here;

Names that to fear were never known,
 Bold Norfolk's Earl De Brotherton,
 And Oxford's famed De Vere.

There Gloster plied the bloody sword,
 And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford,
 Bottetourt and Sanzavere,

Ross, Montague, and Mauley came,
 And Courtenay's pride and Percy's fame

Names known too well in Scotland's war,
At Falkirk, Methven, and Dunbar,
Blazed broader yet in after years,
At Cressy red and fell Poitiers.
Pembroke with these, and Argentine,
Brought up the rearward battle-line.
With caution o'er the ground they tread,
Slippery with blood and piled with dead,
Till hand to hand in battle set,
The bills with spears and axes met,
And, closing dark on every side,
Raged the full contest far and wide.
Then was the strength of Douglas tried,
Then proved was Randolph's generous pride,
And well did Stewart's actions grace
The sire of Scotland's royal race !
Firmly they kept their ground ;
As firmly England onward press'd,
And down went many a noble crest,
And rent was many a valiant breast,
And Slaughter revell'd round.

XXVI.

Unflinching foot 'gainst foot was set,
Unceasing blow by blow was met ;
The groans of those who fell
Were drown'd amid the shriller clang
That from the blades and harness rang,
And in the battle-yell.
Yet fast they fell, unheard, forgot,
Both Southern fierce and hardy Scot ;
And O ! amid that waste of life,
What various motives fired the strife !
The aspiring Noble bled for fame,
The Patriot for his country's claim ;
This Knight his youthful strength to prove
And that to win his lady's love ;
Some fought from ruffian thirst of blood,
From habit some, or hardihood.
But ruffian stern, and soldier good,
The noble and the slave,
From various cause the same wild road,
On the same bloody morning, trode
To that dark inn, the grave !

XXVII.

The tug of strife to flag begins,
Though neither loses yet, nor wins.
High rides the sun, thick rolls the dust,
And feebler speeds the blow and thrust.
Douglas leans on his war-sword now,
And Randolph wipes his bloody brow ;
Nor less had toil'd each Southern knight,
From morn till mid-day in the fight.
Strong Egremont for air must gasp,
Beauchamp undoes his visor-clasp,

And Montague must quit his spear,
 And sinks thy falchion, bold De Vero
 The blows of Berkley fall less fast,
 And gallant Pembroke's bugle-blast
 Hath lost its lively tone;
 Sinks, Argentine, thy battle-word,
 And Percy's shout was fainter heard,
 " My merry-men, fight on ! "

XXVIII.

Bruce, with the pilot's wary eye,
 The slackening of the storm could spy :—
 " One effort more, and Scotland's free !
 Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
 Is firm as Ailsa Rock ;
 Rush on with Highland sword and targe,
 I, with my Carrick spearmen, charge ;
 Now, forward to the shock ! "
 At once the spears were forward thrown,
 Against the sun the broadswords shone ;
 The pibroch lent its maddening tone,
 And loud King Robert's voice was known—
 " Carrick, press on—they fail, they fail !
 Press on, brave sons of Innisgail,
 The foe is fainting fast !
 Each strike for parent, child, and wife,
 For Scotland, liberty, and life,—
 The battle cannot last ! "

XXIX.

The fresh and desperate onset bore
 The foes three furlongs back and more,
 Leaving their noblest in their gore.
 Alone, De Argentine
 Yet bears on high his red-cross shield,
 Gathers the relics of the field,
 Renews the ranks where they have reel'd,
 And still makes good the line.
 Brief strife, but fierce,—his efforts raise
 A bright but momentary blaze.
 Fair Edith heard the Southern shout,
 Beheld them turning from the rout,
 Heard the wild call their trumpets sent,
 In notes 'twixt triumph and lament.
 That rallying force combined anew,
 Appear'd in her distracted view,
 To hem the Islesmen round :
 " O God, the combat they renew,
 And is no rescue found !
 And ye that look thus tamely on,
 And see your native land o'erthrown,
 O ! are your hearts of flesh or stone ? "

XXX.

The multitude that watch'd afar,
 Rejected from the ranks of war,

Had not unmoved beheld the fight,
 When strove the Bruce for Scotland's right :
 Each heart had caught the patriot spark,
 Old man and stripling, priest and clerk,
 Bondsman and serf ; even female hand
 Stretch'd to the hatchet or the brand ;

But, when mute Amadine they heard
 Give to their zeal his signal-word,

A frenzy fired the throng ;—

“ Portents and miracles impeach
 Our sloth—the dumb our duties teach—
 And He that gives the mute his speech,
 Can bid the weak be strong.

To us, as to our lords, are given
 A native earth, a promised heaven ;
 To us, as to our lords, belongs
 The vengeance for our nation's wrongs ;
 The choice, 'twixt death or freedom, warms
 Our breasts as theirs—To arms ! to arms !”
 To arms they flew,—axe, club, or spear,—
 And mimic ensigns high they rear,
 And, like a banner'd host afar,
 Bear down on England's wearied wa:

XXXI.

Already scatter'd o'er the plain.
 Reproof, command, and counsel vain,
 The rearward squadrons fled amain,
 Or made but doubtful stay ;—
 But when they mark'd the seeming show
 Of fresh and fierce and marshall'd foe,

The boldest broke array.—

O give their hapless prince his due !
 In vain the royal Edward threw

His person 'mid the spears,

Cried, “ Fight !” to terror and despair,
 Menaced, and wept, and tore his hair,

And cursed their caitiff fears ;

Till Pembroke turn'd his bridle rein,
 And forced him from the fatal plain.

With them rode Argentine, until
 They gain'd the summit of the hill,
 But quitted there the train :—

“ In yonder field a gage I left,—
 I must not live of fame bereft ;

I needs must turn again.

Speed hence, my Liege, for on your trace
 The fiery Douglas takes the chase,

I know his banner well.

God send my Sovereign joy and bliss,
 And many a happier field than this !

Once more, my Liege, farewell !

XXXII.

Again he faced the battle-field,—
 Wildly they fly, are slain, or yield

"Now then," he said, and couch'd his spear,
 "My course is run, the goal is near ;
 One effort more, one brave career,
 Must close this race of mine."
 Then in his stirrups rising high,
 He shouted loud his battle-cry—
 "Saint James for Argentine !"
 And, of the bold pursuers, four
 The gallant knight from saddle bore ;
 But not unharm'd—a lance's point
 Has found his breastplate's loosen'd joint,
 An axe has razed his crest ;
 Yet still on Colonsay's fierce lord,
 Who press'd the chase with gory sword,
 He rode with spear in rest,
 And through his bloody tartans bored,
 And through his gallant breast.
 Nail'd to the earth, the mountaineer
 Yet writhed him up against the spear,
 And swung his broadsword round !
 Stirrup, steel-boot, and cuish gave way,
 Beneath that blow's tremendous sway,
 The blood gush'd from the wound ;
 And the grim Lord of Colonsay
 Hath turn'd him on the ground,
 And laugh'd in death-pang, that his blade
 The mortal thrust so well repaid.

XXXIII.

Now toil'd the Bruce, the battle done,
 To use his conquest boldly won ;
 And gave command for horse and spear
 To press the Southron's scatter'd rear,
 Nor let his broken force combine,—
 When the war-cry of Argentine
 Fell faintly on his ear ;—
 "Save, save his life," he cried, "O save
 The kind, the noble, and the brave !"
 The squadrons round free passage gave—
 The wounded knight drew near ;
 He raised his red-cross shield no more,
 Helm, cuish, and breastplate stream'd with gore,
 Yet, as he saw the King advance,
 He strove even then to couch his lance—
 The effort was in vain !
 The spur-stroke fail'd to rouse the horse ;
 Wounded and weary, in mid-course
 He stumbled on the plain.
 Then foremost was the generous Bruce
 To raise his head, his helm to loose ;—
 "Lord Earl, the day is thine !
 My sovereign's charge, and adverse fate,
 Have made our meeting all too late :
 Yet this may Argentine,

As boon from ancient comrade, crave—
A Christian's mass, a soldier's grave."

XXXIV.

Bruce press'd his dying hand—its grasp
Kindly replied ; but, in his clasp,
It stiffen'd and grew cold—
" And, O farewell," the victor cried,
" Of chivalry the flower and pride,
The arm in battle bold,
The courteous mien, the noble race,
The stainless faith, the manly face !—
Bid Ninian's convent light their shrine,
For late-wake of De Argentine.
O'er better knight on death-bier laid,
Torch never gleam'd, nor mass was said !"

XXXV.

Nor for De Argentine alone,
Through Ninian's church these torches shone.
And rose the death-prayer's awful tone.
That yellow lustre glimmer'd pale,
On broken plate and bloodied mail,
Rent crest and shatter'd coronet,
Of Baron, Earl, and Bannaret ;
And the best names that England knew,
Claim'd in the death-prayer dismal due.
Yet mourn not, Land of Fame !
Though ne'er the Leopards on thy shield
Retreated from so sad a field,
Since Norman William came.
Oft may thine annals justly boast
Of battle stern by Scotland lost ;
Grudge not her victory,
When for her freeborn rights she strove—
Rights dear to all who freedom love,
To none so dear as thee !

XXXVI.

Turn we to Bruce, whose curious ear
Must from Fitz-Louis tidings hear ;
With him, a hundred voices tell
Of prodigy and miracle,
" For the mute page had spoke."—
" Page !" said Fitz-Louis,—" rather say,
An angel sent from realms of day,
To burst the English yoke.
I saw his plume and bonnet drop,
When hurrying from the mountain top ;
A lovely brow, dark locks that wave,
To his bright eyes new lustre gave,
A step as light upon the green,
As if his pinions waved unseen !"—
" Spoke he with none ?"—" With none—one word
Burst when he saw the Island Lord,

Returning from the battle-field."—
 "What answer made the Chief?"—"He kneel'd,
 Durst not look up, but mutter'd low,
 Some mingled sounds that none might know,
 And greeted him 'twixt joy and fear
 As being of superior sphere."

XXXVII.

Even upon Bannock's bloody plain,
 Heap'd then with thousands of the slain,
 'Mid victor monarch's musings high,
 Mirth laugh'd in good King Robert's eye:—
 "And bore he such angelic air,
 Such noble front, such waving hair?
 Hath Ronald kneel'd to him?" he said;
 "Then must we call the Church to aid—
 Our will be to the Abbot known,
 Ere these strange news are wider blown;
 To Cambuskenneth straight ye pass,
 And deck the church for solemn mass,
 To pay, for high deliverance given,
 A nation's thanks to gracious Heaven.
 Let him array, besides, such state
 As should on princes' nuptials wait.
 Oursel' the cause, through Fortune's spite,
 That once broke short that spousal rite,
 Oursel' will grace, with early morn,
 The Bridal of the Maid of Lorn."

CONCLUSION.

Go forth, my Song, upon thy venturous way;
 Go boldly forth; nor yet thy master blame,
 Who chose no patron for his humble lay,
 And graced thy numbers with no friendly name,
 Whose partial zeal might smooth thy path to fame.
There was—and O! how many sorrows crowd
 Into these two brief words!—*there was* a claim
 By generous friendship given—had fate allow'd,
 It well had bid thee rank the proudest of the proud!

All angel now—yet little less than all,
 While still a pilgrim in our world below!
 What 'vails it us that patience to recall,
 Which hid its own to soothe all other woes;
 What 'vails to tell, how Virtue's purest glow
 Shone yet more lovely in a form so fair!
 And, least of all, what 'vails the world should know,
 That one poor garland, twined to deck thy hair,
 Is hung upon thy hearse to droop and wither there!

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

IN THREE PARTS.

Few personages are so renowned in tradition as Thomas of Ercildoune, known by the appellation of *The Rhymer*. It is agreed on all hands, that the residence, and probably the birthplace of this ancient bard, was Ercildoune, a village situated upon the Leader, two miles above its junction with the Tweed. The ruins of an ancient tower are still pointed out as the Rhymer's castle. The uniform tradition bears, that his surname was Lermont, or Learnmont; and that the appellation of *The Rhymer* was conferred on him in consequence of his poetical compositions. There remains, nevertheless, some doubt upon the subject.

We are better able to ascertain the period at which Thomas of Ercildoune lived, being the latter end of the thirteenth century.

It cannot be doubted that Thomas of Ercildoune was a remarkable and important person in his own time, since, very shortly after his death, we find him celebrated as a prophet and as a poet. Whether he himself made any pretensions to the first of these characters, or whether it was gratuitously conferred upon him by the credulity of posterity, it seems difficult to decide. The popular tale bears that Thomas was carried off, at an early age, to the Fairy Land, where he acquired all the knowledge which made him afterwards so famous. After seven years' residence, he was permitted to return to the earth, to enlighten and astonish his countrymen by his prophetic powers; still, however, remaining bound to return to his royal mistress, when she should intimate her pleasure. Accordingly, while Thomas was making merry with his friends in the Tower of Ercildoune, a person came running in, and told, with marks of fear and astonishment, that a hart and hind had left the neighbouring forest, and were, composedly and slowly, parading the street of the village. The prophet instantly arose, left his habitation, and followed the wonderful animals to the forest, whence he was never seen to return. The Eildon Tree, from beneath the shade of which he delivered his prophecies, now no longer exists, but the spot is marked by a large stone, called Eildon Tree Stone.

The following ballad is given from a copy, obtained from a lady residing not far from Ercildoune, corrected and enlarged by one in Mrs Brown's MSS. To this old tale the Editor has ventured to add a Second Part, consisting of a kind of cento, from the printed prophecies vulgarly ascribed to the Rhymer; and a Third Part, entirely modern, founded upon the tradition of his having returned with the hart and hind to the Land of Faerie.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART FIRST

Ancient.

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

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

True Thomas, he pull'd aff his cap,
 And louted low down to his knee,
 "All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
 For thy peer on earth I never did see."—

"O no, O no, Thomas," she said,
 "That name does not belang to me;
 I am but the Queen of fair Elfland,
 That am hither come to visit thee.

"Harp and carp, Thomas," she said;
 "Harp and carp along wi' me;
 And if ye dare to kiss my lips,
 Sure of your bodie I will be."—

"Betide me weal, betide me woe,
 That weird shall never daunton me."—
 Syne he has kiss'd her rosy lips,
 All underneath the Eildon Tree.

"Now, ye maun go wi' me," she said;
 "True Thomas, ye maun go wi' me;
 And ye maun serve me seven years,
 Thro' weal or woe as may chance to be."

She mounted on her milk-white steed;
 She's ta'en true Thomas up behind:
 And aye, whene'er her bridle rung,
 The steed flew swifter than the wind.

O they rade on, and farther on;
 The steed gaed swifter than the wind;
 Until they reach'd a desert wide,
 And living land was left behind.

"Light down, light down, now, true Thomas,
 And lean your head upon my knee;
 Abide and rest a little space,
 And I will show you ferlies three.

"O see ye not yon narrow road,
 So thick beset with thorns and briers?
 That is the path of righteousness,
 Though after it but few enquires.

"And see ye not that braid braid road,
 That lies across that lily leven?
 That is the path of wickedness,
 Though some call it the road to heaven.

"And see not ye that bonny road,
 That winds about the fernie brae?
 That is the road to fair Elfland,
 Where thou and I this night maun gae.

* *That weird, &c.*—That destiny shall never frighten me.

“ But, Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
 Whatever ye may hear or see ;
 For, if ye speak word in Elflin land,
 Ye'll ne'er get back to your ain countrie.”

O they rade on, and farther on,
 And they waded through rivers aboon the knee,
 And they saw neither sun nor moon,
 But they heard the roaring of the sea.

It was mirk mirk night, and there was nae stern light,
 And they waded through red blude to the knee ;
 For a' the blude that's shed on earth
 Rins through the springs o' that countrie.

Syne they came on to a garden green,
 And she pu'd an apple frae a tree—
 “ Take this for thy wages, true Thomas ;
 It will give thee the tongue that can never lie.”—

“ My tongue is mine ain,” true Thomas said ;
 “ A gudely gift ye wad gie to me !
 I neither dought to buy nor sell,
 At fair or tryst where I may be.

“ I dought neither speak to prince or peer,
 Nor ask of grace from fair ladye.”—
 “ Now hold thy peace !” the lady said,
 “ For as I say, so must it be.”—

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
 And a pair of shoes of velvet green ;
 And till seven years were gane and past,
 True Thomas on earth was never seen.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART SECOND.

Altered from Ancient Prophecies.

CORSPATRICK (Comes Patrick), Earl of March, but more commonly taking his title from his castle of Dunbar, acted a noted part during the wars of Edward I. in Scotland. As Thomas of Erclidoune is said to have delivered to him his famous prophecy of King Alexander's death, the Editor has chosen to introduce him into the following ballad. All the prophetic verses are selected from Hart's publication of the Rhymer's Predictions, printed at Edinburgh A.D. 1615.

WHEN seven years were come and gane,
 The sun blink'd fair on pool and stream ;
 And Thomas lay on Huntlie bank,
 Like one awaken'd from a dream.

He heard the trampling of a steed,
 He saw the flash of armour flee,
 And he beheld a gallant knight
 Come riding down by the Eildon Tree

He was a stalwart knight, and strong ;
 Of giant make he 'pear'd to be :
 He stirr'd his horse, as he were wode,
 Wi' gilded spurs, of faushion free.

Says—" Well met, well met, true Thomas !
 Some uncouth ferlies show to me."—

Says—" Christ thee save, Corspatrick brave !
 Thrice welcome, good Dunbar, to me !

" Light down, light down, Corspatrick brave !
 And I will show thee curses three,
 Shall gar fair Scotland greet and grane,
 And change the green to the black livery.

" A storm shall roar this very hour,
 From Ross's hills to Solway sea "—

" Ye lied, ye lied, ye warlock hoar !
 For the sun shines sweet on fauld and lee."—

He put his hand on the Earlie's head ;
 He show'd him a rock beside the sea,
 Where a king lay stiff beneath his steed,
 And steel-dight nobles wiped their e'e.

" The neist curse lights on Branxton hills :—
 By Flodden's high and heathery side,
 Shall wave a banner red as blude,
 And chieftains throng wi' meikle pride.

" A Scottish King shall come full keen,
 The ruddy lion beareth he ;
 A feather'd arrow sharp, I ween,
 Shall make him wink and warre to see.

" When he is bloody, and all to bledde,
 Thus to his men he still shall say—

" For God's sake, turn ye back again,
 And give yon southern folk a fray !
 Why should I lose, the right is mine ?
 My doom is not to die this day."

" Yet turn ye to the eastern hand,
 And woe and wonder ye sall see ;
 How forty thousand spearmen stand,
 Where yon rank river meets the sea.

" There shall the lion lose the gylte,
 And the libbards bear it clean away ;
 At Pinkyn Cleuch there shall be spilt
 Much gentil bluid that day."—

" Enough, enough, of curse and ban ;
 Some blessings show thou now to me,
 Or, by the faith o' my bodie," Corspatrick said,
 " Ye shall rue the day ye e'er saw me !"—

• The first of blessings I shall thee show
 Is by a burn, that's call'd of bread :

Where Saxon men shall tine the bow,
And find their arrows lack the head.

“ Beside that brigg, out ower that burn,
Where the water bickereth bright and shen,
Shall many a fallen courser spurn,
And knights shall die in battle keen.

“ Beside a headless cross of stone,
The libbards there shall lose the gree;
The raven shall come, the erne shall go,
And drink the Saxon bluid sae free.
The cross of stone they shall not know,
So thick the corsers there shall be.”—

“ But tell me now,” said brave Dunbar,
“ True Thomas, tell now unto me,
What man shall rule the isle Britain,
Even from the north to the southern sea?”—

“ A French Queen shall bear the son,
Shall rule all Britain to the sea;
He of the Bruce's blood shall come,
As near as in the ninth degree.

“ The waters worship shall his race;
Likewise the waves of the farthest sea;
For they shall ride over ocean wide,
With hempen bridles, and horse of tree.”

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

PART THIRD.

Modern.

WHEN seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread,
And Ruberslaw show'd high Dunyon*
His beacon blazing red.

Then all by bonny Coldingknow,
Pitch'd palliouns took their room,
And crested helms, and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie; †
They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall:
And there were knights of great renown,
And ladies, laced in pall.

Nor lack'd they, while they sat at dine,
The music nor the tale,

* Two hills near Jedburgh.

† *Ensenzie*—War-cry, or gathering word.

Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
Nor mantling quaighs* of ale.

True Thomas rose, with harp in hand,
When as the feast was done :
(In minstrel strife, in Fairy Land,
The elfin harp he won.)

Hush'd were the throng, both limb and tongue,
And harpers for envy pale ;
And armed lords lean'd on their swords,
And hearken'd to the tale.

In numbers high, the witching tale
The prophet pour'd along ;
No after bard might e'er avail
Those numbers to prolong.

Yet fragments of the lofty strain
Float down the tide of years,
As, buoyant on the stormy main,
A parted wreck appears.

He sung King Arthur's Table Round :
The Warrior of the Lake ;
How courteous Gawaine met the wound,
And bled for ladies' sake.

But chief, in gentle Tristrem's praise.
The notes melodious swell ;
Was none excell'd in Arthur's days,
The Knight of Lionelle.

For Marke, his cowardly uncle's right,
A venom'd wound he bore ;
When fierce Morholde he slew in fight,
Upon the Irish shore.

No art the poison might withstand ;
No medicine could be found,
Till lovely Isolde's lily hand
Had probed the rankling wound.

With gentle hand and soothing tongue
She bore the leech's part ;
And, while she o'er his sick-bed hung,
He paid her with his heart.

O fatal was the gift, I ween !
For, doom'd in evil tide,
The maid must be rude Cornwall's queen,
His cowardly uncle's bride.

Their loves, their woes, the gifted bard
In fairy tissue wove ;
Where lords, and knights, and ladies bright,
In gay confusion strove.

* *Quaighs*—Wooden cups, composed of staves hooped together

The Garde Joyeuse, amid the tale,
 High rear'd its glittering head ;
 And Avalon's enchanted vale
 In all its wonders spread.

Brangwain was there, and Segramore,
 And fiend-born Merlin's gramarye ;
 Of that famed wizard's mighty lore,
 O who could sing but he ?

Through many a maze the winning song
 In changeful passion led,
 Till bent at length the listening throng
 O'er Tristrem's dying bed.

His ancient wounds their scars expand,
 With agony his heart is wrung :
 O where is Isolde's lily hand,
 And where her soothing tongue ?

She comes ! she comes !—like flash of flame
 Can lover's footsteps fly :
 She comes ! she comes !—she only came
 To see her Tristrem die.

She saw him die ; her latest sigh
 Join'd in a kiss his parting breath ;
 The gentlest pair, that Britain bare,
 United are in death.

There paused the harp : its lingering sound
 Died slowly on the ear ;
 The silent guests still bent around,
 For still they seem'd to hear.

Then woe broke forth in murmurs weak :
 Nor ladies heaved alone the sigh ;
 But, half ashamed, the rugged cheek
 Did many a gauntlet dry.

On Leader's stream, and Learmont's tower,
 The mists of evening close ;
 In camp, in castle, or in bower,
 Each warrior sought repose.

Lord Douglas, in his lofty tent,
 Dream'd o'er the woeful tale ;
 When footsteps light, across the bent,
 The warrior's ears assail.

He starts, he wakes—"What, Richard, ho !
 Arise, my page, arise !
 What venturous wight, at dead of night,
 Dare step where Douglas lies !"—

Then forth they rush'd : by Leader's tide,
 A selcouth* sight they see—

* Selcouth—Wondrous

A hart and hind pace side by side,
As white as snow on Fairnalie.

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

To Learmont's tower a message sped,
As fast as page might run;
And Thomas started from his bed,
And soon his clothes did on.

First he woxe pale, and then woxe red;
Never a word he spake but three:—
“ My sand is run; my thread is spun;
This sign regardeth me.”

The elfin harp his neck around,
In minstrel guise, he hung;
And on the wind, in doleful sound,
Its dying accents rung.

Then forth he went; yet turn'd him oft
To view his ancient hall:
On the grey tower, in lustre soft,
The autumn moonbeams fall;

And Leader's waves, like silver sheen,
Danced shimmering in the ray;
In deepening mass, at distance seen,
Broad Soltra's mountains lay.

“ Farewell, my fathers' ancient tower!
A long farewell,” said he:
“ The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.

“ To Learmont's name no foot of earth
Shall here again belong,
And, on thy hospitable hearth,
The hare shall leave her young.

“ Adieu! adieu!” again he cried,
All as he turn'd him roun'—
“ Farewell to Leader's silver tide!
Farewell to Ercildoune!”

The hart and hind approach'd the place,
As lingering yet he stood;
And there, before Lord Douglas' face,
With them he cross'd the flood.

Lord Douglas leap'd on his berry-brown steed,
And spurr'd him the Leader o'er;
But, though he rode with lightning speed,
He never saw them more.

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

GLENFINLAS;

OR.

LORD RONALD'S CORONACH.*

THE simple tradition upon which the following stanzas are founded, runs thus:—While two Highland hunters were passing the night in a solitary *bothy*, (a hut built for the purpose of hunting,) and making merry over their venison and whisky, one of them expressed a wish that they had pretty lasses to complete their party. The words were scarcely uttered, when two beautiful young women, habited in green, entered the hut, dancing and singing. One of the hunters was seduced by the siren who attached herself particularly to him, to leave the hut: the other remained, and, suspicious of the fair seducers, continued to play upon a trumpet, or Jew's harp, some strain consecrated to the Virgin Mary. Day at length came, and the temptress vanished. Searching in the forest, he found the bones of his unfortunate friend, who had been torn to pieces and devoured by the fiend into whose toils he had fallen. The place was from thence called the *Glen of the Green Women*.

For them the viewless forms of air obey,
 Their bidding heed, and at their beck repair;
 They know what spirit brews the stormful day,
 And heartless oft, like moody madness stare,
 To see the phantom-train their secret work prepare.

COLLIER.

“ O HONE a rie'! O hone a rie'! †
 The pride of Albin's line is o'er,
 And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree;
 We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more!”—

O, sprung from great Macgillianore,
 The chief that never fear'd a foe,
 How matchless was thy broad claymore,
 How deadly thine unerring bow!

Well can the Saxon widows tell,
 How, on the Teith's resounding shore,
 The boldest Lowland warriors fell,
 As down from Lenny's pass you bore.

But o'er his hills, in festal day,
 How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane-tree,
 While youths and maids the light strathspey
 So nimbly danced with Highland glee!

* *Coronach* is the lamentation for a deceased warrior, sung by the aged of the clan.
 † *O hone a rie'* signifies—“ Alas for the prince or chief!”

Cheer'd by the strength of Ronald's shell,
E'en age forgot his tresses hoar ;
But now the loud lament we swell,
O ne'er to see Lord Ronald more !

From distant isles a Chieftain came,
The joys of Ronald's halls to find,
And chase with him the dark-brown game,
That bounds o'er Albin's hills of wind.

'Twas Moy ; whom in Columba's isle
The Seer's prophetic spirit found,
As with a minstrel's fire the while,
He waked his harp's harmonious sound.

Full many a spell to him was known,
Which wandering spirits shrink to hear ;
And many a lay of potent tone,
Was never meant for mortal ear.

For there, 'tis said, in mystic mood,
High converse with the dead they hold,
And oft espy the fated shroud
That shall the future corpse enfold.

O so it fell, that on a day,
To rouse the red deer from their den,
The Chiefs had ta'en their distant way,
And scour'd the deep Glenfinlas' glen.

No vassals wait their sports to aid,
To watch their safety, deck their board ;
Their simple dress, the Highland plaid,
Their trusty guard, the Highland sword.

Three summer days, through brake and dell,
Their whistling shafts successful flew ;
And still, when dewy evening fell,
The quarry to their hut they drew.

In grey Glenfinlas' deepest nook,
The solitary cabin stood,
Fast by Moneira's sullen brook,
Which murmurs through that lonely wood

Soft fell the night, the sky was calm,
When three successive days had flown ;
And summer mist in dewy balm
Steep'd heathy bank, and mossy stone.

The moon, half hid in silvery flakes,
Afar her dubious radiance shed,
Quivering on Katrine's distant lakes,
And resting on Benledi's head.

Now in their hut, in social guise,
Their silvan fare the Chiefs enjoy ;
And pleasure laughs in Ronald's eyes,
As many a pledge he quaffs to Moy

- “ What lack we here to crown our bliss,
While thus the pulse of joy beats high?
What, but fair woman's yielding kiss,
Her panting breath and melting eye ?
- “ To chase the deer of yonder shades,
This morning left their father's pile
The fairest of our mountain maids,
The daughters of the proud Glengyle.
- “ Long have I sought sweet Mary's heart,
And dropp'd the tear, and heaved the sigh :
But vain the lover's wily art,
Beneath a sister's watchful eye.
- “ But thou may'st teach that guardian fair,
While far with Mary I am flown,
Of other hearts to cease her care,
And find it hard to guard her own.
- “ Touch but thy harp, thou soon shalt see
The lovely Flora of Glengyle,
Unmindful of her charge and me,
Hang on thy notes, 'twixt tear and smile.
- “ Or, if she choose a melting tale,
All underneath the greenwood bough,
Will good Saint Oran's rule prevail,
Stern huntsman of the rigid brow ?”—
- “ Since Enrick's fight, since Morna's death,
No more on me shall rapture rise,
Responsive to the panting breath,
Or yielding kiss, or melting eyes.
- “ E'en then, when o'er the heath of woe,
Where sunk my hopes of love and fame,
I bade my harp's wild wailings flow,
On me the Seer's sad spirit came.
- “ The last dread curse of angry heaven,
With ghastly sights and sounds of woe,
To dash each glimpse of joy was given—
The gift, the future ill to know.
- “ The bark thou saw'st yon summer morn,
So gaily part from Oban's bay,
My eye beheld her dash'd and torn,
Far on the rocky Colonsay.
- “ Thy Fergus too—thy sister's son,
Thou saw'st, with pride, the gallant's power
As marching 'gainst the Lord of Downe.
He left the skirts of huge Benmore
- “ Thou only saw'st their tartans wave,
As down Benvoirlich's side they wound,
Hear'd'st but the pibroch, answering brave
To many a target clanking round.

" I heard the groans, I mark'd the tears,
I saw the wound his bosom bore,
When on the serried Saxon spears,
He pour'd his clan's resistless roar.

" And thou, who bidst me think of bliss,
And bidst my heart awake to glee,
And court, like thee, the wanton kiss—
That heart, O Ronald, bleeds for thee !

" I see the death-damps chill thy brow ;
I hear thy Warning Spirit cry ;
The corpse-lights dance—they're gone, and now . . .
No more is given to gifted eye !"—

" Alone enjoy thy dreary dreams,
Sad prophet of the evil hour !
Say, should we scorn joy's transient beams,
Because to-morrow's storm may lour ?

" Or false, or sooth, thy words of woe,
Clangillian's Chieftain ne'er shall fear ;
His blood shall bound at rapture's glow,
Though doom'd to stain the Saxon spear

" E'en now, to meet me in yon dell,
My Mary's buskins brush the dew."
He spoke, nor bade the Chief farewell,
But call'd his dogs, and gay withdrew.

Within an hour return'd each hound ;
In rush'd the rousers of the deer ;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch'd beside the Seer.

No Ronald yet ; though midnight came,
And sad were Moy's prophetic dreams,
As, bending o'er the dying flame,
He fed the watch-fire's quivering gleams.

Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl ;
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs and stifled growl.

Untouch'd the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door ;
And shook responsive every string,
As light a footstep press'd the floor.

And by the watch-fire's glimmering light,
Close by the minstrel's side was seen
An huntress maid, in beauty bright,
All dropping wet her robes of green.

All dropping wet her garments seem ;
Chill'd was her cheek, her bosom bare,
As, bending o'er the dying gleam,
She wrung the moisture from her hair.

- With maiden blush, she softly said,
 " O gentle huntsman, hast thou seen
 In deep Glenfinlas' moonlight glade,
 A lovely maid in vest of green :
- " With her a Chief in Highland pride ;
 His shoulders bear the hunter's bow,
 The mountain dirk adorns his side,
 Far on the wind his tartans flow ?"—
- " And who art thou ? and who are they ?"
 All ghastly gazing, Moy replied :
- " And why, beneath the moon's pale ray,
 Dare ye thus roam Glenfinlas' side ?"—
- " Where wild Loch Katrine pours her tide,
 Blue, dark, and deep, round many an isle,
 Our father's towers o'erhang her side,
 The castle of the bold Glengyle.
- " To chase the dun Glenfinlas deer,
 Our woodland course this morn we bore,
 And haply met, while wandering here,
 The son of great Macgillianore.
- " O aid me, then, to seek the pair,
 Whom, loitering in the woods, I lost ;
 Alone I dare not venture there,
 Where walks, they say, the shrieking ghost."—
- " Yes, many a shrieking ghost walks there ;
 Then, first, my own sad vow to keep,
 Here will I pour my midnight prayer,
 Which still must rise when mortals sleep."
- " O first, for pity's gentle sake,
 Guide a lone wanderer on her way !
 For I must cross the hunted brake,
 And reach my father's towers ere day."—
- " First, three times tell each Ave-head,
 And thrice a Pater-noster say ;
 Then kiss with me the holy rede ;
 So shall we safely wend our way."—
- " O shame to knighthood, strange and foul !
 Go, doff the bonnet from thy brow,
 And shroud thee in the monkish cowl,
 Which best befits thy sullen vow.
- " Not so, by high Dunlathmon's fire,
 Thy heart was froze to love and joy,
 When gaily rung thy raptured lyre
 To wanton Morna's melting eye."
- Wild stared the minstrel's eyes of flame,
 And high his sable locks arose,
 And quick his colour went and came,
 As fear and rage alternate rose.

“ And thou ! when by the blazing oak
I lay, to her and love resign'd,
Say, rode ye on the eddying smoke,
Or sail'd ye on the midnight wind ?

“ Not thine a race of mortal blood,
Nor old Glengyle's pretended line ;
Thy dame, the Lady of the Flood—
Thy sire, the Monarch of the Mine.”

He mutter'd thrice Saint Oran's rhyme,
And thrice Saint Fillan's powerful prayer ;
Then turn'd him to the eastern clime,
And sternly shook his coal-black hair.

And, bending o'er his harp, he flung
His wildest witch-notes on the wind :
And loud, and high, and strange, they rung,
As many a magic change they find.

Tall wax'd the Spirit's altering form,
Till to the roof her stature grew ;
Then, mingling with the rising storm,
With one wild yell away she flew.

Rain beats, hail rattles, whirlwinds tear :
The slender hut in fragments flew ;
But not a lock of Moy's loose hair
Was waved by wind, or wet by dew.

Wild mingling with the howling gale,
Loud bursts of ghastly laughter rise ;
High o'er the minstrel's head they sail,
And die amid the northern skies.

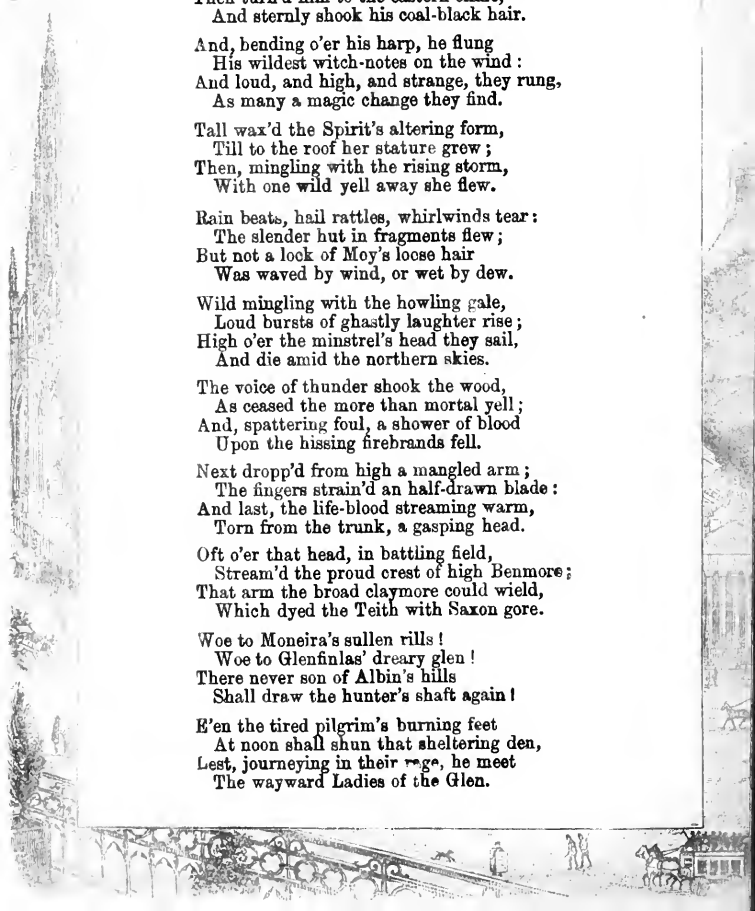
The voice of thunder shook the wood,
As ceased the more than mortal yell ;
And, spattering foul, a shower of blood
Upon the hissing firebrands fell.

Next dropp'd from high a mangled arm ;
The fingers strain'd an half-drawn blade :
And last, the life-blood streaming warm,
Torn from the trunk, a gasping head.

Oft o'er that head, in battling field,
Stream'd the proud crest of high Benmore ;
That arm the broad claymore could wield,
Which dyed the Teith with Saxon gore.

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

E'en the tired pilgrim's burning feet
At noon shall shun that sheltering den,
Lest, journeying in their rage, he meet
The wayward Ladies of the Glen.



And we—behind the Chieftain's shield,
 No more shall we in safety dwell;
 None leads the people to the field—
 And we the loud lament must swell.

O hone a rie' ! O hone a rie' !
 The pride of Albin's line is o'er !
 And fall'n Glenartney's stateliest tree ;
 We ne'er shall see Lord Ronald more !

THE EVE OF ST JOHN.

THE Baron of Smaylho'me rose with day,
 He spurr'd his courser on,
 Without stop or stay, down the rocky way,
 That leads to Brotherstone.

He went not with the bold Buccleuch,
 His banner broad to rear ;
 He went not 'gainst the English yew,
 To lift the Scottish spear.

Yet his plate-jack was braced, and his helmet was laced,
 And his vaunt-brace of proof he wore ;
 At his saddle-gerthe was a good steel sperthe,
 Full ten pound weight and more.

The Baron return'd in three days' space,
 And his looks were sad and sour ;
 And weary was his courser's pace,
 As he reach'd his rocky tower.

He came not from where Ancram Moor
 Ran red with English blood ;
 Where the Douglas true, and the bold Buccleuch,
 'Gainst keen Lord Evers stood.

Yet was his helmet hack'd and hew'd,
 His acton pierced and tore,
 His axe and his dagger with blood imbrued,—
 But it was not English gore.

He lighted at the Chapellage,
 He held him close and still ;
 And he whistled thrice for his little foot-page,
 His name was English Will.

“ Come thou hither, my little foot-page,
 Come hither to my knee ;
 Though thou art young, and tender of age,
 I think thou art true to me.

“ Come, tell me all that thou hast seen,
 And look thou tell me true !
 Since I from Smaylho'me tower have been,
 What did thy lady do ?”—

- “ My lady, each night, sought the lonely light,
That burns on the wild Watchfold ;
For, from height to height, the beacons bright
Of the English foemen told.
- “ The bitter clamour’d from the moss,
The wind blew loud and shrill ;
Yet the craggy pathway she did cross
To the eiry Beacon Hill.
- “ I watch’d her steps, and silent came
Where she sat her on a stone ;—
No watchman stood by the dreary flame,
It burned all alone.
- “ The second night I kept her in sight,
Till to the fire she came,
And, by Mary’s might ! an Armed Knight
Stood by the lonely flame.
- “ And many a word that warlike lord
Did speak to my lady there ;
But the rain fell fast, and loud blew the blast,
And I heard not what they were.
- “ The third night there the sky was fair,
And the mountain-blast was still,
As again I watch’d the secret pair,
On the lonesome Beacon Hill.
- “ And I heard her name the midnight hour,
And name this holy eve ;
And say, ‘ Come this night to thy lady’s bower ;
Ask no bold Baron’s leave.
- “ ‘ He lifts his spear with the bold Buccleuch ;
His lady is all alone ;
The door she’ll undo, to her knight so true,
On the eve of good Saint John.’—
- “ ‘ I cannot come ; I must not come ;
I dare not come to thee ;
On the eve of Saint John I must wander alone ;
In thy bower I may not be.’—
- “ ‘ Now, out on thee, faint-hearted knight !
Thou shouldst not say me nay ;
For the eve is sweet, and, when lovers meet,
Is worth the whole summer’s day.
- “ ‘ And I’ll chain the blood-hound, and the warder
shall not sound,
And rushes shall be strew’d on the stair ;
So, by the black rood-stone, and by holy Saint John,
I conjure thee, my love, to be there !’—

“ Though the blood-hound be mute, and the rush be-
neath my foot,
And the warder his bugle should not blow,
Yet there sleepeth a priest in the chamber to the east,
And my footstep he would know.’—

“ O fear not the priest who sleepeth to the east !
For to Dryburgh the way he has ta’en ;
And there to say mass, till three days do pass,
For the soul of a knight that is slayne.’—

“ He turn’d him around, and grimly he frown’d ;
Then he laugh’d right scornfully—
‘ He who says the mass-rite for the soul of that knight,
May as well say mass for me :

“ At the lone midnight hour, when bad spirits have power,
In thy chamber will I be.’—
With that he was gone, and my lady left alone,
And no more did I see.”

Then changed, I trow, was that bold Baron’s brow,
From the dark to the blood-red high :

“ Now, tell me the mien of the knight thou hast seen,
For, by Mary, he shall die !”—

“ His arms shone full bright, in the beacon’s red light ;
His plume it was scarlet and blue ;
On his shield was a hound, in a silver leash bound,
And his crest was a branch of the yew.”—

“ Thou liest, thou liest, thou little foot-page,
Loud dost thou lie to me !
For that knight is cold, and low laid in the mould,
All under the Eildon Tree.”—

“ Yet hear but my word, my noble lord !
For I heard her name his name ;
And that lady bright, she called the knight
Sir Richard of Coldinghame.”—

The bold Baron’s brow then changed, I trow,
From high blood-red to pale—

“ The grave is deep and dark, and the corpse is stiff and stark,
So I may not trust thy tale.

“ Where fair Tweed flows round holy Melrose,
And Eildon slopes to the plain,
Full three nights ago, by some secret foe,
That gay gallant was slain—

“ The varying light deceived thy sight,
And the wild winds drown’d the name ;
For the Dryburgh bells ring, and the white monks do sing,
For Sir Richard of Coldinghame !”

He pass'd the court-gate, and he oped the tower-gate,
 And he mounted the narrow stair,
 To the bartizan-seat, where, with maids that on her wait,
 He found his lady fair.

That lady sat in mournful mood;
 Look'd over hill and vale;
 Over Tweed's fair flood, and Mertoun's wood,
 And all down Teviotdale.

"Now hail, now hail, thou lady bright!"—
 "Now hail, thou Baron true!
 What news, what news, from Ancram fight?
 What news from the bold Buccleuch?"—

"The Ancram Moor is red with gore,
 For many a Southron fell;
 And Buccleuch has charged us, evermore,
 To watch our beacons well."—

The lady blush'd red, but nothing she said;
 Nor added the Baron a word:
 Then she stepp'd down the stair to her chamber fair,
 And so did her moody lord.

In sleep the lady mourn'd, and the Baron toss'd and turn'd,
 And oft to himself he said,—
 "The worms around him creep, and his bloody grave is
 deep

It cannot give up the dead!"—

It was near the ringing of matin-bell,
 The night was well-nigh done,
 When a heavy sleep on that Baron fell,
 On the eve of good Saint John.

The lady look'd through the chamber fair,
 By the light of a dying flame;
 And she was aware of a knight stood there—
 Sir Richard of Coldinghame!

"Alas! away, away!" she cried,
 "For the holy Virgin's sake!"—
 "Lady, I know who sleeps by thy side;
 But, lady, he will not awake.

"By Bilton Tree, for long nights three,
 In bloody grave have I lain;
 The mass and the death-prayer are said for me,
 But, lady, they are said in vain.

"By the Baron's brand, near Tweed's fair strand,
 Most foully slain, I fell;
 And my restless sprite on the beacon's height,
 For a space is doom'd to dwell.

"At our trysting-place, for a certain space,
 I must wander to and fro;
 But I had not had power to come to thy bower,
 Had'st thou not conjured me so."—

Love master'd fear—her brow she cross'd ;
 “ How, Richard, hast thou sped ?
 And art thou saved, or art thou lost ? ”
 The vision shook his head !—

“ Who spilleth life, shall forfeit life ;
 So bid thy lord believe :
 That lawless love is guilt above,
 This awful sign receive.”

He laid his left palm on an oaken beam,
 His right upon her hand ;
 The lady shrunk, and fainting sunk,
 For it scorch'd like a fiery brand.

The sable score, of fingers four,
 Remains on that board impress'd ;
 And for evermore that lady wore
 A covering on her wrist.

There is a nun in Dryburgh bower,
 Ne'er looks upon the sun ;
 There is a monk in Melrose tower,
 He speaketh word to none.

That nun, who ne'er beholds the day,
 That monk, who speaks to none—
 That nun was Smaylho'me's Lady gay,
 That monk the bold Baron.

CADIOW CASTLE.

IN detailing the death of the Regent Murray, which is made the subject of the following ballad, it would be injustice to my reader to use other words than those of Dr Robertson, whose account of that memorable event forms a beautiful piece of historical painting :—

“ Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh was the person who committed this barbarous action. He had been condemned to death soon after the battle of Langside, as we have already related, and owed his life to the Regent's clemency. But part of his estate had been bestowed upon one of the Regent's favourites, who seized his house, and turned out his wife, naked, in a cold night, into the open fields, where, before next morning, she became furiously mad. This injury made a deeper impression on him than the benefit he had received, and from that moment he vowed to be revenged of the Regent. Party rage strengthened and inflamed his private resentment. His kinsmen, the Hamiltons, applauded the enterprise. The maxims of that age justified the most desperate course he could take to obtain vengeance. He followed the Regent for some time, and watched for an opportunity to strike the blow. He resolved at last to wait till his enemy should arrive at Linlithgow, through which he was to pass in his way from Stirling to Edinburgh. He took his stand in a wooden gallery, which had a window towards the street; spread a feather-bed on the floor to hinder the noise of his feet from being heard; hung up a black cloth behind him, that his shadow might not be observed from without; and after all this preparation, calmly expected the Regent's approach, who had lodged during the night in a house not far distant. Some indistinct information of the danger which threatened him had been conveyed to the Regent, and he paid so much regard to it, that he resolved to return by the same gate through which he had entered, and to fetch a compass

round the town. But, as the crowd about the gate was great, and he himself unacquainted with fear, he proceeded directly along the street; and the throng of people obliging him to move very slowly, gave the assassin time to take so true an aim, that he shot him, with a single bullet, through the lower part of his belly, and killed the horse of a gentleman who rode on his other side. His followers instantly endeavoured to break into the house whence the blow had come; but they found the door strongly barricadoed, and, before it could be forced open, Hamilton had mounted a fleet horse, which stood ready for him at a back passage, and was got far beyond their reach. The Regent died the same night of his wound."—*History of Scotland*, book v.

CADYOW CASTLE.

ADDRESSED TO THE RIGHT HON. LADY ANNE HAMILTON.

WHEN princely Hamilton's abode
 Ennobled Cadyow's Gothic towers,
 The song went round, the goblet flow'd,
 And revel sped the laughing hours.

Then, thrilling to the harp's gay sound,
 So sweetly rung each vaulted wall,
 And echoed light the dancer's bound,
 As mirth and music cheer'd the hall.

But Cadyow's towers, in ruins laid,
 And vaults, by ivy mantled o'er,
 Thrill to the music of the shade,
 Or echo Evan's hoarser roar.

Yet still, of Cadyow's faded fame,
 You bid me tell a minstrel tale,
 And tune my harp, of Border frame,
 On the wild banks of Evandale.

For thou, from scenes of courtly pride,
 From pleasure's lighter scenes, canst turn,
 To draw oblivion's pall aside,
 And mark the long-forgotten urn.

Then, noble maid! at thy command,
 Again the crumbled halls shall rise;
 Lo! as on Evan's banks we stand,
 The past returns—the present flies.

Where, with the rock's wood-cover'd side,
 Were blended late the ruins green,
 Rise turrets in fantastic pride,
 And feudal banners flaunt between:

Where the rude torrent's brawling course
 Was shagg'd with thorn and tangling sloe,
 The ashler buttress braves its force,
 And ramparts frown in battled row.

Tis night—the shade of keep and spire
 Obscurely dance on Evan's stream;

And on the wave the warder's fire
 Is chequering the moonlight beam.
 Fades slow their light; the east is gray;
 The weary warder leaves his tower;
 Steeds snort; uncoupled stag-hounds bay,
 And merry hunters quit the bower.
 The drawbridge falls—they hurry out—
 Clatters each plank and swinging chain,
 As, dashing o'er, the jovial rout
 Urge the shy steed, and slack the rein.
 First of his troop, the Chief rode on;
 His shouting merry-men throng behind;
 The steed of princely Hamilton
 Was fleetest than the mountain wind.
 From the thick copse the roebucks bound,
 The startled red-deer scuds the plain,
 For the hoarse bugle's warrior-sound
 Has roused their mountain haunts again.
 Through the huge oaks of Evandale,
 Whose limbs a thousand years have worn,
 What sullen roar comes down the gale,
 And drowns the hunter's pealing horn?
 Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
 That roam in woody Caledon,
 Crashing the forest in his race,
 The Mountain Bull comes thundering on.
 Fierce, on the hunter's quiver'd band,
 He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow,
 Spurs, with black hoof and horn, the sand,
 And tosses high his mane of snow.
 Aim'd well, the Chieftain's lance has flown;
 Struggling in blood the savage lies;
 His roar is sunk in hollow groan—
 Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse!*^{*}
 'Tis noon—against the knotted oak
 The hunters rest the idle spear;
 Curls through the trees the slender smoke,
 Where yeomen dight the woodland cheer.
 Proudly the Chieftain mark'd his clan,
 On greenwood lap all careless thrown,
 Yet miss'd his eye the boldest man
 That bore the name of Hamilton.
 “Why fills not Bothwellhaugh his place,
 Still wont our weal and woe to share?
 Why comes he not our sport to grace?
 Why shares he not our hunter's fare?”

* The note blown at the death of the game.

Stern Claud replied, with darkening face,
 (Grey Paisley's haughty lord was he,)
 " At merry feast, or buxom chase,
 No more the warrior wilt thou see.

" Few suns have set since Woodhouselee
 Saw Bothwellhaugh's bright goblets foam
 When to his hearths, in social glee,
 The war-worn soldier turn'd him home.

" There, wan from her maternal throes,
 His Margaret, beautiful and mild,
 Sate in her bower, a pallid rose,
 And peaceful nursed her new-born child.

" O change accursed! past are those days:
 False Murray's ruthless spoilers came,
 And, for the hearth's domestic blaze,
 Ascends destruction's volumed flame.

" What sheeted phantom wanders wild,
 Where mountain Eske through woodland flows
 Her arms enfold a shadowy child—
 Oh! is it she, the pallid rose?

" The wilder'd traveller sees her glide,
 And hears her feeble voice with awe—
 ' Revenge,' she cries, ' on Murray's pride!
 And woe for injured Bothwellhaugh!'"

He ceased—and cries of rage and grief
 Burst mingling from the kindred band,
 And half arose the kindling Chief,
 And half unsheathed his Arran brand.

But who, o'er bush, o'er stream and rock,
 Rides headlong, with resistless speed,
 Whose bloody poniard's frantic stroke
 Drives to the leap his jaded steed;

Whose cheek is pale, whose eyeballs glare,
 As one some vision'd sight that saw,
 Whose hands are bloody, loose his hair?—
 'Tis he! 'tis he! 'tis Bothwellhaugh!

From gory selle, and reeling steed,
 Sprung the fierce horseman with a bound
 And, reeking from the recent deed,
 He dash'd his carbine on the ground.

Sternly he spoke—" 'Tis sweet to hear
 In good greenwood the bugle blown,
 But sweeter to Revenge's ear
 To drink a tyrant's dying groan.

" Your slaughter'd quarry proudly trode,
 At dawning morn, o'er dale and down,
 But prouder base-born Murray rode
 Through old Linlithgow's crowded town.

“ From the wild Border’s humbled side,
In haughty triumph marched he,
While Knox relax’d his bigot pride,
And smiled, the traitorous pomp to see.

“ But can stern Power, with all his vaunt,
Or Pomp, with all her courtly glare,
The settled heart of Vengeance daunt,
Or change the purpose of Despair ?

“ With hackbut bent, my secret stand,
Dark as the purposed deed, I chose,
And mark’d, where, mingling in his band,
Troop’d Scottish pikes and English bows.

“ Dark Morton, girt with many a spear,
Murder’s foul minion, led the van ;
And clash’d their broadswords in the rear
The wild Macfarlanes’ plaided clan.

“ Glencairn and stout Parkhead were nigh,
Obsequious at their Regent’s rein,
And haggard Lindsay’s iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.

“ ‘Mid pennon’d spears, a steely grove,
Proud Murray’s plumage floated high ;
Scarce could his trampling charger move,
So close the minions crowded nigh.

“ From the raised vizor’s shade, his eye,
Dark-rolling, glanced the ranks along,
And his steel truncheon, waved on high,
Seem’d marshalling the iron throng.

“ But yet his sadden’d brow confess’d
A passing shade of doubt and awe ;
Some fiend was whispering in his breast,
‘ Beware of injured Bothwellhaugh !’

“ The death-shot parts—the charger springs—
Wild rises tumult’s startling roar !
And Murray’s plumed helmet rings—
—Rings on the ground, to rise no more.

“ What joy the raptured youth can feel,
To hear her love the loved one tell—
Or he, who broaches on his steel
The wolf by whom his infant fell !

“ But dearer to my injured eye
To see in dust proud Murray roll ;
And mine was ten times trebled joy,
To hear him groan his felon soul.

“ My Margaret’s spectre glided near—
With pride her bleeding victim saw—
And shriek’d in his death-deafen’d ear,
‘ Remember injured Bothwellhaugh !’

“ Then speed thee, noble Chatlerault !
 Spread to the wind thy banner'd tree !
 Each warrior bend his Clydesdale bow !—
 Murray is fall'n, and Scotland free ! ”

Vaults every warrior to his steed ;
 Loud bugles join their wild acclaim—
 “ Murray is fall'n, and Scotland freed !
 Couch, Arran ! couch thy spear of flame ! ”

But, see ! the minstrel vision fails—
 The glimmering spears are seen no more ;
 The shouts of war die on the gales,
 Or sink in Evan's lonely roar.

For the loud bugle, pealing high,
 The blackbird whistles down the vale,
 And sunk in ivied ruins lie
 The banner'd towers of Evandale.

For Chiefs, intent on bloody deed,
 And Vengeance shouting o'er the slain,
 Lo ! high-horn Beauty rules the steed,
 Or graceful guides the silken rein.

And long may Peace and Pleasure own
 The maids who list the minstrel's tale ;
 Nor e'er a ruder guest be known
 On the fair banks of Evandale !

THE GRAY BROTHER.

A FRAGMENT.

THE tradition upon which this tale is founded regards a house upon the barony of Gilmerton, near Lasswade, in Mid-Lothian. This building, now called Gilmerton Grange, was originally named Burndale, from the following tragic adventure. The barony of Gilmerton belonged, of yore, to a gentleman named Heron, who had one beautiful daughter. This young lady was seduced by the Abbot of Newbattle, a richly endowed Abbey upon the banks of the South Esk, now a seat of the Marquis of Lothian. Heron came to the knowledge of this circumstance, and learned also, that the lovers carried on their guilty intercourse by the connivance of the lady's nurse, who lived at this house of Gilmerton Grange, or Burndale. He formed a resolution of bloody vengeance, undeterred by the supposed sanctity of the clerical character, or by the stronger claims of natural affection. Choosing, therefore, a dark and windy night, when the objects of his vengeance were engaged in a stolen interview, he set fire to a stack of dried thorns, and other combustibles, which he had caused to be piled against the house, and reduced to a pile of glowing ashes the dwelling, with all its inmates.

The scene with which the ballad opens, was suggested by the following curious passage, extracted from the Life of Alexander Peden, one of the wandering and persecuted teachers of the sect of Cameronians, during the reign of Charles II. and his successor, James. This person was sup

posed by his followers, and, perhaps, really believed himself, to be possessed of supernatural gifts; for the wild scenes which they frequented, and the constant dangers which were incurred through their proscription, deepened upon their minds the gloom of superstition, so general in that age:—

“About the same time he [Peden] came to Audrew Normand’s house, in the parish of Alloway, in the shire of Ayr, being to preach at night in his barn. After he came in, he halted a little, leaning upon a chair-back, with his face covered; when he lifted up his head, he said, ‘They are in this house that I have not one word of salvation unto.’ He halted a little again, saying, ‘This is strange, that the devil will not go out, that we may begin our work!’ Then there was a woman went out, ill-looking upon almost all her life, and to her dying hour, for a witch, with many presumptions of the same. It escaped me in the former passages, what John Muirhead (whom I have often mentioned) told me, that when he came from Ireland to Galloway, he was at family worship, and giving some notes upon the Scripture read, when a very ill-looking man came, and sat down within the door, at the back of the *hallan* [partition of the cottage]: immediately he halted and said, ‘There is some unhappy body just now come into this house. I charge him to go out, and not stop my mouth!’ This person went out, and he *insisted* [went on], yet he saw him neither come in nor go out.”—*The Life and Prophecies of Mr Alexander Peden, late Minister of the Gospel at New Glenluce, in Galloway.* part II. § 26.

THE Pope he was saying the high, high mass,
All on Saint Peter’s day,
With the power to him given, by the saints in heaven,
To wash men’s sins away.

The Pope he was saying the blessed mass,
And the people kneel’d around,
And from each man’s soul his sins did pass,
As he kiss’d the holy ground.

And all, among the crowded throng,
Was still, both limb and tongue,
While, through vaulted roof and aisles aloof,
The holy accents rung.

At the holiest word he quiver’d for fear,
And falter’d in the sound—
And, when he would the chalice rear,
He dropp’d it to the ground.

“The breath of one of evil deed
Pollutes our sacred day;
He has no portion in our creed,
No part in what I say.

“A being, whom no blessed word
To ghostly peace can bring;
A wretch, at whose approach abhorr’d,
Recoils each holy thing.

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

Amid them all a pilgrim kneel'd,
In gown of sackcloth gray;
Far journeying from his native field,
He first saw Rome that day.

For forty days and nights so drear,
I ween he had not spoke,
And, save with bread and water clear,
His fast he ne'er had broke.

Amid the penitential flock
Seem'd none more bent to pray;
But, when the Holy Father spoke,
He rose and went his way.

Again unto his native land
His weary course he drew,
To Lothian's fair and fertile strand,
And Pentland's mountains blue.

His unblest feet his native seat,
'Mid Eske's fair woods, regain;
Thro' woods more fair no stream more sweet
Rolls to the eastern main.

And lords to meet the pilgrim came,
And vassals bent the knee;
For all 'mid Scotland's chiefs of fame,
Was none more famed than he.

And boldly for his country, still
In battle he had stood,
Ay, even when on the banks of Till
Her noblest pour'd their blood.

Sweet are the paths, oh, passing sweet!
By Eske's fair streams that run,
O'er airy steep, through copsewood deep,
Impervious to the sun,

There the rapt poet's step may rove,
And yield the muse the day;
There Beauty, led by timid Love,
May shun the tell-tale ray;

From that fair dome, where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free,
To Auchendinny's hazel glade,
And haunted Woodhouselee.

Who knows not Melville's beechy grove,
And Roslin's rocky glen,
Dalkeith, which all the virtues love,
And classic Hawthornden?

Yet never a path, from day to day,
The pilgrim's footsteps range,
Save but the solitary way
To Burndale's ruin'd grange.

A woeful place was that, I ween,
As sorrow could desire;
For nodding to the fall was each crumbling wall,
And the roof was scathed with fire.

It fell upon a summer's eve,
While, on Carnethy's head,
The last faint gleams of the sun's low beams
Had streak'd the gray with red ;

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

The heavy knell, the choir's faint swell,
Came slowly down the wind,
And on the pilgrim's ear they fell,
As his wonted path he did find.

Deep sunk in thought, I ween, he was,
Nor ever raised his eye,
Until he came to that dreary place,
Which did all in ruins lie.

He gazed on the walls, so scathed with fire,
With many a bitter groan—
And there was aware of a Gray Friar,
Resting him on a stone.

" Now, Christ thee save ! " said the Gray Brother ;
" Some pilgrim thou seem'st to be."
But in sore amaze did Lord Albert gaze,
Nor answer again made he.

" O come ye from east, or come ye from west,
Or bring reliques from over the sea ?
Or come ye from the shrine of Saint James the divine,
Or Saint John of Beverley ?"—

" I come not from the shrine of Saint James the divine,
Nor bring reliques from over the sea ;
I bring but a curse from our father, the Pope,
Which for ever will cling to me."—

" Now, woeful pilgrim, say not so !
But kneel thee down to me,
And shrive thee so clean of thy deadly sin,
That absolved thou may'st be."—

' And who art thou, thou Gray Brother,
That I should shrive to thee,
When he, to whom are given the keys of earth and
heaven,
Has no power to pardon me ?"—

" O I am sent from a distant clime,
Five thousand miles away,
And all to absolve a foul, foul crime,
Done here 'twixt night and day "

The pilgrim kneel'd him on the sand,
 And thus began his saye—
 When on his neck an ice-cold hand
 Did that Gray Brother laye.

* * * * *

WAR-SONG

OF THE

ROYAL EDINBURGH LIGHT DRAGOONS.

WRITTEN DURING THE APPREHENSION OF AN INVASION BY THE FRENCH

To horse ! to horse ! the standard flies,
 The bugles sound the call,
 The Gallic navy stems the seas,
 The voice of battle's on the breeze,
 Arouse ye, one and all !

From high Dunedin's towers we come,
 A band of brothers true ;
 Our casques the leopard's spoils surround,
 With Scotland's hardy thistle crown'd ;
 We boast the red and blue.

Though tamely couch'd to Gallia's frown
 Dull Holland's tardy train ;
 Their ravish'd toys though Romans mourn ;
 Though gallant Switzers vainly spurn,
 And, foaming, gnaw the chain ;

Oh ! had they mark'd the avenging call
 Their brethren's murder gave,
 Disunion ne'er their ranks had mown,
 Nor patriot valour, desperate grown,
 Sought freedom in the grave !

Shall we, too, bend the stubborn head,
 In Freedom's temple born,
 Dress our pale cheek in timid smile,
 To hail a master in our isle,
 Or brook a victor's scorn ?

No ! though destruction o'er the land
 Come pouring as a flood,
 The sun, that sees our falling day,
 Shall mark our sabres' deadly sway,
 And set that night in blood.

For gold let Gallia's legions fight,
 Or plunder's bloody gain ;
 Unbribed, unbought, our swords we draw,
 To guard our king, to fence our law,
 Nor shall their edge be vain.

If ever breath of British gale
 Shall fan the tri-color,
 Or footstep of invader rude,
 With rapine foul, and red with blood,
 Pollute our happy shore,—

Then farewell home! and farewell friends!
 Adieu, each tender tie!
 Resolved, we mingle in the tide,
 Where charging squadrons furious ride,
 To conquer or to die.

To horse! to horse! the sabres gleam;
 High sounds our bugle-call;
 Combined by honour's sacred tie,
 Our word is *Laws and Liberty!*
 March forward one and all!

 HELLVELLYN.

IN the spring of 1805, a young gentleman of talents, and of a most amiable disposition, perished by losing his way on the mountain Hellvellyn. His remains were not discovered till three months afterwards, when they were found guarded by a faithful terrier-bitch, his constant attendant during frequent solitary rambles through the wilds of Cumberland and Westmoreland.

I CLIMB'D the dark brow of the mighty Hellvellyn,
 Lakes and mountains beneath me gleam'd misty and wide;
 All was still, save by fits, when the eagle was yelling,
 And starting around me the echoes replied.
 On the right, Striden-edge round the Red-tarn was bending,
 And Catchedicam its left verge was defending,
 One huge nameless rock in the front was ascending,
 When I mark'd the sad spot where the wanderer had died.

Dark-green was that spot 'mid the brown mountain heather,
 Where the Pilgrim of Nature lay stretch'd in decay,
 Like the corpse of an outcast abandon'd to weather,
 Till the mountain-winds wasted the tenantless clay.
 Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
 For, faithful in death, his mute favourite attendd,
 The much-loved remains of her master defended,
 And chased the hill-fox and the raven away.

How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
 When the wind waved his garment, how oft didst thou
 How many long days and long weeks didst thou number,
 Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thy heart?
 And oh! was it meet, that—no requiem read o'er him—
 No mother to weep, and no friend to deplore him,
 And thou, little guardian, alone stretch'd before him—
 Unhonour'd the Pilgrim from life should depart?

When a Prince to the fate of the Peasant has yielded,
 The tapestry waves dark round the dim-lighted hall;
 With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,
 And pages stand mute by the canopied pall :
 Through the courts, at deep midnight, the torches are gleaming,
 In the proudly arch'd chapel the banners are beaming,
 Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,
 Lamenting a Chief of the people should fall.

But meeter for thee, gentle lover of nature,
 To lay down thy head like the meek mountain-lamb,
 When, wilder'd, he drops from some cliff huge in stature,
 And draws his last sob by the side of his dam.
 And more stately thy couch by this desert lake lying,
 Thy obsequies sung by the grey plover flying,
 With one faithful friend but to witness thy dying,
 In the arms of Hellvellyn and Catchedicam.

THE DYING BARD.

THE Welsh tradition bears, that a Bard, on his deathbed, demanded his harp, and played the air to which these verses are adapted; requesting that it might be performed at his funeral.

I.

DINAS EMLINN, lament; for the moment is nigh,
 When mute in the woodlands thine echoes shall die :
 No more by sweet Teivi Cadwallon shall rave,
 And mix his wild notes with the wild dashing wave.

II.

In spring and in autumn, thy glories of shade
 Unhonour'd shall flourish, unhonour'd shall fade ;
 For soon shall be lifeless the eye and the tongue,
 That view'd them with rapture, with rapture that sung.

III.

Thy sons, Dinas Emlinn, may march in their pride,
 And chase the proud Saxon from Prestatyn's side ;
 But where is the harp shall give life to their name ?
 And where is the bard shall give heroes their fame ?

IV.

And oh, Dinas Emlinn ! thy daughters so fair,
 Who heave the white bosom, and wave the dark hair ;
 What tuneful enthusiasts shall worship their eye,
 When half of their charms with Cadwallon shall die ?

V.

Then adieu, silver Teivi ! I quit thy loved scene,
 To join the dim choir of the bards who have been ;
 With Lewarch, and Meilor, and Merlin the Old,
 And sage Taliessin, high harping to hold.

VI.

And adieu, Dinas Emlinn ! still green be thy shades,
 Unconquer'd thy warriors, and matchless thy maids !
 And thou, whose faint warblings my weakness can tell,
 Farewell, my loved Harp ! my last treasure, farewell !

THE NORMAN HORSE-SHOE.

THE Welsh, inhabiting a mountainous country, and possessing only an inferior breed of horses, were usually unable to encounter the shock of the Anglo-Norman cavalry. Occasionally, however, they were successful in repelling the invaders; and the following verses are supposed to celebrate a defeat of CLARE, Earl of Striguil and Pembroke, and of NEVILLE, Baron of Chepstow, Lords-Marchers of Monmouthshire. Rymny is a stream which divides the counties of Monmouth and Glamorgan: Caerphili, the scene of the supposed battle, is a vale upon its banks, dignified by the ruins of a very ancient castle.

I.

RED glows the forge in Striguil's bounds,
And hammers din, and anvil sounds,
And armourers, with iron toil,
Barb many a steed for battle's broil.
Foul fall the hand which bends the steel
Around the courser's thundering heel,
That e'er shall dint a sable wound
On fair Glamorgan's velvet ground !

II.

From Chepstow's towers, ere dawn of morn,
Was heard afar the bugle-horn ;
And forth, in banded pomp and pride,
Stout Clare and fiery Neville ride.
They swore, their banners broad should gleam,
In crimson light, on Rymny's stream ;
They vow'd, Caerphili's sod should feel
The Norman charger's spurning heel.

III.

And sooth they swore : the sun arose,
And Rymny's wave with crimson glows ;
For Clare's red banner, floating wide,
Roll'd down the stream to Severn's tide !
And sooth they vow'd : the trampled green
Show'd where hot Neville's charge had been ;
In every sable hoof-tramp stood
A Norman horseman's curdling blood !

IV.

Old Chepstow's brides may curse the toil,
That arm'd stout Clare for Cambrian broil ;
Their orphans long the art may rue,
For Neville's war-horse forged the shoe.
No more the stamp of armed steed
Shall dint Glamorgan's velvet mead ;
Nor trace be there, in early spring,
Save of the Fairies' emerald ring.

THE MAID OF TORO.

O low shone the sun on the fair lake of Toro,
 And weak were the whispers that waved the dark wood,
 All as a fair maiden, bewilder'd in sorrow,
 Sorely sigh'd to the breezes, and wept to the flood.
 "O saints! from the mansions of bliss lowly bending—
 Sweet Virgin! who hearest the suppliant's cry,
 Now grant my petition, in anguish ascending,
 My Henry restore, or let Eleanor die!"

All distant and faint were the sounds of the battle;
 With the breezes they rise, with the breezes they fall,
 Till the shout, and the groan, and the conflict's dread rattle,
 And the chase's wild clamour, came loading the gale.
 Breathless she gazed on the woodlands so dreary;
 Slowly approaching, a warrior was seen;
 Life's ebbing tide mark'd his footsteps so weary,
 Cleft was his helmet, and woe was his mien.

"O save thee, fair maid, for our armies are flying!
 O save thee, fair maid, for thy guardian is low!
 Deadly cold on yon heath thy brave Henry is lying,
 And fast through the woodland approaches the foe."
 Scarce could he falter the tidings of sorrow,
 And scarce could she hear them, benumb'd with despair
 And when the sun sank on the sweet lake of Toro,
 For ever he set to the Brave and the Fair.

THE WILD HUNTSMAN.

THIS is a translation, or rather an imitation of the *Wilde Jäger* of the German poet Bürger. The tradition upon which it is founded bears, that formerly a Wildgrave, or keeper of a royal forest, named Falkenburg, was so much addicted to the pleasures of the chase, and otherwise so extremely profligate and cruel, that he not only followed this unhallowed amusement on the Sabbath, and other days consecrated to religious duty, but accompanied it with the most unheard-of oppression upon the poor peasants who were under his vassalage. When this second Nimrod died, the people adopted a superstition, founded probably on the many various uncouth sounds heard in the depth of a German forest during the silence of the night. They conceived they still heard the cry of the Wildgrave's hounds; and the well-known cheer of the deceased hunter, the sounds of his horses' feet, and the rustling of the branches before the game, the pack, and the sportsmen, are also distinctly discriminated; but the phantoms are rarely, if ever, visible.

THE Wildgrave winds his bugle-horn,
 To horse, to horse!—halloo, halloo!
 His fiery courser snuffs the morn,
 And thronging serfs their lord pursue.

The eager pack, from couples freed,
 Dash through the bush, the briar, the brake;
 While answering hound, and horn, and steed.
 The mountain echoes startling wake.

The beams of God's own hallow'd day
 Had painted yonder spire with gold,
 And, calling sinful man to pray,
 Loud, long, and deep the bell had toll'd.

But still the Wildgrave onward rides ;
 Halloo, halloo ! and, hark again !
 When, spurring from opposing sides,
 Two Stranger Horsemen join the train.

Who was each Stranger, left and right,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell :
 The right-hand steed was silver white,
 The left, the swarthy hue of hell.

The right-hand Horseman, young and fair,
 His smile was like the morn of May ;
 The left, from eye of tawny glare,
 Shot midnight lightning's lurid ray.

He waved his huntsman's cap on high,
 Cried, " Welcome, welcome, noble lord !
 What sport can earth, or sea, or sky,
 To match the princely chase, afford ?"—

" Cease thy loud bugle's changing knell,"
 Cried the fair youth, with silver voice ;
 " And for devotion's choral swell,
 Exchange the rude unhallow'd noise.

" To-day, the ill-omen'd chase forbear,
 Yon bell yet summons to the fane ;
 To-day the Warning Spirit hear,
 To-morrow thou may'st mourn in vain."

" Away, and sweep the glades along !"
 The Sable Hunter hoarse replies ;
 " To muttering monks leave matin-song,
 And bells, and books, and mysteries."

The Wildgrave spurr'd his ardent steed,
 And, launching forward with a bound,
 " Who, for thy drowsy priestlike rede,
 Would leave the jovial horn and hound ?

" Hence, if our manly sport offend
 With pious fools go chant and pray :—
 Well hast thou spoke, my dark-brow'd friend ;
 Halloo, halloo ! and, hark away !"

The Wildgrave spurr'd his courser light,
 O'er moss and moor, o'erholt and bill ;
 And on the left and on the right,
 Each Stranger Horseman follow'd still.

Up springs, from yonder tangled thorn,
 A stag more white than mountain snow,
 And louder rung the Wildgrave's horn,
 " Hark forward, forward ! holla, ho !"

A heedless wretch has cross'd the way ;
 He gasps the thundering hoofs below ;—
 But, live who can, or die who may,
 Still, " Forward, forward ! " on they go.

See, where yon simple fences meet,
 A field with Autumn's blessings crown'd ;
 See, prostrate at the Wildgrave's feet,
 A husbandman with toil embrown'd :—

" Oh, mercy, mercy, noble lord !
 Spare the poor's pittance," was his cry,
 " Earn'd by the sweat these brows have pour'd,
 In scorching hour of fierce July."—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey ;
 The impetuous Earl no warning heeds,
 But furious holds the onward way.

" Away, thou hound ! so basely born,
 Or dread the scourge's echoing blow !"—
 Then loudly rung his bugle-horn,
 " Hark forward, forward ! holla, ho !"

So said, so done :— A single bound
 Clears the poor labourer's humble pale ;
 Wild follows man, and horse, and hound,
 Like dark December's stormy gale.

And man and horse, and hound and horn,
 Destructive sweep the field along ;
 While, joying o'er the wasted corn,
 Fell Famine marks the maddening throng

Again uproused, the timorous prey
 Scours moss and moor, and holt and hill ;
 Hard run, he feels his strength decay,
 And trusts for life his simple skill.

Too dangerous solitude appear'd ;
 He seeks the shelter of the crowd ;
 Amid the flock's domestic herd
 His harmless head he hopes to shroud.

O'er moss and moor, and holt and hill,
 His track the steady blood-hounds trace ;
 O'er moss and moor, unwearied still,
 The furious Earl pursues the chase.

Full lowly did the herdsman fall ;—
 " O spare, thou noble Baron, spare
 These herds, a widow's little all—
 These flocks, an orphan's fleecy care !"—

Earnest the right-hand Stranger pleads,
 The left still cheering to the prey ;
 The Earl nor prayer nor pity heeds,
 But furious keeps the onward way

“ Unmanner'd dog! To stop my sport
 Vain were thy cant and beggar whine,
 Though human spirits, of thy sort,
 Were tenants of these carrion kine!”

Again he winds his bugle-horn,
 “ Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!”
 And through the herd, in ruthless scorn,
 He cheers his furious hounds to go.

In heaps the throttled victims fall;
 Down sinks their mangled herdsman near;
 The murderous cries the stag appal,—
 Again he starts, new-nerved by fear.

With blood besmear'd, and white with foam,
 While big the tears of anguish pour,
 He seeks, amid the forest's gloom,
 The humble hermit's hallow'd bower.

But man and horse, and horn and hound,
 Fast rattling on his traces go;
 The sacred chapel rung around
 With “ Hark away! and, holla, ho!”

All mild, amid the rout profane,
 The holy hermit pour'd his prayer:—
 “ Forbear with blood God's house to stain;
 Revere his altar, and forbear!

“ The meanest brute has rights to plead,
 Which, wrong'd by cruelty, or pride,
 Draw vengeance on the ruthless head;—
 Be warn'd at length, and turn aside.”

Still the Fair Horseman anxious pleads;
 The Black, wild whooping, points the prey:—
 Alas! the Earl no warning heeds,
 But frantic keeps the forward way.

“ Holy or not, or right or wrong,
 Thy altar, and its rites, I spurn;
 Not sainted martyrs' sacred song,
 Not God himself, shall make me turn!”

He spurs his horse, he winds his horn,
 “ Hark forward, forward! holla, ho!”—
 But off, on whirlwind's puions borne,
 The stag, the hut, the hermit, go.

And horse and man, and horn and hound,
 And clamour of the chase, was gone;
 For hoofs, and howls, and bugle-sound,
 A deadly silence reign'd alone.

Wild gazed the affrighted Earl around:
 He strove in vain to wake his horn,
 In vain to call; for not a sound
 Could from his anxious lips be borne.

He listens for his trusty hounds ;
 No distant baying reach'd his ears :
 His courser, rooted to the ground,
 The quickening spur unmindful bears.

Still dark and darker frown the shades,
 Dark as the darkness of the grave ;
 And not a sound the still invades,
 Save what a distant torrent gave.

High o'er the sinner's humbled head
 At length the solemn silence broke ;
 And, from a cloud of swarthy red,
 The awful voice of thunder spoke :—

“ Oppressor of creation fair !
 Apostate Spirits' harden'd tool !
 Scornor of God ! scourge of the poor !
 The measure of thy cup is full.

“ Be chased for ever through the wood ;
 For ever roam the affrighted wild ;
 And let thy fate instruct the proud,
 God's meanest creature is his child.”

'Twas hush'd :—One flash, of sombre glare,
 With yellow tinged the forests brown ;
 Uprose the Wildgrave's bristling hair,
 And horror chill'd each nerve and bone.

Cold pour'd the sweat in freezing rill ;
 A rising wind began to sing ;
 And louder, louder, louder still,
 Brought storm and tempest on its wing.

Earth heard the call ;—her entrails rend ;
 From yawning rifts, with many a yell,
 Mix'd with sulphureous flames, ascend
 The misbegotten dogs of hell.

What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
 Well may I guess, but dare not tell ;
 His eye like midnight lightning glows,
 His steed the swarthy hue of hell.

The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
 With many a shriek of helpless woe ;
 Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
 And “ Hark away ! and holla, ho !”

With wild despair's reverted eye,
 Close, close behind, he marks the throng
 With bloody fangs and eager cry ;
 In frantic fear he scours along.—

Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
 Till time itself shall have an end ;
 By day, they scour earth's cavern'd space.
 At midnight's witching hour, ascend.

This is the horn, and hound, and horse,
That oft the lated peasant hears ;
Appall'd, he signs the frequent cross,
When the wild din invades his ears.

The wakeful priest oft drops a tear
For human pride, for human woe,
When, at his midnight mass, he hears
The infernal cry of "Holla, ho !"

THE FIRE-KING.

The blessings of the evil Genii, which are curses, were upon him.
Eastern Tale.

THIS Ballad was written at the request of Mr LEWIS, to be inserted in his *Tales of Wonder*. It is the third in a series of four ballads, on the subject of Elementary Spirits. The story is, however, partly historical; for it is recorded, that, during the struggles of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, a Knight-Templar, called Saint-Alban, deserted to the Saracens, and defeated the Christians in many combats, till he was finally routed and slain, in a conflict with King Baldwin, under the walls of Jerusalem.

BOLD knights and fair dames, to my harp give an ear,
Of love, and of war, and of wonder to hear ;
And you haply may sigh, in the midst of your glee,
At the tale of Count Albert, and fair Rosalie.

O see you that castle, so strong and so high ?
And see you that lady, the tear in her eye ?
And see you that palmer, from Palestine's land,
The shell on his hat, and the staff in his hand ?—

" Now palmer, grey palmer, O tell unto me,
What news bring you home from the Holy Countrie ?
And how goes the warfare by Galilee's strand ?
And how fare our nobles, the flower of the land ?"—

" O well goes the warfare by Galilee's wave,
For Gilead, and Nablous, and Bamah we have ;
And well fare our nobles by Mount Lebanon,
For the Heathen have lost, and the Christians have won."

A fair chain of gold 'mid her ringlets there hung ;
O'er the palmer's grey locks the fair chain has she flung :
" O palmer, grey palmer, this chain be thy fee,
For the news thou hast brought from the Holy Countrie.

" And, palmer, good palmer, by Galilee's wave,
O saw ye Count Albert, the gentle and brave ?
When the Crescent went back, and the Red-cross rush'd on,
O saw ye him foremost on Mount Lebanon ?"—

" O lady, fair lady, the tree green it grows ;
O lady, fair lady, the stream pure it flows ;
Your castle stands strong, and your hopes soar on high,
But, lady, fair lady, all blossoms to die.

"The green boughs they wither, the thunderbolt falls,
It leaves of your castle but levin-scorch'd walls;
The pure stream runs muddy; the gay hope is gone;
Count Albert is prisoner on Mount Lebanon."

O she's ta'en a horse, should be fleet at her speed;
And she's ta'en a sword, should be sharp at her need;
And she has ta'en shipping for Palestine's land,
To ransom Count Albert from Soldanrie's hand.

Small thought had Count Albert on fair Rosalie,
Small thought on his faith, or his knighthood, had he;
A heathenish damsel his light heart had won—
The Soldan's fair daughter of Mount Lebanon.

"O Christian, brave Christian, my love wouldst thou be,
Three things must thou do ere I hearken to thee:
Our laws and our worship on thee shalt thou take;
And this thou shalt first do for Zulema's sake.

"And, next, in the cavern where burns evermore
The mystical flame which the Curdmans adore,
Alone, and in silence, three nights shalt thou wake;
And this thou shalt next do for Zulema's sake.

"And, last, thou shalt aid us with counsel and hand,
To drive the Frank robber from Palestine's land;
For my lord and my love then Count Albert I'll take,
When all this is accomplish'd for Zulema's sake."

He has thrown by his helmet, and cross-handled sword,
Renouncing his knighthood, denying his Lord;
He has ta'en the green caftan, and turban put on,
For the love of the maiden of fair Lebanon.

And in the dread cavern, deep, deep under ground,
Which fifty steel gates and steel portals surround,
He has watch'd until daybreak, but sight saw he none,
Save the flame burning bright on its altar of stone.

Amazed was the Princess, the Soldan amazed,
Sore murmur'd the priests as on Albert they gazed;
They search'd all his garments, and, under his weeds,
They found, and took from him, his rosary beads.

Again in the cavern, deep, deep under ground,
He watch'd the lone night, while the winds whistled round;
Far off was their murmur, it came not more nigh,
The flame burn'd unmoved, and nought else did he spy.

Loud murmur'd the priests, and amazed was the King,
While many dark spells of their witchcraft they sing;
They search'd Albert's body, and, lo! on his breast
Was the sign of the Cross, by his father impress'd.

The priests they erase it with care and with pain,
And the recreant return'd to the cavern again;
But, as he descended, a whisper there fell:
It was his good angel, who bade him farewell.

High bristled his hair, his heart flutter'd and beat,
 And he turn'd him five steps, half resolved to retreat;
 But his heart it was harden'd, his purpose was gone,
 When he thought of the Maiden of fair Lebanon.

Scarce pass'd he the archway, the threshold scarce trode,
 When the winds from the four points of heaven were abroad ;
 They made each steel portal to rattle and ring,
 And, borne on the blast, came the dread Fire-King.

Full sore rock'd the cavern whene'er he drew nigh,
 The fire on the altar blazed bickering and high ;
 In volcanic explosions the mountains proclaim
 The dreadful approach of the Monarch of Flame.

Unmeasured in height, undistinguish'd in form,
 His breath it was lightning, his voice it was storm ;
 I ween the stout heart of Count Albert was tame,
 When he saw in his terrors the Monarch of Flame.

In his hand a broad falchion blue-glimmer'd through smoke,
 And Mount Lebanon shook as the monarch he spoke :
 " With this brand shalt thou conquer, thus long, and no more,
 Till thou bend to the Cross, and the Virgin adore."

The cloud-shrouded Arm gives the weapon ; and see !
 The recreant receives the charm'd gift on his knee :
 The thunders growl distant, and faint gleam the fires,
 As, borne on the whirlwind, the phantom retires.

Count Albert has arm'd him the Paynim among,
 Though his heart it was false, yet his arm it was strong :
 And the Red-cross wax'd faint, and the Crescent came on,
 From the day he commanded on Mount Lebanon.

From Lebanon's forests to Galilee's wave,
 The sands of Samaar drank the blood of the brave ;
 Till the Knights of the Temple, and Knights of Saint John,
 With Salem's King Baldwin, against him came on.

The war-cymbals clatter'd, the trumpets replied,
 The lances were couch'd, and they closed on each side ;
 And horsemen and horses Count Albert o'erthrew,
 Till he pierced the thick tumult King Baldwin unto.

Against the charm'd blade which Count Albert did wield
 The fence had been vain of the King's Red-cross shield ;
 But a page thrust him forward the monarch before,
 And cleft the proud turban the renegade wore.

So fell was the dint, that Count Albert stoop'd low
 Before the cross'd shield, to his steel saddlebow ;
 And scarce had he bent to the Red-cross his head,—
 " *Benne Grace, Notre Dame!*" he unwittingly said.

Sore sigh'd the charm'd sword, for its virtue was o'er,
 It sprung from his grasp, and was never seen more ;
 But true men have said, that the lightning's rod wing
 Did waft back the brand to the dread Fire-King.

He clench'd his set teeth, and his gauntleted hand;
 He stretch'd, with one buffet, that Page on the strand;
 As back from the stripling the broken casque roll'd,
 You might see the blue eyes, and the ringlets of gold.

Short time had Count Albert in horror to stare
 On those death-swimming eyeballs, and blood-clotted hair;
 For down came the Templars, like Cedron in flood,
 And dyed their long lances in Saracen blood.

The Saracens, Curdmans, and Ishmaelites yield
 To the scallop, the saltier, and crossleted shield;
 And the eagles were gorged with the infidel dead,
 From Bethsaida's fountains to Naphthali's head.

The battle is over on Bethsaida's plain.—
 Oh, who is yon Paynim lies stretch'd 'mid the slain?
 And who is yon Page lying cold at his knee?—
 Oh, who but Count Albert and fair Rosalie!

The Lady was buried in Salem's bless'd bound;
 The Count he was left to the vulture and hound:
 Her soul to high mercy Our Lady did bring;
 His went on the blast to the dread Fire-King.

Yet many a minstrel, in harping, can tell,
 How the Red-cross it conquer'd, the Crescent it fell:
 And lords and gay ladies have sigh'd, 'mid their glee.
 At the tale of Count Albert and fair Rosalie.

FREDERICK AND ALICE.

THIS Tale is imitated, rather than translated, from a fragment introduced in Goethe's *Claudina von Villa Bella*, where it is sung by a member of a gang of banditti, to engage the attention of the family, while his companions break into the castle.

FREDERICK leaves the land of France,
 Homeward hastes his steps to measure,
 Careless casts the parting glance
 On the scene of former pleasure.

Joying in his prancing steed,
 Keen to prove his untried blade,
 Hope's gay dreams the soldier lead
 Over mountain, moor, and glade.

Helpless, ruin'd, left forlorn,
 Lovely Alice wept alone;
 Mourn'd o'er love's fond contract torn,
 Hope, and peace, and honour flown

Mark her breast's convulsive throbs!
 See, the tear of anguish flows!—
 Mingling soon with bursting sobs,
 Loud the laugh of frenzy rose.

Wild she curs'd, and wild she pray'd;
 Seven long days and nights are o'er;
 Death in pity brought his aid,
 As the village bell struck four.

Far from her, and far from France,
 Faithless Frederick onward rides;
 Marking, blithe, the morning's glance
 Mantling o'er the mountain's sides.

Heard ye not the hoding sound,
 As the tongue of yonder tower,
 Slowly, to the hills around,
 Told the fourth, the fated hour?

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

Desperate, as his terrors rise,
 In the steed the spur he hides;
 From himself in vain he flies;
 Anxious, restless, on he rides.

Seven long days, and seven long nights.
 Wild he wander'd, woe the while!
 Ceaseless care, and causeless fright,
 Urge his footsteps many a mile.

Dark the seventh sad night descends;
 Rivers swell, and rain-streams pour:
 While the deafening thunder lends
 All the terrors of its roar.

Weary, wet, and spent with toil,
 Where his head shall Frederick hide?
 Where, but in yon ruin'd aisle,
 By the lightning's flash descried?

To the portal, dank and low,
 Fast his steed the wanderer bound:
 Down a ruin'd staircase slow,
 Next his dark'ning way he wound.

Long drear vaults before him lie!
 Glimmering lights are seen to glide!
 "Blessed Mary, hear my cry!
 Deign a sinner's steps to guide!"

Often lost their quivering beam,
 Still the lights move slow before,
 Till they rest their ghastly gleam
 Right against an iron door.

Thundering voices from within,
 Mix'd with peals of laughter, rose;
 As they fell, a solemn strain
 Lent its wild and wondrous close!

Midst the din, he seem'd to hear
Voice of friends, by death removed:—
Well he knew that solemn air,
'Twas the lay that Alice loved.—

Hark ! for now a solemn knell
Four times on the still night broke;
Four times, at its deaden'd swell,
Echoes from the ruins spoke.

As the lengthen'd clangours die,
Slowly opes the iron door !
Straight a banquet met his eye,
But a funeral's form it wore !

Coffins for the seats extend ;
All with black the board was spread ;
Girt by parent, brother, friend,
Long since number'd with the dead !

Alice, in her grave-clothes bound,
Ghastly smiling, points a seat ;
All arose, with thundering sound—
All the expected stranger greet.

High their meagre arms they wave,
Wild their notes of welcome swell;—
“ Welcome, traitor, to the grave !
Perjured, bid the light farewell !”

NOTES TO THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

p. 6. *The feast was over in Branksome tower.*

In the reign of James I., Sir William Scott of Buccleuch, chief of the clan bearing that name, exchanged, with Sir Thomas Inglis of Manor, the estate of Murdiestone, in Lanarkshire, for one-half of the Barony of Branksome, or Brankholm, lying upon the Teviot, about three miles above Hawick. He was probably induced to this transaction from the vicinity of Branksome to the extensive domain which he possessed in Etrick Forest and in Teviotdale. In the former district he held by occupancy the estate of Buccleuch, and much of the forest land on the river Etrick. In Teviotdale, he enjoyed the barony of Eckford, by a grant from Robert II. to his ancestor, Walter Scott of Kirkurd, for the apprehending of Gilbert Ridderford, confirmed by Robert III., 3d May 1424. Tradition imputes the exchange betwixt Scott and Inglis to a conversation, in which the latter—a man, it would appear, of a mild and forbearing nature—complained much of the injuries to which he was exposed from the English Borderers, who frequently plundered his lands of Branksome. Sir William Scott instantly offered him the estate of Murdiestone, in exchange for that which was subject to such egregious inconvenience. When the bargain was completed, he dryly remarked that the cattle in Cumberland were as good as those of Teviotdale; and proceeded to commence a system of reprisals upon the English, which was regularly pursued by his successors.

p. 6. *Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall.*

The ancient barons of Buccleuch, both from feudal splendour and from their frontier situation, 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.

p. 7. *—with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow.*

“Of a truth,” says Froissart, “the Scottish cannot boast great skill with the bow, but rather bear axes, with which, in time of need, they give heavy strokes.”

p. 7. *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.*

Branksome Castle was continually exposed to the attacks of the English, both from its situation and the restless military disposition of its inhabitants, who were seldom on good terms with their neighbours.

- p. 7. *While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott.*

The family of Ker, Kerr, or Carr, was very powerful on the Border

- p. 8. *His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!*

The shadow of a necromancer was independent of the sun. Glycas informs us that Simon Magus caused his shadow to go before him, making people believe it was an attendant spirit.

- p. 10. *By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds.*

The kings and heroes of Scotland, as well as the Border-riders, were sometimes obliged to study how to evade the pursuit of blood-hounds. Barbour informs us, that Robert Bruce was repeatedly tracked by sleuth-dogs. On one occasion, he escaped by wading down a brook; thus, leaving no trace on land of his footsteps, he baffled the scent. A sure way of stopping the dog was to spill blood upon the track. Henry the Minstrel tells a story of Wallace, founded on this circumstance:—The hero's little band had been joined by an Irishman, named Fawdoun, or Fadzean, a dark, savage, and suspicious character. After a sharp skirmish at Black-Erne Slide, Wallace was forced to retreat with only sixteen followers, the English pursuing with a Border sleuth-bratch or blood-hound. In the retreat, Fawdoun, tired, or affecting to be so, would go no further, and Wallace having in vain argued with him, in hasty anger struck off his head, and continued the retreat. When the English came up, their hound stayed upon the dead body:—

“The sleuth stopped at Fawdoun, still she stood,
Nor further would fra time she fund the blood.”

- p. 14. *Then view St David's ruin'd pile.*

David I. of Scotland purchased the reputation of sanctity, by founding, and liberally endowing, not only the monastery of Melrose, but those of Kelso, Jedburgh, and many others; which led to the well-known observation of his successor, that he was a *sore saint for the crown*.

- p. 16. *O gallant Chief of Otterbourne!*

The desperate battle of Otterburne was fought 15th August 1388, between Henry Percy, called Hotspur, and James, Earl of Douglas. Both these renowned champions, rivals in military fame, were at the head of a chosen body of troops. The issue of the conflict is well known. Percy was made prisoner, and the Scots won the day, dearly purchased by the death of their gallant general, the Earl of Douglas, who was slain in the action. He was buried at Melrose beneath the high altar.

- p. 16. *—Dark Knight of Liddesdale.*

William Douglas, the Knight of Liddesdale, flourished during the reign of David II., and was so distinguished by his valour that he was called the Flower of Chivalry. But he tarnished his renown by the murder of Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie, originally his friend and brother in arms. The King had conferred upon Ramsay the sheriffdom of Teviotdale, to which Douglas pretended some claim. In revenge of this preference, the Knight of Liddesdale came down upon Ramsay, while he was administering justice at Hawick, seized and carried him off to his remote and inaccessible castle of Hermitage, where he threw his unfortunate prisoner into a dungeon, leaving him to perish of hunger. So weak was the royal authority, that David, although highly incensed at this atrocious murder, found himself obliged to appoint the Knight of Liddesdale successor to his victim, as Sheriff of Teviotdale. But he was soon after slain, while hunting in Ettrick Forest, by his own godson and Cheftain, William, Earl of Douglas, in revenge.

p. 17. *The words that cleft Eildon hills in three.*

Michael Scott was much embarrassed by a spirit, for whom he was under the necessity of finding constant employment. He commanded him to build a *cauld*, or dam-head, across the Tweed at Kelso; it was accomplished in one night. Michael next ordered that Eildon hill, which was then a uniform cone, should be divided into three. Another night was sufficient to part its summit into the three picturesque peaks which it now bears, and it is said the division was made by two *delves* of the spade, the spirit finishing his work by a blow from the flat of the spade on one of the cones, which has made one of them *flat-topp'd*. At length the enchanter conquered this indefatigable demon, by employing him in the hopeless and endless task of making ropes out of sea-sand. After vainly attempting this for some time, the spirit petitioned to be allowed to use barley chaff, but Michael would not permit it; they therefore left their ropes untwisted, the remains of which form the vermicular ridges of the sand on the sea-shore.

p. 21. *The Baron's Dwarf his courser held.*

The idea of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page is taken from a being called Gilpin Horner, who appeared, and made some stay, at a farm-house among the Border mountains.

p. 25. *It had much of glamour.*

Glamour, in the legends of Scottish superstition, means the magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators, so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality. To such a charm the ballad of Johnny Fa' imputes the fascination of the lovely Countess, who eloped with that gipsy leader:—

“Sae soon as they saw her weel-faur'd face,
They cast the *glamour* o'er her.”

p. 26. *The running stream dissolved the spell.*

It is a firm article of popular faith, that no enchantment can subsist in a living stream. Nay, if you can interpose a brook betwixt you and witches, spectres, or even fiends, you are in perfect safety. Burns's inimitable *Tam o' Shanter* turns entirely upon such a circumstance.

p. 27. *He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee.*

To wound an antagonist in the thigh, or leg, was reckoned contrary to the law of arms. In a tilt betwixt Gawain Michael, an English squire, and Joachim Cathore, a Frenchman, “they met at the spear point rudely; the French squyer justed right pleasantly; the Englyshman ran too lowe, for he strak the Frenchman depe into the thigh. Wherwith the Erle of Buckingham was ryght sore displeared, and so were all the other lordes, and sayde how it was shamefully done.”—*Froissart*, vol. i. chap. 366.

p. 30. *On Penchryst glows a bale of fire.*

The Border beacons, from their number and position, formed a sort of telegraphic communication with Edinburgh.—The act of Parliament 1455, c. 48, directs, that one bale or fagot shall be warning of the approach of the English, in any manner; two bales, that they are *coming indeed*; four bales, blazing beside each other, that the enemy are in great force.

p. 32. *Fell by the side of great Dundee.*

The Viscount of Dundee, slain in the battle of Killorankle.

- p. 32. *For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lovely shade.*

The morasses were the usual refuge of the Border herdsmen, on the approach of an English army. Caves, hewed in the most dangerous and inaccessible places, also afforded an occasional retreat. Such caverns may be seen in the precipitous banks of the Teviot at Sunlaws, upon the Aie at Ancram, upon the Jed at Hundalee, and in many other places upon the Border. The banks of the Eske, at Gorton and Hawthornden, are hollowed into similar recesses.

- p. 32. *Watt Tinninn.*

This person was, in my younger days, the theme of many a fireside tale. He was a retainer of the Buccleuch family, and held for his Border service a small tower on the frontiers of Liddesdale. Watt was, by profession, a *sutor* (shoemaker), but, by inclination and practice, an archer and warrior. Upon one occasion, the captain of Bewcastle, military governor of that wild district of Cumberland, is said to have made an incursion into Scotland, in which he was defeated and forced to fly. Watt Tinninn pursued him closely through a dangerous morass; the captain, however, gained the firm ground; and, seeing Tinninn dismounted, and floundering in the bog, used these words of insult:—“Sutor Watt, you cannot sew your boots; the heels *riap* (creak), and the seams *rive* (tear).”—“If I cannot sew,” retorted Tinninn, discharging a shaft which nailed the captain’s thigh to his saddle,—“If I cannot sew, I can *yerk*.”*

- p. 33. *His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow’d,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud.*

As the Borderers were indifferent about the furniture of their habitations, so much exposed to be burned and plundered, they were proportionally anxious to display splendour in decorating and ornamenting their females.

- p. 35. *Belted Will Howard.*

Lord William Howard, third son of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk. By a poetical anachronism, he is introduced into the romance a few years earlier than he actually flourished. He was warden of the Western Marches; and, from the rigour with which he repressed the Border excesses, the name of Belted Will Howard is still famous in our traditions.

- p. 33. *Lord Dacre.*

The well-known name of Dacre is derived from the exploits of one of their ancestors at the siege of Acre, or Ptolemais, under Richard Cœur de Lion.

- p. 33. *The German hackbut-men.*

At the battle of Pinky, there were in the English army six hundred hackbutters on foot, and two hundred on horseback, composed chiefly of foreigners.

- p. 39. *Knighthood he took of Douglas’ sword.*

The dignity of knighthood, according to the original institution, had this peculiarity, that it did not flow from the monarch, but could be conferred by one who himself possessed it, upon any squire who, after due probation, was found to merit the honour of chivalry.

* *Yerk*, to twitch, as shoemakers do, in securing the stitches of their work

- p. 41. *The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!*

The chief of this potent race of heroes, about the date of the poem, was Archibald Douglas, seventh Earl of Angus, a man of great courage and activity. The Bloody Heart was the well-known cognisance of the house of Douglas, assumed from the time of good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart, to be carried to the Holy Land.

- p. 44. *The Seven Spears of Wedderburne.*

Sir David Home of Wedderburn, slain in the fatal battle of Flodden, left seven sons, who were called the Seven Spears of Wedderburne.

- p. 44. *And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"*

The Earls of Home, as descendants of the Dunbars, ancient Earls of March, carried a lion rampant, argent. The slogan, or war-cry, of this powerful family was, "A Home! a Home!"

The Hepburns, a powerful family in East Lothian, were usually in close alliance with the Homes.

- o. 45. *'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day.*

Notwithstanding the constant wars upon the Borders, 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, they often carried on something resembling friendly intercourse, even in the middle of hostilities; and it is evident, from various ordinances against trade and intermarriages, between English and Scottish Borderers, that the governments of both countries were jealous of their cherishing too intimate a connexion.

- p. 53. *Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!*

The pursuit of border marauders was followed by the injured party and his friends with blood-hounds and bugle-horn, and was called the *hot-trot*. He was entitled, if his dog could trace the scent, to follow the invaders into the opposite kingdom; a privilege which often occasioned bloodshed.

- p. 55. *She wrought not by forbidden spell.*

Popular belief, though contrary to the doctrines of the Church, made a favourable distinction betwixt magicians, and necromancers or wizards;—the former were supposed to command the evil spirits, and the latter to serve, or at least to be in league and compact with, those enemies of mankind. The arts of subjecting the demons were manifold; sometimes the fiends were actually swindled by the magicians.

- p. 55. *A merlin sat upon her wrist.*

A merlin, or sparrow-hawk, was usually carried by ladies of rank, as a falcon was, in time of peace, the constant attendant of a knight or baron.

- p. 56. *And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave.*

The peacock, it is well known, was considered, during the times of chivalry, not merely an exquisite delicacy, but a dish of peculiar solemnity. After being roasted, it was again decorated with its plumage, and a sponge, dipped in lighted spirits of wine, was placed in its bill. When

it was introduced on days of grand festival, it was the signal for the adventurous knights to take upon them vows to do some deed of chivalry, "before the peacock and the ladies."

v. 56. *Smole, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill.*

The Rutherfords of Hunthill were an ancient race of Border Lairds, whose names occur in history, sometimes as defending the frontier against the English, sometimes as disturbing the peace of their own country. Dickon Draw-the-sword was son to the ancient warrior, called in tradition the Cock of Hunthill.

p. 57. *old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name.*

John Grahame, second son of *Malice*, Earl of *Monteith*, commonly surnamed *John with the Bright Sword*, upon some displeasure risen against him at court, retired with many of his clan and kindled into the English Borders, in the reign of King Henry the Fourth, where they seated themselves; and many of their posterity have continued there ever since.

p. 63. *St Bride of Douglas.*

This was a favourite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus in particular, as we learn from the following passage:—"The Queen-Regent had proposed to raise a rival noble to the ducal dignity; and discoursing of her purpose with Angus, he answered, 'Why not, madam? we are happy that have such a princess, that can know and will acknowledge men's services, and is willing to recompense it; but, by the might of God' (this was his oath when he was serious and in anger; at other times, it was by *St Bryde of Douglas*), 'if he be a Duke, I will be a Drake!'—So she desisted from prosecuting of that purpose" *Godscroft*

NOTES TO MARMION.

v. 74. *As when the Champion of the Lake
Enters Morgana's fated house,
Or in the Chapel Perilous,
Despising spells and demons' force,
Holds converse with the unburied corse.*

The romance of the *Morte d'Arthur* contains a sort of abridgment of the most celebrated adventures of the Round Table. It has also the merit of being written in pure old English; and many of the wild adventures which it contains are told with a simplicity bordering upon the sublime. As this curious work is about to be republished, I confine myself to the tale of the Chapel Perilous, and of the quest of Sir Launcelot after the Sangreal.

"Right so Sir Launcelot departed, and when he came to the Chapel Perilous, he alighted downe, and tied his horse to a little gate. And as soon as he was within the churchyard, he saw, on the front of the chapell, many faire rich shields turned upside downe; and many of the shields Sir Launcelot had seene knights have before; with that he saw stand by him thirtie great knights, more, by a yard, than any man that ever he had seene, and all those grinned and gnashed at Sir Launcelot; and when he saw their countenance, hee dread them sore, and so put his shield afore him, and tooke his sword in his hand, ready to doe battaile; and they were all armed in black harness, ready, with their shields and swords drawn. And when Sir Launcelot would have gone through them, they scattered on every side of him, and gave him the way: and

therewith he waxed all bold, and entered into the chappell, and then hee saw no light but a dimme lampe burning, and then was he ware of a corps covered with a cloath of silke: then Sir Launcelot stooped doune, and cut a piece of that cloath away, and then hee saw a faire sword lye by the dead knight, and that he gat in his hand, and hied him out of the chappell. As soon as he was in the chappell-yerd, all the knights spoke to him with a grimly voice, and said, 'Knight, Sir Launcelot, lay that sword from thee, or else thou shalt die.'—'Whether I live or die,' said Sir Launcelot, 'with no great words get yee it againe, therelof fight for it an yee list.' Therewith hee passed through them; and beyond the chappell-yerd, there met him a faire damosell, and said, 'Sir Launcelot, leave that sword behind thee, or thou wilt die for it.'—'I will not leave it,' said Sir Launcelot, 'for no threats.'—'No?' said she; 'and ye did leave that sword, Queene Guenever should ye never see.'—Then were I a fool and I would leave this sword,' said Sir Launcelot.—'Now, gentle knight,' said the damosell, 'I require thee to kiss me once.'—'Nay,' said Sir Launcelot, 'that God forbid!'—'Well, sir,' said she, 'and thou haddest kissed me thy life dayes had been done; but now, alas!' said she, 'I have lost all my labour; for I ordeined this chappell for thy sake, and for Sir Gawaine; and once I had Sir Gawaine within it; and at that time hee fought with that knight which there lieth dead in yonder chappell, Sir Gilbert the bastard, and at that time he smote off Sir Gilbert the bastard's left hand. And so, Sir Launcelot, now I tell thee, that I have loved thee this seven years; but thee may no woman have thy love but Queene Guenever; but sithen I may not rejoyce thee to have thy body alive, I had kept no more joy in this world but to have had thy dead body; and I would have balm'd it and served, and so have kept it in my life daies, and daily I should have clipped thee, and kissed thee, in the despite of Queene Guenever.'—'Yee say well,' said Sir Launcelot; 'Jesus preserve me from your subtyll craft.' And therewith hee took his horse, and departed from her."

p. 74.

*A sinful man, and unconfess'd,
He took the Sangreal's holy quest,
And, slumbering, saw the vision high,
He might not view with waking eye.*

One day, when Arthur was holding a high feast with his Knights of the Round Table, the Sangreal, or vessel out of which the last passover was eaten, (a relic, which had long remained concealed from human eyes, because of the sins of the land,) suddenly appeared to him and all his chivalry. The consequence of this vision was, that all the knights took on them a solemn vow to seek the Sangreal. But, alas! it could only be revealed to a knight at once accomplished in earthly chivalry, and pure and guiltless of evil conversation. All Sir Launcelot's noble accomplishments were therefore rendered vain by his guilty intrigue with Queen Guenever, or Ganore; and in this holy quest he encountered only such disgraceful disasters as that which follows:—

"But Sir Launcelot rode overthwart and endlong in a wild forest, and held no path but as wild adventure led him; and at the last, he came unto a stone crosse, which departed two wayes, in wast land; and, by the crosse, was a stone that was of marble; but it was so dark, that Sir Launcelot might not well know what it was. Then Sir Launcelot looked by him, and saw an old chappell, and there he went to have found people. And so Sir Launcelot tied his horse to a tree, and there he put off his shield, and hung it upon a tree, and then hee went to the chappell doore, and found it wated and broken. And within he found a faire altar, full richly srrayed with cloth of silke, and there stood a faire candlestick, which beare six great candles, and the candlestick was of silver. And when Sir Launcelot saw this light, hee had a great will for to enter into the chappell, but he could find no place where hee might enter. Then was hee passing heavie and dismayed. Then he returned, and came againe to his horse, and took off his saddle and his bridle, and let him pasture, and unlaced his helme, and ungrded his sword, and laid him doune to sleepe upon his shield, before the crosse.

"And so he fell on sleepe; and, halfe waking and halfe sleeping, he saw come by him two palfrys, both faire and white, the which beare a litter, therein lying a sicke knight. And when hee was nigh the crosse, hee there abode still. All this Sir Launcelot saw and beheld, for hee slept not verily, and hee heard him say, 'O sweete Lord, when shall this sorrow leave me, and when shall the holy vessel come by me, where through I shall be blessed, for I have endured thus long for little trespass!' And thus a great while complained the knight, and alwaies Sir Launcelot heard it. With that Sir Launcelot saw the candlestick, with the fire tapers, come before the crosse; but he could see nobody that brought it. Also there came a table of silver, and the holy vessel of Sangreal, the which Sir Launcelot had seen before that time in King Petchour's house. And therewithall the sicke knight set him upright, and held up both his hands, and said: 'Faire sweete Lord, which is here within the holy vessel, take heede to mee, that I may bee hole of this great malady!' And therewith upon his hands, and upon his knees, hee went so nigh, that hee touched the holy vessel, and kissed it: And anon hee was hole, and then hee said, 'Lord God, I thank thee, for I am healed of this malady.' Soe when the holy vessel had bene there a great while, it went into the chappelle againe, with the candlestick and the light, so that Sir Launcelot wist not where it be

came, for he was overtaken with sinne, that hee had no power to arise against the holy vessell, wherefore afterward many men said of him shame. But he tooke repentance afterward. Then the sicke knight dressed him upright, and kissed the crosse. Then anon his squire brought him his armes, and asked his lord how he did. 'Certainly,' said hee, 'I thanke God right heartily for through the holy vessell I am healed: But I have right great mervalle of this sleeping knight, which hath had neither grace nor power to awake during the time that this holy vessell hath bene here present.'—'I dare it right well say,' said the squire, 'that this same knight is defouled with some manner of deadly sinne, whereof he has never confessed.'—'By my faith,' said the knight, 'whatsoever he be, he is unhappie; for, as I deeme, he is of the fellowship of the Round Table, the which is entered in the quest of the Sancgreall.'—'Sir,' said the squire, 'here I have brought you all your armes, save your helme and your sword; and, therefore, by mine assent, now may ye take this knight's helme and his sword;' and so he did. And when he was cleane armed, he took Sir Launcelot's horse, for he was better than his owne, and so they departed from the crosse.

"Then anon Sir Launcelot awaked, and set himselfe upright, and he thought him what hee had there scene, and whether it were dreames or not; right so he heard a voice that said, 'Sir Launcelot, more hardy than is the stone, and more bitter than is the wood, and more naked and bare than is the liefe of the fig-tree, therefore go thou from hence, and withdraw thee from this holy place;' and when Sir Launcelot heard this, he was passing heavy, and wist not what to doe. And so he departed sore weeping, and cursed the time that he was borne; for then he deemed never to have had more worship; for the words went unto his heart, till that he knew wherefore that hee was so called."

- p. 74. *And Dryden, in immortal strain,
Had raised the Table Round again.*

Dryden's melancholy account of his projected Epic Poem, blasted by the selfish and sordid parsimony of his patrons, is contained in an "Essay on Satire," addressed to the Earl of Dorset, and prefixed to the Translation of Juvenal.

- p. 75. *Their theme the merry minstrels made,
Of Ascapart, and Bevis bold.*

Ascapart, a most important personage in the "History of Bevis of Hampton," is thus described in an extract:—

"This geaunt was mighty and strong,
And full thirty foot was long.
He was bristled like a sow;
A foot he had between each brow;
His lips were great, and hung aside;
His eyes were hollow, his mouth was wide;
Lothly he was to look on than,
And liker a devil than a man.
His staff was a yongg oak,
Hard and heavy was his stroke."

Specimens of Metrical Romances, vol. ii. p. 136.

- p. 75. *Day set on Norham's castled steep,
And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep.*

The ruinous castle of Norham (anciently called Ubbanford) is situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, about six miles above Berwick, and where that river is still the boundary between England and Scotland. The extent of its ruins, as well as its historical importance, shews it to have been a place of magnificence as well as strength. Edward I. resided there when he was created umpire of the dispute concerning the Scottish succession. It was repeatedly taken and retaken during the wars between England and Scotland; and, indeed, scarce any happened in which it had not a principal share. Norham Castle is situated on a steep bank which overhangs the river. The repeated sieges which the castle had sustained, rendered frequent repairs necessary. In 1164, it was almost rebuilt by Hugh Pudsey, Bishop of Durham, who added a huge keep, or donjon; notwithstanding which, King Henry II., in 1174, took the castle from the bishop, and committed the keeping of it to William de Neville. After this period it seems to have been chiefly garrisoned by the King, and considered as a royal fortress. The Greys of Chillingham Castle were frequently the castellans, or captains of the

garrison; yet, as the castle was situated in the patrimony of St Cuthbert, the property was in the See of Durham till the Reformation.

According to Mr Pinkerton, there is in the British Museum, Cal. B. 6. 216, a curious memoir of the Dacres on the state of Norham Castle in 1522, not long after the battle of Flodden. The inner ward, or keep, is represented as impregnable:—"The provisions are three great vats of salt eels, forty-four kine, three hogsheads of salted salmon, forty quarters of grain, besides many cows, and four hundred sheep, lying under the castle-wall nightly; but a number of the arrows wanted feathers, and a good *Fletcher* [*i. e.*, maker of arrows] was required."—*History of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 201, note.

The ruins of the castle are at present considerable, as well as picturesque. They consist of a large shattered tower, with many vaults, and fragments of other edifices, enclosed within an outward wall of great circuit.

p. 75. *The battled towers, the donjon keep.*

It is perhaps unnecessary to remind my readers, that the *donjon*, in its proper signification, means the strongest part of a feudal castle; a high square tower, with walls of tremendous thickness, situated in the centre of the other buildings, from which, however, it was usually detached. The prison of the fortress was generally in the donjon, from which circumstance we derive our *dungeon*.

p. 77. *Well was he arm'd from head to heel,
In mail and plate of Milan steel.*

The artists of Milan were famous in the middle ages for their skill in armoury, as appears from the following passage, in which Froissart gives an account of the preparations made by Henry, Earl of Hereford, afterwards Henry IV., and Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marischal, for their proposed combat in the lists at Coventry:—"These two lords made ample provision of all things necessary for the combat; and the Earl of Derby sent off messengers to Lombardy, to have armour from Sir Galeas, Duke of Milan. The Duke complied with joy, and gave the knight, called Sir Francis, who had brought the message, the choice of all his armour for the Earl of Derby. When he had selected what he wished for in plated and mail armour, the Lord of Milan, out of his abundant love for the Earl, ordered four of the best armourers in Milan to accompany the knight to England, that the Earl of Derby might be more completely armed."—*JONES'S Froissart*, vol. iv. p. 597.

p. 77. *Who checks at me, to death is dight.*

The crest and motto of Marmion are borrowed from the following story:—Sir David de Lindsay, first Earl of Crauford, was, among other gentlemen of quality, attended, during a visit to London in 1390, by Sir William Dalzell, who was, according to my authority, Bower, not only excelling in wisdom, but also of a lively wit. Chancing to be at the court, he there saw Sir Piers Courtenay, an English knight, famous for skill in tilting, and for the beauty of his person, parading the palace, arrayed in a new mantle, bearing for device an embroidered falcon, with this rhyme,—

"I bear a falcon, fairest of flight,
Whoso pinches at her, his death is dight,*
In graith." †

The Scottish knight, being a wag, appeared next day in a dress exactly similar to that of Courtenay, but bearing a magpie instead of the falcon, with a motto ingeniously contrived to rhyme to the vaunting inscription of Sir Piers:—

"I bear a pie picking at a piece,
Whoso picks at her, I shall pick at his nose, ‡
In faith."

* Prepared.

† Armour.

‡ None.

This affront could only be expiated by a just with sharp lances. In the course, Dalzell left his helmet unlaced, so that it gave way at the touch of his antagonist's lance, and he thus avoided the shock of the encounter. This happened twice: in the third encounter, the handsome Courtenay lost two of his front teeth. As the Englishman complained bitterly of Dalzell's fraud in not fastening his helmet, the Scottishman agreed to run six courses more, each champion staking in the hand of the king two hundred pounds, to be forfeited if, on entering the lists, any unequal advantage should be detected. This being agreed to, the wily Scot demanded that Sir Piers, in addition to the loss of his teeth, should consent to the extinction of one of his eyes, he himself having lost an eye in the fight of Otterburn. As Courtenay demurred to this equalization of optical powers, Dalzell demanded the forfeit, which, after much altercation, the king appointed to be paid to him, saying, he surpassed the English both in wit and valour. This must appear to the reader a singular specimen of the humour of that time. I suspect the Jockey Club would have given a different decision from Henry IV.

p. 78.

*They hail'd Lord Marmion :
They hail'd him Lord of Fontenaye,
Of Lutterward, and Scritelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town.*

Lord Marmion, the principal character of the present romance, is entirely a fictitious personage. In earlier times, indeed, the family of Marmion, Lords of Fontenay in Normandy, was highly distinguished. Robert de Marmion, Lord of Fontenay, a distinguished follower of the Conqueror, obtained a grant of the castle and town of Tamworth, and also of the manor of Scritelby, in Lincolnshire. One, or both, of these noble possessions, was held by the honourable service of being the Royal Champion, as the ancestors of Marmion had formerly been to the Duke of Normandy. But after the castle and demesne of Tamworth had passed through four successive barons from Robert, the family became extinct in the person of Philip de Marmion, who died in 20th Edward I. without issue male. He was succeeded in his castle of Tamworth by Alexander de Freville, who married Mazera, his granddaughter. Baldwin de Freville, Alexander's descendant, in the reign of Richard I., by the supposed tenure of his castle of Tamworth, claimed the office of Royal Champion, and to do the service appertaining; namely, on the day of coronation, to ride, completely armed, upon a barbed horse, into Westminster Hall, and there to challenge the combat against any who would gainsay the king's title. But this office was adjudged to Sir John Dymoke, to whom the manor of Scritelby had descended by another of the co-heiresses of Robert de Marmion; and it remains in that family, whose representative is Hereditary Champion of England at the present day. The family and possessions of Freville have merged in the Earls of Ferrars. I have not, therefore, created a new family, but only revived the titles of an old one in an imaginary personage.

It was one of the Marmion family, who, in the reign of Edward II., performed that chivalrous feat before the very castle of Norham, which Bishop Percy has woven into his beautiful ballad, "The Hermit of Warkworth." The story is thus told by Leland:—

"The Scottes cam yn to the marches of England, and destroyed the castles of Werk and Herbotel, and overran much of Northumberland marches.

"At this tyme, Thomas Gray and his friendes defended Norham from the Scottes.

"It were a wonderful processe to declare, what mischeifes cam by hungrs and asseges by the space of xi yerres in Northumberland; for the Scottes became so proude, after they had got Berwick, that they nothing esteemed the Englishmen.

"About this tyme there was a greate feste made yn Lincolnshir, to which came many gentlemen and ladies; and amonge them one lady brought a heaulme for a man of were, with a very riche creste of gold, to Willtam Marmion, knight, with a letter of commandement of her lady, that he shold go into the daungerest place in England, and ther to let the heaulme be seene and known as famous. So he went to Norham; whither, within 4 days of cumming, cam Phillip Monbray, guardian of Berwicke, having yn his bande 40 men of armes, the very flower of men of the Scottish marches.

Thomas Gray, capitayne of Norham, seynge this, brought his garrison afore the

barriers of the castel, behind whom cam William, richly arrayed, as al glitterinz in gold, and wearing the heaulme, his lady's present.

"Then said Thomas Gray to Marmion, 'Sir Knight, be ye cum hither to fame your helmet, mount up on your horse, and ryde lyke a valliant man to your foes, even here at hand, and I forsake God if I rescue not thy body deale or alyve, or I myself wyl dye for it.'

"Whereupon he toke his cursere, and rode among the throng of ennemyes; the which layed sore stripes on him, and pulled him at the last out of his sadel to the grounde.

"Then Thomas Gray, with al the hoiegarrison, lette prick yn among the Scottes, and so wondid them and their horses, that they were overthrowan; and Marmion, sore beten, was horsid agsyn, and, with Gray, persewed the Scottes yn chase. There were taken 50 horse of price; and the women of Norham brought them to the foote men to follow the chase."

p. 79.

*Sir Hugh the Heron bold,
Baron of Twisell, and of Ford,
And Captain of the Hold.*

Were accuracy of any consequence in a fictitious narrative, this castellan's name ought to have been William; for William Heron of Ford was husband to the famous Lady Ford, whose siren charms are said to have cost our James IV. so dear.

p. 81.

*James back'd the cause of that mock prince,
Warbeck, that Flemish counterfeit,
Who on the gibbet paid the cheat.
Then did I march with Surrey's power,
What time we razed old Ayton Tower.*

The story of Perkin Warbeck, or Richard, Duke of York, is well known. In 1496, he was received honourably in Scotland; and James IV., after conferring upon him in marriage his own relation, the Lady Catherine Gordon, made war on England in behalf of his pretensions. To retaliate an invasion of England, Surrey advanced into Berwickshire at the head of considerable forces, but retreated, after taking the considerable fortress of Ayton.

p. 81.

*For here be some have prick'd as far,
On Scottish ground, as to Dunbar;
Have drunk the monks of St Bothan's ale,
And driven the beeves of Lauderdale.*

The garrisons of the English castles of Wark, Norham, and Berwick, were, as may be easily supposed, very troublesome neighbours to Scotland. Sir Richard Maitland of Ledington wrote a poem, called "The Blind Baron's Comfort," when his barony of Blythe, in Lauderdale, was harried by Rowland Foster, the English captain of Wark, with his company, to the number of 300 men. They spoiled the poetical knight of 5000 sheep, 200 nolt, 30 horses and mares; the whole furniture of his house of Blythe, worth 100 pounds Scots (£8, 6s. 8d.), and everything else that was portable.

p. 83.

*—that Grot where Olives nod,
Where, darling of each heart and eye,
From all the youth of Sicily,
Saint Rosalie retired to God.*

"Sante Rosalie was of Palermo, and born of a very noble family, and when very young, abhorred so much the vanities of this world, and avoided the converse of mankind, resolving to dedicate herself wholly to God Almighty, that she, by divine inspiration, forsook her father's house, and never was more heard of till her body was found in that cleft of a rock, on that almost inaccessible mountain, where now the chapel is built; and they affirm she was carried up there by the hands of angels; for that place was net formerly so accessible (as now it is) in the days of the Saint; and even now it is a very bad, and steepy, and breakneck way. In this frightful place, this holy woman lived a great many years, feeding only on what she found growing on that barren mountain, and

creeping into a narrow and dreadful cleft in a rock, which was always dropping wet, and was her place of retirement as well as prayer.—*Voyag. to Sicily and Malta*, by Mr John Dryden (son to the Poet), p. 107.

p. 84.

Friar John—————
Himself still sleeps before his beads
Have mark'd ten aves and two creeds.

Friar John understood the soporific virtue of his beads and breviary as well as his namesake in Rabelais. "But Gargantua could not sleep by any means, on which side soever he turned himself. Whereupon the monk said to him, 'I never sleep soundly but when I am at sermon or prayers: Let us therefore begin, you and I, the seven penitential psalms, to try whether you shall not quickly fall asleep.' The conceit pleased Gargantua very well; and beginning the first of these psalms, as soon as they came to *Beati quorum*, they both fell asleep."

p. 84.

The summon'd Palmer came in place.

A *Palmer*, opposed to a *Pilgrim*, was one who made it his sole business to visit different holy shrines; travelling incessantly, and subsisting by charity: whereas the *Pilgrim* retired to his usual home and occupations, when he had paid his devotions at the particular spot which was the object of his pilgrimage. The *Palmer*s seem to have been the *Questionarii* of the ancient Scottish canons 1242 and 1296.

p. 85.

To fair St Andrews bound,
Within the ocean cave to pray,
Where good Saint Rule his holy lay,
From midnight to the dawn of day,
Sung to the billows' sound.

St Regulus (*Scotticè*, St Rule), a monk of Patræ, in Achaia, warned by a vision, is said, A.D. 370, to have sailed westward, until he landed at St Andrews, in Scotland, where he founded a chapel and tower. The latter is still standing, and, though we may doubt the precise date of its foundation, is certainly one of the most ancient edifices in Scotland. A cave, nearly fronting the ruinous castle of the Archbishops of St Andrews, bears the name of this religious person. It is difficult of access; and the rock in which it is hewed is washed by the German Ocean. It is nearly round, about ten feet in diameter, and the same in height. On one side is a sort of stone altar; on the other, an aperture into an inner den, where the miserable ascetic, who inhabited this dwelling, probably slept. At full tide, egress and regress are hardly practicable. As Regulus first colonized the metropolitan see of Scotland, and converted the inhabitants in the vicinity, he has some reason to complain, that the ancient name of Killrule (*Cella Reguli*) should have been superseded, even in favour of the tutelary saint of Scotland. The reason of the change was, that St Rule is said to have brought to Scotland the relics of Saint Andrew.

p. 85.

—————*Saint Fillan's blessed well,*
Whose spring can frenzied dreams dispel,
And the crazed brain restore.

St Fillan was a Scottish saint of some reputation. There are in Perthshire several wells and springs dedicated to St Fillan, which are still places of pilgrimage and offerings, even among the Protestants. They are held powerful in cases of madness; and, in some of very late occurrence, lunatics have been left all night bound to the holy stone, in confidence that the saint would cure and unloose them before morning.

p. 87.

The scenes are desert now, and bare,
Where flourish'd once a forest fair.

Etrick Forest, now a range of mountainous sheep-walks, was anciently reserved for the pleasure of the royal chase. Since it was disparked, the wood has been, by degrees, almost totally destroyed, although, wherever

protected from the sheep, copses soon arise without any planting. When the King hunted there, he often summoned the array of the country to meet and assist his sport. Thus, in 1528, James V. "made proclamation to all lords, barons, gentlemen, landward-men, and frecholders, that they should compear at Edinburgh, with a month's victuals, to pass with the King where he pleased, to dauton the thieves of Tiviotdale, Annandale, Liddisdale, and other parts of that country; and also warned all gentlemen that had good dogs to bring them, that he might hunt in the said country as he pleased: The whilk the Earl of Argyle, the Earl of Huntley, the Earl of Athole, and so all the rest of the gentlemen of the Highland, did, and brought their hounds with them in like manner, to hunt with the King as he pleased.

"The second day of June the King passed out of Edinburgh to the hunting, with many of the nobles and gentlemen of Scotland with him, to the number of twelve thousand men; and then past to Meggitland, and hounded and hawked all the country and bounds; that is to say, Crammat, Pappertlaw, St Mary-laws, Carlavrick, Chapel, Ewindoores, and Longhope. I heard say, he slew, in these bounds, eighteen score of harts." *

Taylor, the water-poet, has given an account of the mode in which these huntings were conducted in the Highlands of Scotland, in the seventeenth century, having been present at Braemar upon such an occasion:—

"For once in the year, which is the whole month of August, and sometimes part of September, many of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom (for their pleasure) do come into these Highland countries to hunt; where they do conform themselves to the habit of the Highlandmen, who, for the most part, speak nothing but Irish; and, in former time, were those people which were called the *Red-shanks*. Their habit is—shoes, with but one sole a-piece; stockings (which they call short hose), made of a warm stuff of diverse colours, which they call tartan; as for breeches, many of them, nor their forefathers, never wore any, but a jerkin of the same stuff that their hose is of; their garters being bands or wreaths of hay or straw; with a plaid about their shoulders; which is a mantle of diverse colours, much finer and lighter stuff than their hose; with blue flat caps on their heads; a handkerchief, knit with two knots, about their necks; and thus are they attired. Now their weapons are—long bowes and forked arrows, swords and targets, barquebusses, muskets, durks, and Lochaber axes. With these arms I found many of them armed for the hunting. As for their attire, any man, of what degree soever, that comes amongst them, must not disdain to wear it; for, if they do, then they will disdain to hunt, or willingly to bring in their dogs; but if men be kind unto them, and be in their habit, then are they conquered with kindness, and the sport will be plentiful. This was the reason that I found so many noblemen and gentlemen in those shapes. But to proceed to the hunting:—

"My good Lord of Marr having put me into that shape, I rode with him from his house, where I saw the ruins of an old castle, called the Castle of Kindroghit. The first day, we travelled eight miles, where there were small outtages, built on purpose to lodge in, which they call Lonquhards. I thank my good Lord Erskine, he commanded that I should always be lodged in his lodging; the kitchen being always on the side of a bank: many kettles and pots boiling, and many spits turning and winding with great variety of cheer,—as venison baked; sodden, rost, and stewed beef; mutton, goats, kids, hares, fresh salmon, pigeons, hens, capons, chickens, partridges, mair-cocks, heath-cocks, caperkellies, and termagants; good ale, sacke, white and claret, tent (or allegant), with most potent aquavits.

"All these, and more than these, we had continually in superfluons abundance, caught by falconers, fowlers, fishers, and brought by my lord's tenants and purveyors to victual our camp, which consisteth of fourteen or fifteen hundred men and horses. The manner of the hunting is this:—Five or six hundred men do rise early in the morning, and they do disperse themselves divers ways, and seven, eight, or ten miles compass, they do bring, or chase in, the deer in many herds (two, three, or four hundred in a herd) to such or such a place, as the nobleman shall appoint them; then, when day is come, the lords and gentlemen of their companies do ride or go to the said places, sometimes wading up to the middle through burns and rivers; and then, they being come to the place, do lie down on the ground, till those foresaid scouts, which are called the Tinkhell, do bring down the deer; but, as the proverb says of the bad cook, so these tinkhell men do lick their own fingers; for, besides their bows and arrows, which they carry with them, we can hear, now and then, a barquebus or a musket go off, which they do seldom discharge in vain. Then, after we had staid there three hours, or thereabouts, we might perceive the deer appear on the hills round about us (their heads making a show like a wood), which being followed close by the tinkhell, are chased down into the valley where we lay; then all the valley on each side being way-laid with a hundred couple of strong Irish grey hounds, they are all let loose as occasion serves, upon the herd of deer, that with dogs, guns, arrows, durks, and daggers, in the space of two

hours, fourscore fat deer were slain; which after are disposed of, some one way, and some another, twenty and thirty miles, and more than enough left for us, to make merry withal, at our rendezvous.

p. 89.

By lone Saint Mary's silent lake.

This beautiful sheet of water forms the reservoir from which the Yarrow takes its source. It is connected with a smaller lake, called the Loch of the Lowes, and surrounded by mountains. In the winter, it is still frequented by flights of wild swans; hence my friend Mr Wordsworth's lines—

"The swan on sweet St Mary's lake
Floats double, swan and shadow."

Near the lower extremity of the lake are the ruins of Dryhope Tower, the birthplace of Mary Scott, daughter of Philip Scott of Dryhope, and famous by the traditional name of the Flower of Yarrow. She was married to Walter Scott of Harden, no less renowned for his depredations than his bride for her beauty. Her romantic appellation was, in latter days, with equal justice, conferred on Miss Mary Lillias Scott, the last of the elder branch of the Harden family. The author well remembers the talent and spirit of the latter Flower of Yarrow, though age had then injured the charms which procured her the name. The words usually sung to the air of "Tweedside," beginning, "What beauties does Flora disclose," were composed in her honour.

p. 90.

*— in feudal strife, a foe
Hath laid Our Lady's chapel low.*

The chapel of St Mary of the Lowes (*de lacubus*) was situated on the eastern side of the lake, to which it gives name. The vestiges of the building can now scarcely be traced; but the burial-ground is still used as a cemetery.

p. 91.

Like that which frowns round dark Loch-skene

Loch-skene is a mountain lake, of considerable size, at the head of the Moffat-water. The character of the scenery is uncommonly savage; and the earn, or Scottish eagle, has, for many ages, built its nest yearly upon an islet in the lake. From Loch-skene issues a brook, which, after a short and rugged course, forms a cataract of great height (300 feet), called, from its appearance, the "Grey Mare's Tail." The "Giant's Grave," afterwards mentioned, is a sort of trench, which bears that name, a little way from the foot of the cataract.

p. 92.

*Where, from high Whitby's cloister'd pile,
Bound to St Cuthbert's Holy Isle.*

Lindisfarne, an isle on the coast of Northumberland, was called Holy Island, from the sanctity of its ancient monastery, and from its having been the Episcopal seat of the See of Durham during the early ages of British Christianity. A succession of holy men held that office: but their merits were swallowed up in the superior fame of St Cuthbert, who was sixth Bishop of Durham, and who bestowed the name of his "patrimony" upon the extensive property of the See. The ruins of the monastery upon Holy Island betoken great antiquity. Lindisfarne is not properly an island, but rather, as the venerable Bede has termed it, a semi-isle; for, although surrounded by the sea at full tide, the ebb leaves the sands dry between it and the opposite coast of Northumberland, from which it is about three miles distant.

p. 97.

*A Saxon princess once did dwell,
The lovely Edelred.*

She was the daughter of King Oswy, who, in gratitude to Heaven for the great victory which he won in 655, against Penda, the Pagan King

of Mercia, dedicated Edelfleda, then but a year old, to the service of God in the monastery of Whitby, of which St Hilda was then abbess. She afterwards adorned the place of her education with great magnificence

p. 97.

—of thousand snakes, each one
Was changed into a coil of stone,
When holy Hilda pray'd ;

* * * * *
They told, how sea-fowls' pinions fail,
As over Whitby's towers they sail.

These two miracles are much insisted upon by all ancient writers who have occasion to mention either Whitby or St Hilda. The relics of the snakes which infested the precincts of the convent, and were, at the abbess's prayer, not only beheaded, but petrified, are still found about the rocks, and are termed by Protestant fossilists, *Ammonites*.

The other miracle is thus mentioned by Camden: "It is also ascribed to the power of her sanctity, that these wild geese, which, in the winter, fly in great flocks to the lakes and rivers unfrozen in the southern parts, to the great amazement of every one, fall down suddenly upon the ground, when they are in their flight over certain neighbouring fields hereabouts: a relation I should not have made, if I had not received it from several credible men. But those who are less inclined to heed superstition attribute it to some occult quality in the ground, and to somewhat of antipathy between it and the geese, such as they say is betwixt wolves and scyllarocks: For that such hidden tendencies and aversions, as we call sympathies and antipathies, are implanted in many things by provident Nature for the preservation of them, is a thing so evident that everybody grants it."

p. 97.

His body's resting-place of old,
How oft their patron changed, they told.

St Cuthbert was, in the choice of his sepulchre, one of the most mutable and unreasonable saints in the Calendar. He died A.D. 686, in a hermitage upon the Farne Islands, having resigned the bishopric of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, about two years before. His body, after being carried about from place to place, was ultimately brought to a place named Wardlaw, or Wardilaw. Here the saint chose his place of residence; and all who have seen Durham, must admit that, if difficult in his choice, he evinced taste in at length fixing it. It is said that the Northumbrian Catholics still keep secret the precise spot of the saint's sepulture, which is only entrusted to three persons at a time. When one dies, the survivors associate to them, in his room, a person judged fit to be the depository of so valuable a secret.

p. 97.

Even Scotland's dauntless King, and heir, &c.
Before his standard fled.

Every one has heard, that when David I., with his son Henry, invaded Northumberland in 1136, the English host marched against them under the holy banner of St Cuthbert; to the efficacy of which was imputed the great victory they obtained in the bloody battle of Northallerton, or Cuton-moor. The conquerors were at least as much indebted to the jealousy and intractability of the different tribes who composed David's army; among whom, as mentioned in the text, were the Galwegians, the Britons of Strath-Clyde, the men of Teviotdale and Lothian, with many Norman and German warriors, who asserted the cause of the Empress Maud.

p. 98.

'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
And turn'd the Conqueror back again.

Cuthbert, we have seen, had no great reason to spare the Danes, when opportunity offered. Accordingly, I find, in Simeon of Durham, that the saint appeared in a vision to Alfred, when lurking in the marshes of Glastonbury, and promised him assistance and victory over his heathen

enemies; a consolation which, as was reasonable, Alfred, after the victory of Ashdown, rewarded by a royal offering at the shrine of the saint. As to William the Conqueror, the terror spread before his army, when he marched to punish the revolt of the Northumbrians, in 1096, had forced the monks to fly once more to Holy Island with the body of the saint. It was, however, replaced before William left the north; and to balance accounts, the Conqueror having intimated an indiscreet curiosity to view the saint's body, he was, while in the act of commanding the shrine to be opened, seized with heat and sickness, accompanied with such a panic-terror, that, notwithstanding there was a sumptuous dinner prepared for him, he fled without eating a morsel (which the monkish historian seems to have thought no small part both of the miracle and the penance), and never drew his bridle till he got to the river Tees.

p. 98. *Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The sea-born beads that bear his name.*

Although we do not learn that Cuthbert was, during his life, such an artificer as Dunstan, his brother in sanctity, yet, since his death, he has acquired the reputation of forging those *Entrochi* which are found among the rocks of Holy Island, and pass there by the name of St Cuthbert's Beads. While at this task, he is supposed to sit during the night upon a certain rock, and use another as his anvil. This story was perhaps credited in former days; at least the saint's legend contains some not more probable.

p. 98. *Old Colwulf.*

Colwulf, or Colwulf, King of Northumberland, flourished in the eighth century. He was a man of some learning; for the venerable Bede dedicates to him his "Ecclesiastical History." He abdicated the throne about 738, and retired to Holy Island, where he died in the odour of sanctity.

p. 99. *Tynemouth's haughty Prioress.*

That there was an ancient priory at Tynemouth is certain. Its ruins are situated on a high rocky point; and, doubtless, many a vow was made to the shrine by the distressed mariners who drove towards the iron-bound coast of Northumberland in stormy weather. It was anciently a nunnery; for Virca, abbess of Tynemouth, presented St Cuthbert (yet alive) with a rare winding-sheet, in emulation of a holy lady called Tuda, who had sent him a coffin.

p. 101. *On those the wall was to enclose,
Alive, within the tomb.*

It is well known that the religious, who broke their vows of chastity, were subjected to the same penalty as the Roman vestals in a similar case. A small niche, sufficient to enclose their bodies, was made in the massive wall of the convent; a slender pittance of food and water was deposited in it; and the awful words, *VADE IN PACE*, were the signal for immuring the criminal. It is not likely that, in latter times, this punishment was often resorted to; but, among the ruins of the Abbey of Coldingham, were some years ago discovered the remains of a female skeleton, which, from the shape of the niche, and position of the figure, seemed to be that of an immured nun.

p. 102. *The village inn.*

The accommodations of a Scottish hostlerie, or inn, in the 16th century, may be collected from Dunbar's admirable tale of "The Friars of Berwick." Simon Lawder, "the gay ostler," seems to have lived very comfortably; and his wife decorated her person with a scarlet kirtle, and a belt of silk and silver, and rings upon her fingers, and feasted her paramour with rabbits, capons, partridges, and Bourdeaux wine. At

least, if the Scottish inns were not good, it was not for want of encouragement from the legislature, who, so early as the reign of James I., not only enacted, that in all boroughs and fairs there be hostellaries, having stables and chambers, and provision for man and horse, but by another statute, ordained that no man, travelling on horse or foot, should presume to lodge anywhere except in these hostellaries: and that no person, save innkeepers, should receive such travellers, under the penalty of forty shillings, for exercising such hospitality. But in spite of these provident enactments, the Scottish hostels are but indifferent, and strangers continue to find reception in the houses of individuals.

p. 114. *The death of a dear friend.*

Among other omens to which faithful credit is given among the Scottish peasantry, is what is called the "dead-bell," explained, by my friend James Hogg, to be that tinkling in the ears which the country people regard as the secret intelligence of some friend's decease.

p. 116. *The Goblin-Hall.*

A vaulted hall under the ancient castle of Gifford or Yester, the construction of which has from a very remote period been ascribed to magic. The Statistical Account of the Parish of Garvald and Baro gives the following account of the present state of this castle and apartment:—"Upon a peninsula, formed by the water of Hopes on the east, and a large rivulet on the west, stands the ancient castle of Yester. Sir David Dalrymple, in his Annals, relates, that 'Hugh Gifford de Yester died in 1267; that in his castle there was a capacious cavern, formed by magical art, and called in the country Bo-Hall, i. e., Hobgoblin Hall.' A stair of twenty-four steps led down to this apartment, which is a large and spacious hall, with an arched roof; and though it hath stood for so many centuries, and been exposed to the external air for a period of fifty or sixty years, it is still as firm and entire as if it had only stood a few years. From the floor of this hall, another stair of thirty-six steps leads down to a pit which hath a communication with Hopes-water. A great part of the walls of this large and ancient castle are still standing. There is a tradition, that the castle of Yester was the last fortification, in this country, that surrendered to General Gray, sent into Scotland by Protector Somerset."—*Statistical Account*, vol. xiii. I have only to add, that, in 1737, the Goblin-Hall was tenanted by the Marquis of Tweeddale's falconer, as I learn from a poem by Boyse, entitled "Retirement," written upon visiting Yester. It is now rendered inaccessible by the fall of the stair.

p. 117. *There floated Haco's banner trim,
Above Norweyan warriors grim.*

In 1263, Haco, King of Norway, came into the Frith of Clyde with a powerful armament, and made a descent at Largs, in Ayrshire. Here he was encountered and defeated, on 2d October, by Alexander III. Haco retreated to Orkney, where he died soon after this disgrace to his arms. There are still existing, near the place of battle, many barrows, some of which, having been opened, were found, as usual, to contain bones and urns.

p. 117. *Upon his breast a pentacle.*

A pentacle is a piece of fine linen folded with five corners, according to the five senses, and suitably inscribed with characters. This the magician extends towards the spirits which he invokes, when they are stubborn and rebellious, and refuse to be conformable unto the ceremonies and rites of magic.

p. 118. *As born upon that blessed night,
When yawning graves, and dying groans,
Proclaim'd hell's empire overthrowen.*

It is a popular article of faith, that those who are born on Christmas, or Good Friday, have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them. The Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Phillip II. to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him.

p. 119.

*Yet still the knightly spear and shield
The Elfin Warrior doth wield,
Upon the brown hill's breast.*

The following extract from the Essay upon the Fairy Superstitions, in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," will shew whence many of the particulars of the combat between Alexander III. and the Goblin Knight are derived:—

Gervase of Tilbury (*Otia Imperial. ap. Script. rer. Brunsvic*) relates the following popular story concerning a fairy knight:—"Osbert, a bold and powerful baron, visited a noble family in the vicinity of Wandlebury, in the bishopric of Ely. Among other stories related in the social circle of his friends, who, according to custom, amused each other by repeating ancient tales and traditions, he was informed that if any knight unattended, entered an adjacent plain by moonlight, and challenged an adversary to appear, he would be immediately encountered by a spirit in the form of a knight. Osbert resolved to make the experiment, and set out, attended by a single squire, whom he ordered to remain without the limits of the plain, which was surrounded by an ancient entrenchment. On repeating the challenge, he was instantly assailed by an adversary, whom he quickly unhorsed, and seized the reins of his steed. During this operation, his ghostly opponent sprung up, and darting his spear, like a javelin, at Osbert, wounded him in the thigh. Osbert returned in triumph with the horse, which he committed to the care of his servants. The horse was of a sable colour, as well as his whole accoutrements, and apparently of great beauty and vigour. He remained with his keeper till cock-crowing, when, with eyes flashing fire, he reared, spurned the ground, and vanished. On disarming himself, Osbert perceived that he was wounded, and that one of his steel boots was full of blood." Gervase adds, that "as long as he lived, the scar of his wound opened afresh on the anniversary of the eve on which he encountered the spirit." Less fortunate was the gallant Bohemian knight, who, travelling by night with a single companion, "came in sight of a fairy host, arrayed under displayed banners. Despising the remonstrances of his friend, the knight pricked forward to break a lance with a champion, who advanced from the ranks apparently in defiance. His companion beheld the Bohemian overthrown, horse and man, by his aerial adversary; and returning to the spot next morning, he found the mangled corpses of the knight and steed."—*Hierarchy of Blessed Angels.*

Besides the instances of Elfin chivalry above quoted, many others might be alleged in support of employing fairy machinery in this manner. The forest of Glenmore, in the North Highlands, is believed to be haunted by a spirit called *Lham-dearg*, in the array of an ancient warrior, having a bloody hand, from which he takes his name. He insists upon those with whom he meets doing battle with him; and the clergyman, who makes up an account of the district, extant in the Macfarlane MS. in the Advocates' Library, gravely assures us, that, in his time, *Lham-dearg* fought with three brothers whom he met in his walk, none of whom long survived the ghostly conflict. Barclay, in his "Euphormion," gives a singular account of an officer who had ventured, with his servant, rather to intrude upon a haunted house in a town in Flanders, than to put up with worse quarters elsewhere. After taking the usual precautions of providing fires, lights, and arms, they watched till midnight, when behold! the severed arm of a man dropped from the ceiling; this was followed by the legs, the other arm, the trunk, and the head of the body, all separately. The members rolled together, united themselves in the presence of the astonished soldiers, and formed a gigantic warrior, who defied them both to combat. Their blows, although they penetrated the

body and amputated the limbs of their strange antagonist, had, as the reader may easily believe, little effect on an enemy who possessed such powers of self-union; nor did his efforts make more effectual impression upon them. How the combat terminated I do not exactly remember, and I have not the book by me; but I think the spirit made to the intruders on his mansion the usual proposal, that they should renounce their redemption; which being declined, he was obliged to retract.

The northern champions of old were accustomed peculiarly to search for and delight in, encounters with such military spectres. See a whole chapter on the subject, in BARTHOLINUS, *De Causis contemptæ Mortis a Danis*, p. 253.

p. 124. *Close to the hut no more his own,
Close to the aid he sought in rain,
The morn may find the stiffen'd swain.*

I cannot help here mentioning, that, on the night in which these lines were written, suggested, as they were, by a sudden fall of snow, beginning after sunset, an unfortunate man perished exactly in the manner here described, and his body was next morning found close to his own house.

p. 127. *Friar Rush.*

Alias, "Will o' the Wisp." This personage is a strolling demon, or *esprit follet*, who, once upon a time, got admittance into a monastery as a scullion, and played the monks many pranks. He was also a sort of Robin Goodfellow, and Jack o' Lanthorn. It is in allusion to this mischievous demon that Milton's clown speaks,—

"She was pinch'd, and pull'd, she said,
And he by *Friar's lanthorn* led."

p. 130. *Crichton Castle.*

A large ruinous castle on the banks of the Tyne, about ten miles from Edinburgh. It was built at different times, and with a very differing regard to splendour and accommodation. The oldest part of the building is a narrow keep, or tower, such as formed the mansion of a lesser Scottish baron; but so many additions have been made to it, that there is now a large court-yard, surrounded by buildings of different ages. The eastern front of the court is raised above a portico, and decorated with entablatures, bearing anchors. All the stones of this front are cut into diamond facets, the angular projections of which have an uncommonly rich appearance. The inside of this part of the building appears to have contained a gallery of great length and uncommon elegance. Access was given to it by a magnificent staircase, now quite destroyed. The soffits are ornamented with twining cordage and rosettes, and the whole seems to have been far more splendid than was usual in Scottish castles. The castle belonged originally to the Chancellor, Sir William Crichton, and probably owed to him its first enlargement, as well as its being taken by the Earl of Douglas, who imputed to Crichton's counsels the death of his predecessor, Earl William, beheaded in Edinburgh Castle, with his brother, in 1440. It is said to have been totally demolished on that occasion; but the present state of the ruin shows the contrary. In 1483, it was garrisoned by Lord Crichton, then its proprietor, against King James III., whose displeasure he had incurred by seducing his sister Margaret, in revenge, it is said, for the monarch having dishonoured his bed. From the Crichton family the castle passed to that of the Hepburns, Earls of Bothwell; and when the forfeitures of Stewart, the last Earl of Bothwell, were divided, the barony and castle of Crichton fell to the share of the Earl of Buccleuch. They were afterwards the property of the Pringles of Clifton, and are now that of Sir John Callander, Baronet. It were to be wished the proprietor would take a little pains to preserve these splendid remains of antiquity, which are at present used as a fold for sheep, and wintering cattle; although, perhaps, there are very

few ruins in Scotland which display so well the style and beauty of ancient castle-architecture. The castle of Crichton has a dungeon-vault, called the *Mossy More*. The epithet, which is not uncommonly applied to the prisons of other old castles in Scotland, is of Saracenic origin. It occurs twice in the "*Epistolæ Itinerariæ*" of Tollin:—"*Carcer subterraneus, sive, ut Mauri appellant MAZMORRA,*" p. 147; and again—"*Coguntur omnes Captivi sub noctem in ergastula subterranea, que Turcæ Algerani vocant MAZMORRAS,*" p. 243. The same word applies to the dungeons of the ancient Moorish castles in Spain, and serves to show from what nation the Gothic style of castle-building was originally derived.

p. 131.

Earl Adam Hepburn.

He was the second Earl of Bothwell, and fell in the field of Flodden, where, according to an ancient English poet, he distinguished himself by a furious attempt to retrieve the day:—

"Then on the Scottish part, right proud,
The Earl of Bothwell then out brast,
And stepping forth, with stomach good,
Into the enemies' throng he thrast;
And *Bothwell!* *Bothwell!* cried bold,
To cause his souldiers to ensue,
But there he caught a wellcome coll,
The Englishmen straight down him threw,
Thus Haburn through his hardy heart
His fatal fine in conflict found," &c.

Flodden Field, a Poem.

Adam was grandfather to James, Earl of Bothwell, too well known in the history of Queen Mary.

p. 132.

*For that a messenger from heaven
In vain to James had counsel given
Against the English war.*

This story is told by Pitscottie with characteristic simplicity:—

"The King, seeing that France could get no support of him for that time, made a proclamation, full hastily, through all the realm of Scotland, both east and west, south and north, as well in the isles as in the firm land, to all manner of men between sixty and sixteen years, that they should be ready, within twenty days, to pass with him, with forty days' victual, and to meet at the Burrow-muir of Edinburgh, and there to pass forward where he pleased. His proclamations were hastily obeyed, contrary to the Council of Scotland's will; but every man loved his Prince so well, that they would on no ways disobey him; but every man caused make his proclamation so hastily, conform to the charge of the King's proclamation.

"The King came to Lithgow, where he happened to be for the time at the Council, very sad and dolorous, making his devotion to God, to send him good chance and fortune in his voyage. In this meantime there came a man, clad in a blue gown, in at the kirk door, and belted about him in a roll of linen cloth; a pair of brookines* on his feet, to the great of his legs; with all other hose and clothes conform thereto; but he had nothing on his head, but ayde† red yellow hair behind, and on his haffets,‡ which wane down to his shoulders; but his forehead was bald and bare. He seemed to be a man of two-and-fifty years, with a great pike staff in his hand, and came first forward among the lords, crying and speering§ for the King, saying, he desired to speak with him. While, at the last, he came where the King was sitting in the desk at his prayers; but when he saw the King; he made him little reverence or salutation, but leaped down groffing on the desk before him, and said to him in this manner, as after follows:—'Sir King, my mother hath sent me to you, desiring you not to pass, at this time, where thou art purposed; for if thou does, thou wilt not fare well in thy journey, nor none that passeth with thee. Further, she bade thee mell|| with no woman, nor use their counsel, nor let them touch thy body, nor thou theirs; for if thou do it, thou wilt be confounded and brought to shame.'

"By this man had spoken thir words unto the King's grace, the evening-song was near done, and the King paused on thir words, studying to give him an answer; but, in the meantime, before the King's eyes, and in the presence of all the lords that were about him for the time, this man vanished away, and could no ways be seen or comprehended, but vanished away as he had been a blink of the sun, or a whip of the whirlwind, and could no more be seen. I heard say, Sir David Lindesay Lyon-herald, and John Inglis the marshal, who were at that time young men, and special servants

* Buskina.

† Long.

‡ Choekes.

§ Asking.

|| Meddle.

to the King's grace, were standing presently beside the King who thought to have laid hands on this man, that they might have speared further things at him: But all for nought; they could not touch him; for he vanished away betwixt them, and was no more seen."

p. 132. *June saw his father's overthrow*

The rebellion against James III. was signalized by the cruel clemency of his son's presence in the hostile army. When the king saw his own banner displayed against him, and his son in the faction of his enemies, he lost the little courage he had ever possessed, fled out of the field, fell from his horse as it started at a woman and water-pitcher, and was slain, it is not well understood by whom. James IV., after the battle, passed to Stirling, and hearing the monks of the chapel-royal deploring the death of his father, their founder, he was seized with deep remorse, which manifested itself in severe penances.

p. 138. *— in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.*

The well-known arms of Scotland. If you will believe Boethius and Buchanan, the double tressure round the shield, mentioned, *counter fleur-de-lysed or lingued and armed azure*, was first assumed by Echanius, King of Scotland, contemporary of Charlemagne, and founder of the celebrated League with France; but later antiquaries make poor Eochy, or Achy, little better than a sort of King of Brentford, whom old Grig (who has also swelled into Gregorius Magnus) associated with himself in the important duty of governing some part of the north-eastern coast of Scotland.

p. 142. *Since first, when conquering York arose,
To Henry meek she gave repose.*

Henry VI., with his queen, his heir, and the chiefs of his family, fled to Scotland after the fatal battle of Towton. Queen Margaret certainly came to Edinburgh, though it seems doubtful whether her husband did so.

p. 144. *The cloth-yard arrows.*

This is no poetical exaggeration. In some of the counties of England, distinguished for archery, shafts of this extraordinary length were actually used. The Scottish, according to Ascham, had a proverb, that every English archer carried under his belt twenty-four Scots, in allusion to his bundle of unerring shafts.

p. 145. *He saw the hardy burghers there
March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare.*

The Scottish burgesses were, like yeomen, appointed to be armed with bows and sheaves, sword, buckler, knife, spear, or a good axe instead of a bow, if worth £100; their armour to be of white or bright harness. They were *white hats*, i. e., bright steel caps, without crest or visor. By an act of James IV., their *weapon-schawings* are appointed to be held four times a-year, under the aldermen or bailiffs.

p. 145. *His arms were halbert, axe, or spear.*

Bows and quivers were in vain recommended to the peasantry of Scotland, by repeated statutes; spears and axes seem universally to have been used instead of them. Their defensive armour was the plate-jack, hauberk, or brigantine; and their missile weapons crossbows and culverins. All wore swords of excellent temper, according to Patten; and a voluminous handkerchief round their neck, "not for cold, but for cutting." The mace also was much used in the Scottish army.

p. 147. *A banquet rich, and costly wines.*

In all transactions of great or petty importance, and among whomso-

ever taking place, it would seem that a present of wine was a uniform and indispensable preliminary.

p. 149.

—his iron belt,
That bound his breast in penance pain,
In memory of his father slain.

Few readers need to be reminded of this belt, to the weight of which James added certain ounces every year that he lived. Pitscottie founds his belief, that James was not slain in the battle of Flodden, because the English never had this token of the iron belt to show to any Scottishman. The person and character of James are delineated according to our best historians. His romantic disposition, which led him highly to relish gaiety approaching to licence, was, at the same time, tinged with enthusiastic devotion. These propensities sometimes formed a strange contrast. He was wont, during his fits of devotion, to assume the dress, and conform to the rules, of the order of Franciscans; and when he had thus done penance for some time in Stirling, to plunge again into the tide of pleasure.

p. 149.

Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway.

King James's acquaintance with Lady Heron of Ford did not commence until he marched into England. Our historians impute to the King's infatuated passion the delays which led to the fatal defeat of Flodden.

p. 149.

—the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance;
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand.

"Also the Queen of France wrote a love-letter to the King of Scotland, calling him her love, showing him that she had suffered much rebuke in France for the defending of his honour. She believed surely that he would recompense her again with some of his kingly support in her necessity; that is to say, that he would raise her an army, and come three foot of ground on English ground, for her sake. To that effect she sent him a ring off her finger, with fourteen thousand French crowns to pay his expenses."

p. 152.

Archibald Bell-the-Cat

Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, a man remarkable for strength of body and mind, acquired the popular name of *Bell-the-Cat*, upon the following remarkable occasion:—James III., of whom Pitscottie complains, that he delighted more in music and "policies of building," than in hunting, hawking, and other noble exercises, was so ill advised as to make favourites of his architects and musicians, whom the same historian irreverently terms masons and fiddlers. His nobility, who did not sympathise in the King's respect for the fine arts, were extremely incensed at the honours conferred on those persons, particularly on Cochrane, a mason, who had been created Earl of Marr; and, seizing the opportunity, when, in 1482, the King had convoked the whole array of the country to march against the English, they held a midnight council in the church of Lauder, for the purpose of forcibly removing these minions from the King's person. When all had agreed on the propriety of this measure, Lord Grey told the assembly the apologue of the Mice, who had formed a resolution, that it would be highly advantageous to their community to tie a bell round the cat's neck, that they might hear her approach at a distance; but which public measure unfortunately miscarried, from no mouse being willing to undertake the task of fastening the bell. "I understand the moral," said Angus, "and, that what we propose may not lack execution, I will bell the cat."

p. 152. *Against the war had Angus stood,
And chafed his royal lord.*

Angus was an old man when the war against England was resolved upon. He earnestly spoke against that measure from its commencement; and, on the eve of the battle of Flodden, remonstrated so freely upon the impolicy of fighting, that the King said to him, with scorn and indignation, "If he was afraid, he might go home." The Earl burst into tears at this insupportable insult, and retired accordingly, leaving his sons George, Master of Angus, and Sir William of Glenbervie to command his followers. They were both slain in the battle, with two hundred gentlemen of the name of Douglas. The aged Earl, broken-hearted at the calamities of his house and his country, retired into a religious house, where he died about a year after the field of Flodden.

p. 152. *Then rest you in Tantallon Hold.*

The ruins of Tantallon Castle occupy a high rock projecting into the German Ocean, about two miles east of North Berwick. The building formed a principal castle of the Douglas family, and when the Earl of Angus was banished, in 1527, it continued to hold out against James V. When the Earl of Angus returned from banishment, upon the death of James, he again obtained possession of Tantallon, and it actually afforded refuge to an English ambassador, under circumstances similar to those described in the text. This was no other than the celebrated Sir Ralph Sadler, who resided there for some time under Angus's protection, after the failure of his negotiation for matching the infant Mary with Edward VI.

p. 152. *Their motto on his blade.*

A very ancient sword, in possession of Lord Douglas, bears, among a great deal of flourishing, two hands pointing to a heart, which is placed betwixt them, and the date 1329, being the year in which Bruce charged the Good Lord Douglas to carry his heart to the Holy Land.

p. 155. *Martin Swart.*

The name of this German general is preserved by that of the field of battle, which is called, after him, Swart-moor. There were songs about him long current in England.—See Dissertation prefixed to *Ritson's Ancient Songs*, 1792, p. lxi.

p. 158. *Dun-Edin's Cross.*

The Cross of Edinburgh was an ancient and curious structure. The lower part was an octagonal tower, sixteen feet in diameter, and about fifteen feet high; it is still preserved at Drum, near Edinburgh.

p. 158. *This awful summons came.*

This supernatural citation is mentioned by all our Scottish historians. It was, probably, like the apparition at Linlithgow, an attempt, by those averse to the war, to impose upon the superstitious temper of James IV.

p. 164. *————— the savage Dane
At Iol more deep the mead did drain.*

The Iol of the heathen Danes (a word still applied to Christmas in Scotland) was solemnized with great festivity. The humour of the Danes at table displayed itself in pelting each other with bones.

p. 165. *On Christmas Eve.*

In Roman Catholic countries, mass is never said at night, except on Christmas eve.

p. 167.

The Highlander ———
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,
If ask'd to tell a fairy tale.

The *Daoine shì*, *Men of Peace*, of the Scottish Highlanders, rather resemble the Scandinavian *Duergar* than the English Fairies. Notwithstanding their name, they are, if not absolutely malevolent, at least peevish, discontented, and apt to do mischief on slight provocation. The belief of their existence is deeply impressed on the Highlanders, who think they are particularly offended at mortals who talk of them, who wear their favourite colour, green, or in any respect interfere with their affairs. This is especially to be avoided on a Friday, when, whether as dedicated to Venus, with whom, in Germany, this subterraneous people are held nearly connected, or for a more solemn reason, they are more active, and possessed of greater power. Some curious particulars concerning the popular superstitions of the Highlanders may be found in Dr Graham's Picturesque Sketches of Perthshire.

p. 168.

The towers of Franchémont.

The Journal of the friend to whom the Fourth Canto of the Poem is inscribed, furnished me with the following account of a striking superstition:—

"Passed the pretty little village of Franchémont (near Spaw), with the romantic ruins of the old castle of the Counts of that name. The road leads through many beautiful vales on a rising ground; at the extremity of one of them stands the ancient castle, now the subject of many superstitious legends. It is firmly believed by the neighbouring peasantry, that the last Baron of Franchémont deposited, in one of the vaults of the castle, a ponderous chest, containing an immense treasure in gold and silver, which, by some magic spell, was intrusted to the care of the Devil, who is constantly found sitting on the chest in the shape of a huntsman. Any one adventurous enough to touch the chest is instantly seized with the palsy. Upon one occasion, a priest of noted piety was brought to the vault: he used all the arts of exorcism to persuade his infernal majesty to vacate his seat, but in vain; the huntsman remained immovable. At last, moved by the earnestness of the priest, he told him that he would agree to resign the chest, if the exorciser would sign his name with blood. But the priest understood his meaning, and refused, as by that act he would have delivered over his soul to the Devil. Yet if anybody can discover the mystic words used by the person who deposited the treasure, and pronounce them, the fiend must instantly decamp. I had many stories of a similar nature from a peasant, who had himself seen the Devil in the shape of a great cat."

p. 176.

——— *the huge and sweeping brand*
Which wont of yore, in battle fray,
His foemen's limbs to shred away,
As wood-knife lops the sapling spray.

The Earl of Angus had strength and personal activity corresponding to his courage. Spens of Kilspindie, a favourite of James IV., having spoken of him lightly, the Earl met him while hawking, and compelling him to single combat, at one blow cut asunder his thigh-bone, and killed him on the spot. But ere he could obtain James's pardon for this slaughter, Angus was obliged to yield his castle of Hermitage, in exchange for that of Bothwell, which was some diminution to the family greatness. The sword with which he struck so remarkable a blow, was presented by his descendant James, Earl of Morton, afterwards Regent of Scotland, to Lord Lindesay of the Byres, when he defied Bothwell to single combat on Carberry Hill.

p. 178.

And hopes thou hence unscathed to go?—
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!—
Up drawbridge, grooms!—what, Warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall.

This ebullition of violence in the potent Earl of Angus is not without its example in the real history of the house of Douglas, whose chieftains possessed the ferocity, with the heroic virtues, of a savage state. The most curious instance occurred in the case of Maclellan, Tutor of Bombay,

who, having refused to acknowledge the pre-eminence claimed by Douglas over the gentlemen and barons of Galloway, was seized and imprisoned by the Earl, in his castle of the Thrieve, on the borders of Kirkcudbrightshire. Sir Patrick Gray, commander of King James the Second's guard, was uncle to the Tutor of Bombay, and obtained from the King "a sweet letter of supplication," praying the Earl to deliver his prisoner into Gray's hand. When Sir Patrick arrived at the castle, he was received with all the honour due to a favourite servant of the King's household; but while he was at dinner, the Earl, who suspected his errand, caused his prisoner to be led forth and beheaded. After dinner, Sir Patrick presented the King's letter to the Earl, who received it with great affectation of reverence; "and took him by the hand, and led him forth to the green, where the gentleman was lying dead, and showed him the manner, and said, 'Sir Patrick, you are come a little too late; yonder is your sister's son lying, but he wants the head: take his body, and do with it what you will.'—Sir Patrick answered again, with a sore heart, and said, 'My lord, if ye have taken from him his head, dispone upon the body as ye please;' and with that called for his horse, and leaped thereon; and when he was on horseback, he said to the Earl in this manner, 'My lord, if I live, you shall be rewarded for your labours that you have used at this time, according to your demerits.'

"At this saying the Earl was highly offended, and cried for horse. Sir Patrick, seeing the Earl's fury, spurred his horse, but he was chased near Edinburgh, ere they left him; and had it not been his led horse was so tried and good, he had been taken."—*Pittscottie's History*.

p. 178. *A letter forged!—Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed!*

Lest the reader should partake of the Earl's astonishment, and consider the crime as inconsistent with the manners of the period, I have to remind him of the numerous forgeries (partly executed by a female assistant) devised by Robert of Artois, to forward his suit against the Countess Matilda; which, being detected, occasioned his flight into England, and proved the remote cause of Edward the Third's memorable wars in France. John Harding, also, was expressly hired by Edward VI. to forge such documents as might appear to establish the claim of fealty asserted over Scotland by the English monarchs.

p. 182. *Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray.*

The reader cannot here expect a full account of the battle of Flodden; but, so far as is necessary to understand the romance, I beg to remind him, that, when the English army, by their skilful countermarch, were fairly placed between King James and his own country, the Scottish monarch resolved to fight; and, setting fire to his tents, descended from the ridge of Flodden to secure the neighbouring eminence of Brankstone, on which that village is built. Thus the two armies met, almost without seeing each other. The English army advanced in four divisions. On the right, which first engaged, were the sons of Earl Surrey, namely, Thomas Howard, the Admiral of England, and Sir Edmund, the Knight-Marshal of the army. The centre was commanded by Surrey in person; the left wing by Sir Edward Stanley, with the men of Lancashire, and of the palatinate of Chester. Lord Dacre, with a large body of horse, formed a reserve. When the smoke, which the wind had driven between the armies, was somewhat dispersed, they perceived the Scots, who had moved down the hill in a similar order of battle, and in deep silence. The Earls of Huntly and of Home commanded their left wing, and charged Sir Edmund Howard with such success as entirely to defeat his part of the English right wing. The Admiral, however, stood firm; and Dacre advancing to his support with the reserve of cavalry, probably between the interval of the divisions commanded by the brothers Howard, appears to have kept the victors in effectual check. Home's men, chiefly Borderers, began to pillage the baggage of both armies; and their

leader is branded by the Scottish historians with negligence or treachery. On the other hand, Huntly, on whom they bestow many encomiums, is said by the English historians to have left the field after the first charge. Meanwhile the Admiral, whose flank these chiefs ought to have attacked, availed himself of their inactivity, and pushed forward against another large division of the Scottish army in his front, headed by the Earls of Crawford and Montrose, both of whom were slain, and their forces routed. On the left, the success of the English was yet more decisive; for the Scottish right wing, consisting of undisciplined Highlanders, commanded by Lennox and Argyle, was unable to sustain the charge of Sir Edward Stanley, and especially the severe execution of the Lancashire archers. The King and Surrey, who commanded the respective centres of their armies, were meanwhile engaged in close and dubious conflict. James, surrounded by the flower of his kingdom, and impatient of the galling discharge of arrows, supported also by his reserve under Bothwell, charged with such fury, that the standard of Surrey was in danger. At that critical moment, Stanley, who had routed the left wing of the Scottish, pursued his career of victory, and arrived on the right flank, and in the rear of James's division, which, throwing itself into a circle, disputed the battle till night came on. Surrey then drew back his forces; for the Scottish centre not having been broken, and their left wing being victorious, he yet doubted the event of the field. The Scottish army, however, felt their loss, and abandoned the field of battle in disorder, before dawn. They lost, perhaps, from eight to ten thousand men; but that included the very prime of their nobility, gentry, and even clergy. Scarce a family of eminence but has an ancestor killed at Flodden; and there is no province in Scotland, even at this day, where the battle is mentioned without a sensation of terror and sorrow. The English lost also a great number of men, perhaps within one-third of the vanquished, but they were of inferior note.

p. 183. *Brian Tunstall, stainless knight.*

Sir Brian Tunstall, called, in the romantic language of the time, Tunstall the Undeiled, was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden. Tunstall perhaps derived his epithet of *undeiled* from his white armour and banner, the latter bearing a white cock, about to crow, as well as from his unstained loyalty and knightly faith.

p. 190. *Reckless of life, he desperate fought,
And fell on Flodden plain.*

There can be no doubt that King James fell in the battle of Flodden. He was killed, says the curious French Gazette, within a lance's length of the Earl of Surrey; and the same account adds, that none of his division were made prisoners, though many were killed; a circumstance that testifies the desperation of their resistance. Home was accused, by the popular voice, not only of failing to support the King, but even of having carried him out of the field, and murdered him. Home was the chamberlain of the King, and his prime favourite; he had much to lose (in fact, did lose all) in consequence of James's death, and nothing earthly to gain by that event. Other reports gave a still more romantic turn to the King's fate, and averred that James, weary of greatness after the carnage among his nobles, had gone on a pilgrimage, to merit absolution for the death of his father, and the breach of his oath of amity to Henry. In particular, it was objected to the English that they could never shew the token of the iron belt. They produce a better evidence, the monarch's sword and dagger, which are still preserved in the Herald's College in London. An unhewn column marks the spot where James fell, still called the King's Stone.

p. 190. *The fair cathedral storm'd and took.*

This storm of Lichfield cathedral, which had been garrisoned on the part of the King, took place in the Great Civil War. Lord Brook, who

with Sir John Gill, commanded the assailants, was shot with a musket-ball through the vizor of his helmet. The royalists remarked, that he was killed by a shot fired from St Chad's cathedral, and upon St Chad's Day, and received his death-wound in the very eye with which, he had said, he had hoped to see the ruin of all the cathedrals in England.

NOTES TO THE LADY OF THE LAKE

196. ————*the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern, where, 'tis told,
A giant made his den of old.*

UA-VAR, as the name is pronounced, or more properly *Uaighmor*, is a mountain to the north-east of the village of Callander in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den, or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said, by tradition, to have been the abode of a giant. In latter times, it was the refuge of robbers and banditti, who have been only extirpated within these forty or fifty years.

- p. 197. *Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed.*

"The hounds which we call Saint Hubert's hounds are commonly all blacke, yet neuertheless, the race is so mingled at these days, that we find them of all colours. These are the hounds which the abbots of St Hubert hane always kept some of their race or kind, in honour or remembrance of the saint, which was a hunter with S. Enstace."

- p. 198. *For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whinyard drew.*

When the stag turned to bay, the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon and killing or disabling the desperate animal. At certain times of the year this was held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horn being then deemed poisonous, and more dangerous than one from the tusks of a boar, as the old rhyme testifies—

"If thou be hurt with hart, it brings thee to thy bier,
But barber's hand will boar's hurt heal, therefore thou
need'st not fear.

- p. 200. *Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.*

There is now a road which cuts through the barrier of the pass here described.

- p. 201. *To meet with Highland plunderers here
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.*

The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighbourhood of Loch Katrine, were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their Lowland neighbours.

- p. 204. *A grey-hair'd sire, whose eye intent
Was on the vision'd future bent.*

If force of evidence could authorise us to believe facts inconsistent with

the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favour of the existence of the Second-sight. It is called in Gaelic *Taishitaraugh*, from *Taish*, an unreal or shadowy appearance; and those possessed of the faculty are called *Taishatrin*, which may be aptly translated visionaries. Martin, a steady believer in the second-sight, gives the following account of it:—

“The second-sight is a singular faculty of seeing an otherwise invisible object without any previous means used by the person that used it for that end: the vision makes such a lively impression upon the seers, that they neither see nor think of anything else, except the vision, as long as it continues; and then they appear pensive or jovial, according to the object that was represented to them.

“At the sight of a vision, the eyelids of the person are erected, and the eyes continue staring until the object vanish. This is obvious to others who are by when the persons happen to see a vision, and occurred more than once to my own observation, and to others that were with me.”

To these particulars innumerable examples might be added, all attested by grave and credible authors. But, in despite of evidence which neither Bacon, Boyle, nor Johnson, were able to resist, the *Taish*, with all its visionary properties, seems to be now universally abandoned to the use of poetry. The exquisitely beautiful poem of Lochiel will at once occur to the recollection of every reader.

p. 210. *Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel grey.*

Highland chieftains, to a late period, retained in their service the bard, as a family officer.

p. 213. *Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.*

The downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus during the reign of James V. is the event alluded to in the text.

p. 214. *In Holy-Rood a Knight he slew.*

This was by no means an uncommon occurrence in the Court of Scotland; nay, the presence of the sovereign himself scarcely restrained the ferocious and inveterate feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility.

p. 214. *The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disown'd by every noble peer.*

The exiled state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and subsequent passages. The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate, that numerous as their allies were, and disregarded as the regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them, unless under the strictest and closest disguise.

p. 215. *Maronnan's cell.*

The parish of Kilmaronock, at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond, derives its name from a cell or chapel, dedicated to Saint Maronock, or Marnock, or Maronnan, about whose sanctity very little is now remembered. There is a fountain devoted to him in the same parish; but its virtues, like the merits of its patron, have fallen into oblivion.

p. 216. *For Tine-man forged by fairy lore.*

Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises, that he acquired the epithet of *TINE-MAN*, because he *tined*, or lost, his followers in every battle which he fought.

p. 216. *Did, self-uncabbarred, foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.*

The ancient warriors were accustomed to deduce omens from their

swords, especially from such as were supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill.

p. 218. *Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroc!*

Besides his ordinary name and surname, which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan, and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt, or Arsaces to those of Parthia.

p. 228. *And while the Fiery Cross glanced, like a meteor, round.*

When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the *Fiery Cross*, also *Crean Tarigh*, or the *Cross of Shame*, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal despatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms and accoutrements, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear, suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal.

p. 229. *That monk, of savage form and face.*

The state of religion in the middle ages afforded considerable facilities for those whose mode of life excluded them from regular worship, to secure, nevertheless, the ghostly assistance of confessors, perfectly willing to adapt the nature of their doctrine to the necessities and peculiar circumstances of their flock. Robin Hood, it is well known, had his celebrated domestic chaplain, Friar Tuck.

p. 229. *Yet ne'er again, to braid her hair,
The virgin snood did Alice wear.*

The *snood*, or riband, with which a Scottish lass braided her hair, had an emblematical signification, and applied to her maiden character. It was exchanged for the *curch*, *toy*, or *coil*, when she passed, by marriage, into the matron state. But if the damsel was so unfortunate as to lose pretensions to the name of maiden, without gaining a right to that of matron, she was neither permitted to use the snood, nor advanced to the graver dignity of the *curch*. In old Scottish songs there occur many allusions to such misfortune; as in the old words to the popular tune of "Over the muir among the heather:"—

"Down among the broom, the broom,
Down among the broom, my dearie,
The lassie lost her silken snood,
That gard her greet till she was wearie."

p. 231. *The fatal Ben-Shie's boding scream.*

Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelary, or rather a domestic, spirit attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimated, by its wailings, any approaching disaster

p. 231. *Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast,
Of charming steeds, careering fast.*

*Along Benharrou's shingly side,
Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride.*

A presage of the kind alluded to in the text is still believed to announce death to the ancient Highland family of M'Lean of Lochbuay.

p. 244. *The Taghairm call'd; by which, afar,
Our sires foresaw the events of war.*

The Highlanders had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the *Taghairm*. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited in some wild situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation, he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for inspiration.

p. 245. *— that huge cliff, whose ample verge
Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.*

A rock so named, in the Forest of Glenfinlas, is said to have afforded refuge to an outlaw, who was supplied with provisions by a woman, who lowered them down from the brink of the precipice above. His water he procured for himself, by letting down a fagon tied to a string into the black pool beneath the fall.

p. 246. *Which spills the foremost foeman's life,
That party conquers in the strife.*

It is said that the Highlanders under Montrose were so deeply imbued with this notion, that, on the morning of the battle of Tippermoor, they murdered a defenceless herdsman, whom they found in the fields, merely to secure an advantage of so much consequence to their party.

p. 243. *Or who comes here to chase the deer,
Beloved of our Elfin Queen?*

Fairies, if not positively malevolent, are capricious, and easily offended. Like other proprietors of forests, they are peculiarly jealous of their rights of *vert* and *venison*. This jealousy was also an attribute of the northern *Duergar*, or dwarfs; to many of whose distinctions the fairies seem to have succeeded

p. 249. *Or who may dare on wold to wear
The fairies' fatal green.*

The *Daoine Shi'*, or Men of Peace, were supposed to take offence when any mortals ventured to assume their favourite colour, green. Indeed, green is held in Scotland to be unlucky to particular tribes and counties. The Caithness men, who hold this belief, allege as a reason, that their bands wore that colour when they were cut off at the battle of Flodden. Green is also disliked by those of the name of Ogilvy; but more especially is it held fatal to the whole clan of Grahame. An aged gentleman of that name, when his horse fell in a fox-chase, accounted for it at once by observing, that the whipcord attached to his lash was of this unlucky colour.

p. 249. *For thou wert christen'd man.*

The elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to those mortals who had fallen into their power a certain precedence, founded upon this distinction.

p. 258. *Who ever reck'd, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapp'd or slain?*

St John actually used this illustration when engaged in confuting the plea of law proposed for the unfortunate Earl of Strafford:—"It was

true, we gave laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of chase; but it never was accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey."

- p. 262. *Not then claim'd sovereignty his due,
While Albany, with feeble hand,
Held borrow'd truncheon of command.*

There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds, and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily, and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh bloodshed.

- p. 265. *Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.*

This incident, like some other passages in the poem, illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exertions of generosity, and of cruel revenge and perfidy.

- p. 265. *On Bochastle the mouldering lines.*

The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor, called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence, called the *Dun* of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some entrenchments, which have been thought Roman. There is adjacent to Callander, a sweet villa, the residence of Captain Fairfoul, entitled the Roman Camp.

- p. 266. *See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd, like thyself, with single brand.*

The duellists of former times did not always stand upon those punctilios respecting equality of arms, which are now judged essential to fair combat. It is true, that in former combats in the lists, the parties were, by the judges of the field, put as nearly as possible in the same circumstances; but in private duel it was often otherwise.

- p. 267. *Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his target he threw.*

A round target of light wood, covered with strong leather, and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops, they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside, and used the broadsword against the encumbered soldier.

- p. 270. *The burghers hold their sports to-day.*

Every burgh of Scotland, of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn *play*, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic exercises of the period.

- p. 278. *These drew not for their fields the sword,
Like tenants of a feudal lord.*

The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them, for military service by themselves and their tenants. The patriarchal influence exercised by the heads of clans in the Highlands and Borders was of a different nature.

and sometimes at variance with feudal principles. It flowed from the *Patria Potestas*, exercised by the chieftain as representing the original father of the whole name, and was often obeyed in contradiction to the feudal superior.

p. 280. *Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!*
Get thee an ape, and trudge the land,
The leader of a juggler band.

The jongleurs, or jugglers, used to call in the aid of various assistants, to render these performances as captivating as possible. The glee-maiden was a necessary attendant. Her duty was tumbling and dancing; and therefore the Anglo-Saxon version of Saint Mark's Gospel states Herodias to have vaulted or tumbled before King Herod.

p. 284. *That stirring air that peals on high,*
O'er Dermid's race our victory.—
Strike it!

There are several instances, at least in tradition, of persons so much attached to particular tunes, as to require to hear them on their death-bed. Such an anecdote is mentioned by the late Mr Riddel of Glenriddle, in his collection of Border tunes, respecting an air called the "Dandling of the Bairns," for which a certain Gallovidian laird is said to have evinced this strong mark of partiality.

p. 285. *Battle of Beal an Duine.*

A skirmish actually took place at a pass thus called in the Trosachs, and closed with the remarkable incident mentioned in the text. It was greatly posterior in date to the reign of James V.

p. 292. *And Snowdown's Knight is Scotland's King.*

This discovery will probably remind the reader of the beautiful Arabian tale of *Il Bondocani*. Yet the incident is not borrowed from that elegant story, but from Scottish tradition. James V., of whom we are treating, was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *King of the Commons*. For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to traverse the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises.

p. 293. *Stirling's tower*
Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims.

William of Worcester, who wrote about the middle of the fifteenth century, calls Stirling Castle, Snowdoun.

NOTES TO THE VISION OF DON RODERICK.

- p. 239. *And Cattraeth's glens with voice of triumph rung,
And mystic Merlin harp'd, and grey-hair'd Llywarch sung!*

This locality may startle those readers who do not recollect that much of the ancient poetry preserved in Wales refers less to the history of the Principality to which that name is now limited, than to events which happened in the north-west of England, and south-west of Scotland, where the Britons for a long time made a stand against the Saxons. The battle of Cattraeth, lamented by the celebrated Aneurin, is supposed, by the learned Dr Leyden, to have been fought on the skirts of Ettrick Forest.

- p. 309. *Minchmore's haunted spring.*

A belief in the existence and nocturnal revels of the fairies still lingers among the vulgar in Selkirkshire. A copious fountain upon the ridge of Minchmore, called the Cheese-well, is supposed to be sacred to these fanciful spirits, and it was customary to propitiate them by throwing in something upon passing it. A pin was the usual oblation; and the ceremony is still sometimes practised, though rather in jest than earnest.

- p. 309. *In verse spontaneous chants some favour'd name.*

The flexibility of the Italian and Spanish languages, and perhaps the liveliness of their genius, renders these countries distinguished for the talent of improvisation, which is found even among the lowest of the people. It is mentioned by Baretti and other travellers.

- p. 302. *What! will Don Roderick here till morning stay,
To wear in shrift and prayer the night away?
And are his hours in such dull penance past
For fair Florinda's plunder'd charms to pay?*

Almost all the Spanish historians, as well as the voice of tradition, ascribe the invasion of the Moors to the forcible violation committed by Roderick upon Florinda, called by the Moors, Caba or Cava. She was the daughter of Count Julian, one of the Gothic monarch's principal lieutenants, who, when the crime was perpetrated, was engaged in the defence of Ceuta against the Moors. In his indignation at the ingratitude of his sovereign, and the dishonour of his daughter, Count Julian forgot the duties of a Christian and a patriot, and, forming an alliance with Musa, then the Caliph's lieutenant in Africa, he countenanced the invasion of Spain by a body of Saracens and Africans, commanded by the celebrated Tarik; the issue of which was the defeat and death of Roderick, and the occupation of almost the whole peninsula by the Moors.

- p. 305. *The Teebir war-cry and the Lelie's yell.*

The Teebir (derived from the words *Alla acbar*, God is most mighty) was the original war-cry of the Saracens. It is celebrated by Hughes in the Siege of Damascus:—

“We heard the Teebir: so these Arabs call
Their shout of onset, when with loud appeal,
They challenge Heaven, as if demanding conquest”

The *Lelie*, well known to the Christians during the crusades, is the shout of *Alla illa Alla*, the Mahomedan confession of faith. It is twice used in poetry by my friend Mr W. Stewart Rose, in the romance of Partenopex, and in the Crusade of St Lewis.

- p. 306. *By Heaven, the Moors prevail! the Christians yield!—
Their coward leader gives for flight the sign!*

Count Julian, the father of the injured Florinda, with the connivance and assistance of Oppas, Archbishop of Toledo, invited, in 713, the Saracens into Spain. A considerable army arrived under the command of Tarik, or Tarif, who bequeathed the well-known name of Gibraltar (*Gibei al Tarik*, or the mountain of Tarik) to the place of his landing. He was joined by Count Julian, ravaged Andalusia, and took Seville. In 714, they returned with a still greater force, and Roderick marched into Andalusia at the head of a great army to give them battle.

- p. 308. *When for the light bolero ready stand,
The mozo blithe, with gay muchacha met.*

The bolero is a very light and active dance, much practised by the Spaniards, in which castanets are always used. *Mozo* and *muchacha* are equivalent to our phrase of lad and lass.

- p. 310. *While trumpets rang, and heralds cried, "Castile!"*

The heralds, at the coronation of a Spanish monarch, proclaim his name three times, and repeat three times the word *Castilla*, *Castilla*, *Castilla*; which, with all other ceremonies, was carefully copied in the mock inauguration of Joseph Bonaparte.

- p. 311. *High blazed the war, and long, and far, and wide.*

Those who were disposed to believe that mere virtue and energy are able of themselves to work forth the salvation of an oppressed people, surprised in a moment of confidence, deprived of their officers, armies, and fortresses, who had every means of resistance to seek in the very moment when they were to be made use of, and whom the numerous treasons among the higher orders deprived of confidence in their natural leaders,—those who entertained this enthusiastic but delusive opinion may be pardoned for expressing their disappointment at the protracted warfare in the Peninsula. There are, however, another class of persons, who, having themselves the highest dread or veneration, or something allied to both, for the power of the modern Attila, will nevertheless give the heroidal Spaniards little or no credit for the long, stubborn, and unsubdued resistance of three years to a power before whom their former well-prepared, well-armed, and numerous adversaries fell in the course of as many months. While these gentlemen plead for deference to Bonaparte, and crave

"Respect for his great place, and bid the devil
Be duly honour'd for his burning throne,"

It may not be altogether unreasonable to claim some modification of censure upon those who have been long, and to a great extent successfully, resisting this great enemy of mankind. That the energy of Spain has not uniformly been directed by conduct equal to its vigour, has been too obvious; that her armies, under their complicated disadvantages, have shared the fate of such as were defeated after taking the field with every possible advantage of arms and discipline, is surely not to be wondered at. But that a nation, under the circumstances of repeated discomfiture, internal treason, and the mismanagement incident to a temporary and hastily adopted government, should have wasted, by its stubborn, uniform, and prolonged resistance, myriads after myriads of those soldiers who had overrun the world—that some of its provinces should, like Galicia, after being abandoned by their allies, and overrun

by their enemies, have recovered their freedom by their own unassisted exertions; that others, like Catalonia, undismayed by the treason which betrayed some fortresses, and the force which subdued others, should not only have continued their resistance, but have attained over their victorious enemy a superiority, which is even now enabling them to besiege and retake the places of strength which had been wrested from them, is a tale hitherto untold in the revolutionary war.

p. 312. *They won not Zaragoza, but her children's bloody tomb.*

The interesting account of Mr Vaughan has made most readers acquainted with the first siege of Zaragoza. The last and fatal siege of that gallant and devoted city is detailed with great eloquence and precision in the "Edinburgh Annual Register" for 1809—a work in which the affairs of Spain have been treated of with attention corresponding to their deep interest, and to the peculiar sources of information open to the historian.

p. 314. *The Vault of Destiny.*

Before finally dismissing the enchanted cavern of Don Roderick, it may be noticed, that the legend occurs in one of Calderon's plays, entitled, *La Virgin del Sagrario*. The scene opens with the noise of the chase, and Recisundo, a predecessor of Roderick upon the Gothic throne, enters pursuing a stag. The animal assumes the form of a man, and defies the king to enter the cave, which forms the bottom of the scene, and engage with him in single combat. The king accepts the challenge, and they engage accordingly, but without advantage on either side, which induces the Genie to inform Recisundo, that he is not the monarch for whom the adventure of the enchanted cavern is reserved, and he proceeds to predict the downfall of the Gothic monarchy, and of the Christian religion, which shall attend the discovery of its mysteries. Recisundo, appalled by these prophecies, orders the cavern to be secured by a gate and bolts of iron. In the second part of the same play, we are informed that Don Roderick had removed the barrier, and transgressed the prohibition of his ancestor, and had been apprised by the prodigies which he discovered of the approaching ruin of his kingdom.

p. 315. *While downward on the land his legions press,
Before them it was rich with vine and flock,
And smiled like Eden in her summer dress;—
Behind their wasteful march, a reeking wilderness.*

I have ventured to apply to the movements of the French army that sublime passage in the prophecies of Joel, which seems applicable to them in more respects than that I have adopted in the text. One would think their ravages, their military appointments, the terror which they spread among invaded nations, their military discipline, their arts of political intrigue and deceit, were distinctly pointed out in the following verses of Scripture:—

"2. A day of darknesse and of gloominesse, a day of clouds and of thick darknesse, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong, there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the yeares of many generations. 3. A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth: the land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behinde them a desolate wilderness, yea, and nothing shall escape them. 4. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses and as horsemen, so shall they runne. 5. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains, shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battel array. 6. Before their face shall the people be much pained; all faces shall gather blacknesse. 7. They shall run like mighty men, they shall climb the wall like men of warre, and they shall march every one in his wayes, and they shall not break their ranks. 8. Neither shall one thrust another, they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. 9. They shall run to and fro in the citie; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses: they shall enter in at the windows like a thief. 10. The earth shall quake before them, the heavens shall tremble, the sunne and the moon shall be dark, and the starres shall withdraw their shining.

In verse 20th also, which announces the retreat of the northern army, described in such dreadful colours, into a "land barren and desolate," and the dishonour with which God afflicted them for having "magnified themselves to do great things," there are particulars not inapplicable to the retreat of Massena;—Divine Providence having, in all ages, attached disgrace as the natural punishment of cruelty and presumption.

- p. 316. *The rudest sentinel, in Britain born,
With horror paused to view the havoc done,
Gave his poor crust to feed some wretch forlorn.*

Even the unexampled gallantry of the British army in the campaign of 1810-11, although they never fought but to conquer, will do them less honour in history than their humanity, attentive to soften to the utmost of their power the horrors which war, in its mildest aspect, must always inflict upon the defenceless inhabitants of the country in which it is waged, and which, on this occasion, were tenfold augmented by the barbarous cruelties of the French. Soup-kitchens were established by subscription among the officers, wherever the troops were quartered for any length of time. The commissaries contributed the heads, feet, &c. of the cattle slaughtered for the soldiery; rice, vegetables, and bread, where it could be had, were purchased by the officers. Fifty or sixty starving peasants were daily fed at one of these regimental establishments, and carried home the relics to their famished households. The emaciated wretches, who could not crawl from weakness, were speedily employed in pruning their vines. While pursuing Massena, the soldiers evinced the same spirit of humanity. Is it possible to know such facts without feeling a sort of confidence, that those who so well deserve victory are most likely to obtain it?—It is not the least of Lord Wellington's military merits, that the slightest disposition towards marauding meets immediate punishment. Independently of all moral obligation, the army which is most orderly in a friendly country, has always proved most formidable to an armed enemy.

- p. 316. *Vainglorious fugitive!*

The French conducted this memorable retreat with much of the *fanfarronade* proper to their country, by which they attempt to impose upon others, and perhaps on themselves, a belief that they are triumphing in the very moment of their discomfiture. On the 30th March 1811, their rear-guard was overtaken near Pega by the British cavalry. Being well posted, and conceiving themselves safe from infantry, (who were indeed many miles in the rear,) and from artillery, they indulged themselves in parading their bands of music, and actually performed "God save the King." Their minstrelsy was, however, deranged by the undesired accompaniment of the British horse-artillery, on whose part in the concert they had not calculated. The surprise was sudden, and the rout complete; for the artillery and cavalry did execution upon them for about four miles, pursuing at the gallop as often as they got beyond the range of the guns.

- p. 317. *Vainly thy squadrons hide Assuava's plain,
And front the flying thunders as they roar,
With frantic charge and tenfold odds, in vain!*

In the severe action of Fuentes d'Honoro, upon 5th May, 1811, the grand mass of the French cavalry attacked the right of the British position, covered by two guns of the horse-artillery, and two squadrons of cavalry. After suffering considerably from the fire of the guns, which annoyed them in every attempt at formation, the enemy turned their wrath entirely towards them, distributed brandy among their troopers, and advanced to carry the field pieces with the desperation of drunken fury. They were in nowise checked by the heavy loss which they sustained in this daring attempt, but closed, and fairly mingled with the British cavalry, to whom they bore the proportion of ten to one. Cap-

tain Ramsay, who commanded the two guns, dismissed them at the gallop, and putting himself at the head of the mounted artillerymen, ordered them to fall upon the French, sabre-in-hand. This very unexpected conversion of artillerymen into dragoons, contributed greatly to the defeat of the enemy; and the appearance of some small reinforcements, notwithstanding the immense disproportion of force, put them to absolute rout. A colonel or major of their cavalry, and many prisoners, (almost all intoxicated,) remained in our possession.

p. 317. *And what avails thee that, for Cameron slain,
Wild from his plaided ranks the yell was given?*

The gallant Colonel Cameron was wounded mortally during the desperate contest in the streets of the village called Fuentes d'Honoro. He fell at the head of his native Highlanders, the 71st and 79th, who raised a dreadful shriek of grief and rage. They charged, with irresistible fury, the finest body of French grenadiers ever seen, being a part of Bonaparte's selected guard. The officer who led the French, a man remarkable for stature and symmetry, was killed on the spot. The Frenchman who stepped out of his rank to take aim at Colonel Cameron was also bayoneted, pierced with a thousand wounds, and almost torn to pieces by the furious Highlanders, who, under the command of Colonel Cadogan, bore the enemy out of the contested ground at the point of the bayonet. Massena pays my countrymen a singular compliment in his account of the attack and defence of this village, in which he says the British lost many officers, and Scotch.

p. 317. *Roused them to emulate their fathers' praise,
Temper'd their headlong rage, their courage steel'd,
And raised fair Lusitania's fallen shield.*

Nothing during the war of Portugal seems, to a distinct observer, more deserving of praise, than the self-devotion of Field-Marshal Beresford, who was contented to undertake all the hazard of obloquy which might have been founded upon any miscarriage in the highly important experiment of training the Portuguese troops to an improved state of discipline. In exposing his military reputation to the censure of imprudence from the most moderate, and all manner of unutterable calumnies from the ignorant and malignant, he placed at stake the dearest pledge which a military man had to offer, and nothing but the deepest conviction of the high and essential importance attached to success can be supposed an adequate motive. How great the chance of miscarriage was supposed, may be estimated from the general opinion of officers of unquestioned talents and experience, possessed of every opportunity of information; how completely the experiment has succeeded, and how much the spirit and patriotism of our ancient allies had been underrated, is evident, not only from those victories in which they have borne a distinguished share, but from the liberal and highly honourable manner in which these opinions have been retracted. The success of this plan, with all its important consequences, we owe to the indefatigable exertions of Field-Marshal Beresford.

p. 318. *—— a race renown'd of old,
Whose war-cry oft has waked the battle-swallow.
* * * * *
—— the conquering shout of Græme.*

This stanza alludes to the various achievements of the warlike family of Græme, or Grahame. They are said, by tradition, to have descended from the Scottish chief, under whose command his countrymen stormed the wall built by the Emperor Severus between the Friths of Forth and Clyde, the fragments of which are still popularly called Græme's Dyke. Sir John the Græme, "the hardy wight, and wise," is well known as the friend of Sir William Wallace. Alderne, Kilsythe, and Tibbermuir, were scenes of the victories of the heroic Marquis of Montrose. The pass

of Killiecrankie is famous for the action between King William's forces and the Highlanders in 1689,

"Where glad Dundee in faint buzzas expired."

It is seldom that one line can number so many heroes, and yet more rare when it can appeal to the glory of a living descendant in support of its ancient renown.

The allusions to the private history and character of General Grahame may be illustrated by referring to the eloquent and affecting speech of Mr Sheridan, upon the vote of thanks to the Victor of Barosa.

NOTES TO ROKEBY

p. 321. *On Barnard's towers, and Tees's stream, &c.*

"Barnard Castle," saith Old Leland, "standeth stately upon Tees." It is founded upon a very high bank, and its ruins impend over the river, including within the area a circuit of six acres and upwards. This once magnificent fortress derives its name from its founder, Barnard Balliol, the ancestor of the short and unfortunate dynasty of that name, which succeeded to the Scottish throne under the patronage of Edward I. and Edward III. Balliol's Tower, afterwards mentioned in the poem, is a round tower of great size, situated at the western extremity of the building. It bears marks of great antiquity, and was remarkable for the curious construction of its vaulted roof, which has been lately greatly injured by the operations of some persons, to whom the tower has been leased for the purpose of making patent shot! The prospect from the top of Balliol's tower commands a rich and magnificent view of the wooded valley of the Tees.

p. 323. *The morion's plumes his visage hide,
And the buff-coat, in ample fold,
Mantles his form's gigantic mould.*

The use of complete suits of armour was fallen into disuse during the Civil War, though they were still worn by leaders of rank and importance. "In the reign of King James I.," says our military antiquary, "no great alterations were made in the article of defensive armour, except that the buff-coat, or jerkin, which was originally worn under the cuirass, now became frequently a substitute for it, it having been found that a good buff leather would of itself resist the stroke of a sword; this, however, only occasionally took place among the light-armed cavalry and infantry, complete suits of armour being still used among the heavy horse. Buff-coats continued to be worn by the city trained-bands till within the memory of persons now living, so that defensive armour may, in some measure, be said to have terminated in the same materials with which it began, that is, the skins of animals, or leather."—*Grose's Military Antiquities.*

p. 324. *On his dark face a scorching elime,
And toul, had done the work of time.*

In this character I have attempted to sketch one of those West India adventurers who, during the course of the seventeenth century, were popularly known by the name of Buccaneers. The successes of the English in the predatory incursions upon Spanish America, during the reign of Elizabeth, had never been forgotten; and, from that period

downward, the exploits of Drake and Raleigh were imitated, upon a smaller scale indeed, but with equally desperate valour, by small bands of pirates, gathered from all nations, but chiefly French and English.

p. 325.

— On Marston heath,
Met, front to front, the ranks of death.

The well-known and desperate battle of Long-Marston Moor, which terminated so unfortunately for the cause of Charles, commenced under very different auspices. Prince Rupert had marched with an army of 20,000 men for the relief of York, then besieged by Sir Thomas Fairfax, at the head of the Parliamentary army, and the Earl of Leven, with the Scottish auxiliary forces. In this he so completely succeeded, that he compelled the besiegers to retreat to Marston Moor, a large open plain, about eight miles distant from the city. Thither they were followed by the Prince, who had now united to his army the garrison of York, probably not less than ten thousand men strong, under the gallant Marquis (then Earl) of Newcastle. Whitelocke has recorded, with much impartiality, the following particulars of this eventful day:—"The right wing of the Parliament was commanded by Sir Thomas Fairfax, and consisted of all his horse, and three regiments of the Scots horse; the left wing was commanded by the Earl of Manchester, and Colonel Cromwell. One body of their foot was commanded by Lord Fairfax, and consisted of his foot, and two brigades of the Scots foot for reserve; and the main body of the rest of the foot was commanded by General Leven.

"The right wing of the Prince's army was commanded by the Earl of Newcastle; the left wing by the Prince himself; and the main body by General Goring, Sir Charles Lucas, and Major-General Porter. Thus were both sides drawn up into battalia.

"July 3d, 1644. In this posture both armies faced each other, and about seven o'clock in the morning the fight began between them. The Prince, with his left wing, fell on the Parliament's right wing, routed them, and pursued them a great way; the like did General Goring, Lucas, and Porter, upon the Parliament's main body. The three generals giving all for lost, hasted out of the field, and many of their soldiers fled, and threw down their arms; the King's forces too eagerly following them, the victory, now almost achieved by them, was again snatched out of their hands. For Colonel Cromwell with the brave regiment of his countrymen, and Sir Thomas Fairfax having rallied some of his horse, fell upon the Prince's right wing, where the Earl of Newcastle was, and routed them; and the rest of their companions rallying, they fell altogether upon the divided bodies of Rupert and Goring, and totally dispersed them, and obtained a complete victory, after three hours' fight.

"From this battle and the pursuit, some reckon were buried 7000 Englishmen; all agree that above 3000 of the Prince's men were slain in the battle, besides those in the chase, and 3000 prisoners taken, many of their chief officers, twenty-five pieces of ordnance, forty-seven colours, 10,000 arms, two waggons of carabins and pistols, 130 barrels of powder, and all their bag and baggage."—*Whitelocke's Memoirs* fol. p. 89. Lond. 1682.

p. 329.

*Monckton and Mitton told the news,
How troops of Roundheads choked the Ouse.*

Monckton and Mitton are villages near the river Ouse, and not very distant from the field of battle. The particulars of the action were violently disputed at the time.

p. 330.

*With his barb'd horse, fresh tidings say,
Stout Cromwell has redeem'd the day.*

Cromwell, with his regiment of cuirassiers, had a principal share in turning the fate of the day at Marston Moor; which was equally matter of triumph to the Independents, and of grief and heart-burning to the Presbyterians and to the Scottish.

p. 330.

*Do not my native dæles prolong
Of Percy Rede the tragic song,
Train'd forward to his bloody fall,
By Girsunfield, that treacherous Hall?*

In a poem entitled "The Lay of the Reedwater Minstrel," Newcastle, 1809, this tale, with many others peculiar to the valley of the Reed, is

commemorated:—"The particulars of the traditional story of Percy Reed of Troughend, and the Halls of Girsonfield, the author had from a descendant of the family of Reed. From his account, it appears that Percival Reed, Esquire, a keeper of Reedsdale, was betrayed by the Halls (hence denominated the false-hearted Ha's) to a band of moss-troopers of the name of Crosier, who slew him at Bartinghope, near the source of the Reed.

"The Halls were, after the murder of Percy Keed, held in such universal abhorrence and contempt by the inhabitants of Reedsdale, for their cowardly and treacherous behaviour, that they were obliged to leave the country." In another passage, we are informed that the ghost of the Injured Borderer is supposed to haunt the banks of a brook called the Pringle. These Reeds of Troughend were a very ancient family, as may be conjectured from their deriving their surname from the river on which they had their mansion. An epitaph on one of their tombs affirms that the family held their lands of Troughend, which are situated on the Reed, nearly opposite to Otterburn, for the incredible space of nine hundred years.

p. 330.

*And near the spot that gave me name,
The moated mound of Risingham,
Where Reed upon her margin sees
Sweet Woodburne's cottages and trees,
Some ancient sculptor's art has shown,
An outlaw's image on the stone.*

Risingham, upon the river Reed, near the beautiful hamlet of Woodburn, is an ancient Roman station, formerly called Habitancum. Camden says that in his time the popular account bore, that it had been the abode of a deity, or giant, called Magon; and appeals, in support of this tradition, as well as to the etymology of Risingham, or Reisenham, which signifies, in German, the habitation of the giants, to two Roman altars taken out of the river, inscribed, DEO MOGONTI CADENOREM. About half a mile distant from Risingham, upon an eminence covered with scattered birch-trees and fragments of rock, there is cut upon a large rock, in *alto relievo*, a remarkable figure called Robin of Risingham, or Robin of Reedsdale. It presents a hunter, with his bow raised in one hand, and in the other what seems to be a hare. There is a quiver at the back of the figure, and he is dressed in a long coat, or kirtle, coming down to the knees, and meeting close, with a girdle bound round him. Dr Horseley, who saw all monuments of antiquity with Roman eyes, inclines to think this figure a Roman archer: and certainly the bow is rather of the ancient size than of that which was so formidable in the hand of the English archers of the middle ages. But the rudeness of the whole figure prevents our founding strongly upon mere inaccuracy of proportion. The popular tradition is, that it represents a giant, whose brother resided at Woodburn, and he himself at Risingham. It adds, that they subsisted by hunting, and that one of them, finding the game become too scarce to support them, poisoned his companion, in whose memory the monument was engraved. What strange and tragic circumstance may be concealed under this legend, or whether it is utterly apocryphal, it is now impossible to discover.

p. 330.

— do thou revere
The statutes of the Bucanier.

The "statutes of the Bucaniers" were, in reality, more equitable than could have been expected from the state of society under which they had been formed. They chiefly related, as may readily be conjectured, to the distribution and inheritance of their plunder.

When the expedition was completed, the fund of prize-money acquired was thrown together, each party taking his oath that he had retained or concealed no part of the common atock. If any one transgressed in this important particular, the punishment was, his being set ashore on some

desert key or island, to shift for himself as he could. The owners of the vessel had then their share assigned for the expenses of the outfit. These were generally old pirates, settled at Tobago, Jamaica, St Domingo, or some other French or English settlement. The surgeon's and carpenter's salaries, with the price of provisions and ammunition, were also defrayed. Then followed the compensation due to the maimed and wounded, rated according to the damage they had sustained; as six hundred pieces of eight, or six slaves, for the loss of an arm or leg, and so in proportion.

p. 337.

The course of Tees.

The view from Barnard Castle commands the rich and magnificent valley of Tees. Immediately adjacent to the river, the banks are very thickly wooded. The finest view of its romantic course is from a handsome modern-built bridge over the Tees, by the late Mr Morritt of Rokeby.

p. 339.

—————*the mound,*
Raised by that Legion long renown'd.

Close behind the George Inn at Greta Bridge, there is a well-preserved Roman encampment, surrounded with a triple ditch, lying between the river Greta and a brook called the Tutta.

p. 339.

Rokeby's turrets high.

This ancient manor long gave name to a family by whom it is said to have been possessed from the Conquest downward, and who are at different times distinguished in history. It was the Baron of Rokeby who finally defeated the insurrection of the Earl of Northumberland, *tempore Hen. IV.* The Rokeby, or Rokesby family, continued to be distinguished until the great Civil War, when, having embraced the cause of Charles I., they suffered severely by fines and confiscations. The estate then passed from its ancient possessors to the family of the Robinsons, from whom it was purchased by the father of my valued friend, the present proprietor.

p. 342.

Of Erick's cap and Elmo's light.

Ericus, King of Sweden, in his time was held second to none in the magical art; and he was so familiar with the evil spirits, which he exceedingly adored, that which way soever he turned his cap, the wind would presently blow that way. From this occasion he was called Windy Cap.

p. 342.

The Demon Frigate.

This is an allusion to a well-known nautical superstition concerning a fantastic vessel, called by sailors the Flying Dutchman, and supposed to be seen about the latitude of the Cape of Good Hope. She is distinguished from earthly vessels by bearing a press of sail when all others are unable, from stress of weather, to show an inch of canvass. The cause of her wandering is not altogether certain; but the general account is, that she was originally a vessel loaded with great wealth, on board of which some horrid act of murder and piracy had been committed; that the plague broke out among the wicked crew who had perpetrated the crime, and that they sailed in vain from port to port, offering, as the price of shelter, the whole of their ill-gotten wealth; that they were excluded from every harbour for fear of the contagion which was devouring them; and that, as a punishment of their crimes, the apparition of the ship still continues to haunt those seas in which the catastrophe took place, and is considered by the mariners as the worst of all possible omens.

p. 342

—————*By some desert isle or key.*

What contributed much to the security of the Buccaneers about the

Windward Islands, was the great number of little islets, called in that country *keys*. These are small sandy patches, appearing just above the surface of the ocean, covered only with a few bushes and weeds, but sometimes affording springs of water, and, in general, much frequented by turtle. Such little uninhabited spots afforded the pirates good harbours, either for refitting or for the purpose of ambush; they were occasionally the hiding-place of their treasure, and often afforded a shelter to themselves. As many of the atrocities which they practised on their prisoners were committed in such spots, there are some of these keys which even now have an indifferent reputation among seamen, and where they are with difficulty prevailed on to remain ashore at night, on account of the visionary terrors incident to places which have been thus contaminated.

p. 344. *Before the gate of Mortham stood.*

The castle of Mortham, which Leland terms "Mr Rokesby's Place, in *ripa citer*, scant a quarter of a mile from Greta Bridge, and not a quarter of a mile beneath into Tees," is a picturesque tower, surrounded by buildings of different ages, now converted into a farm-house and offices.

Its situation is eminently beautiful, occupying a high bank, at the bottom of which the Greta winds out of the dark, narrow, and romantic dell, which the text has attempted to describe, and flows onward through a more open valley to meet the Tees about a quarter of a mile from the castle.

p. 345. *There dig, and tomb your precious heap;
And bid the dead your treasure keep.*

If time did not permit the Buccaneers to lavish away their plunder in their usual debaucheries, they were wont to hide it, with many superstitious solemnities, in the desert islands and keys which they frequented, and where much treasure, whose lawless owners perished without reclaiming it, is still supposed to be concealed. The most cruel of mankind are often the most superstitious; and these pirates are said to have recourse to a horrid ritual, in order to secure an unearthly guardian to their treasures. They killed a Negro or Spaniard, and buried him with the treasure, believing that his spirit would haunt the spot, and terrify away all intruders. I cannot produce any other authority on which this custom is ascribed to them than that of maritime tradition, which is, however, amply sufficient for the purposes of poetry.

p. 345. *And force him, as by magic spell,
In his despite his guilt to tell.*

All who are conversant with the administration of criminal justice, must remember many occasions in which malefactors appear to have conducted themselves with a species of infatuation, either by making unnecessary confidences respecting their guilt, or by sudden and involuntary allusions to circumstances by which it could not fail to be exposed. A remarkable instance occurred in the celebrated case of Eugene Aram. A skeleton being found near Knaresborough, was supposed, by the persons who gathered around the spot, to be the remains of one Clarke, who had disappeared some years before, under circumstances leading to a suspicion of his having been murdered. One Houseman, who had mingled in the crowd, suddenly said, while looking at the skeleton, and hearing the opinion which was buzzed around, "That is no more Dan Clarke's bone than it is mine!"—a sentiment expressed so positively, and with such peculiarity of manner, as to lead all who heard him to infer that he must necessarily know where the real body had been interred. Accordingly, being apprehended, he confessed having assisted Eugene Aram to murder Clarke, and to hide his body in Saint Robert's Cave. It happened to the author himself, while conversing with a person accused of an atrocious crime, for the purpose of rendering him professional assistance upon his trial, to hear the prisoner, after the most solemn and reiterated protestations that he was guiltless,

suddenly, and, as it were, involuntarily, in the course of his communications, make such an admission as was altogether incompatible with innocence.

p. 350.

*Nobles and knights, so proud of late,
Must fine for freedom and estate.*

* * * * *

*Right heavy shall his ransom be,
Unless that maid compound with thee!*

After the battle of Marston Moor, the Earl of Newcastle retired beyond sea in disgust, and many of his followers laid down their arms and made the best composition they could with the Committees of Parliament. Fines were imposed upon them in proportion to their estates and degrees of delinquency, and these fines were often bestowed upon such persons as had deserved well of the commons. In some circumstances it happened that the oppressed cavaliers were fain to form family alliances with some powerful person among the triumphant party.

p. 351

*In Redesdale his youth had heard
Each art her wily dalesmen dared.*

"What manner of cattle-stealers they are that inhabit these valleys in the marches of both kingdoms, John Lesly, a Scotche man himself, and Bishop of Ross, will inform yon. They sally out of their own borders in the night, in troops, through unfrequented by-ways and many intricate windings. All the day-time they refresh themselves and their horses in lurking holes they had pitched upon before, till they arrive in the dark in those places they have a design upon. As soon as they have seized upon the booty, they, in like manner, return home in the night, through blind ways, and fetching many a compass. The more skilful any captain is to pass through those wild deserts, crooked turnings, and deep precipices, in the thickest mists, his reputation is the greater, and he is looked upon as a man of an excellent head."—*Camden's Britannia*.

The inhabitants of the valleys of Tyne and Reed were, in ancient times, so inordinately addicted to these depredations, that in 1564, the incorporated Merchant-adventurers of Newcastle made a law that none born in these districts should be admitted apprentice. The inhabitants are stated to be so generally addicted to rapine, that no faith should be reposed in those proceeding from "such lewde and wicked progenitors." This regulation continued to stand unrepealed until 1771. A beggar, in an old play, describes himself as "born in Redesdale, in Northumberland, and come of a wight-riding surname called the Robsons, good honest men and true, *saving a little shifting for their living, God help them!*"—a description which would have applied to most Borderers on both sides.

p. 353.

*Hiding his face, lest foemen spy
The sparkle of his swarthy eye.*

After one of the recent battles in which the Irish rebels were defeated, one of their most active leaders was found in a bog, in which he was immersed up to the shoulders, while his head was concealed by an impending ledge of turf. Being detected and seized, notwithstanding his precaution, he became solicitous to know how his retreat had been discovered. "I caught," answered the Sutherland Highlander, by whom he was taken, "the sparkle of your eye." Those who are accustomed to mark hares upon their form usually discover them by the same circumstance.

p. 356.

*Of my marauding on the clowns
Of Calverley and Bradford downs.*

The troops of the King, when they first took the field, were as well disciplined as could be expected from circumstances. But as the circumstances of Charles became less favourable, and his funds for regularly paying his forces decreased, habits of military licence prevailed

among them in greater excess. Lacy the player, who served his master during the Civil War, brought out, after the Restoration, a piece called *The Old Troop*, in which he seems to have commemorated some real incidents which occurred in his military career. The moral of the whole is comprehended in a rebuke given to the lieutenant, whose disorders in the country are said to prejudice the King's cause more than his courage in the field could recompense. The piece is by no means void of farcical humour.

p. 357. ——— *Brignall's woods, and Scargill's, wave
L'en now, o'er many a sister cave.*

The banks of the Greta, below Rutherford Bridge, abound in seams of greyish slate, which are wrought in some places to a very great depth underground, thus forming artificial caverns, which, when the seam has been exhausted, are gradually hidden by the underwood which grows in profusion upon the romantic banks of the river. In times of public confusion, they might be well adapted to the purposes of banditti.

p. 361. ——— *When Spain waged warfare with our land.*

There was a short war with Spain in 1625-6, which will be found to agree pretty well with the chronology of the poem. But probably Bertram held an opinion very common among the maritime heroes of the age, that "there was no peace beyond the Line." The Spanish *guardacostas* were constantly employed in aggressions upon the trade and settlements of the English and French; and, by their own severities, gave room for the system of *Buccaneering*, at first adopted in self-defence and retaliation, and afterwards persevered in from habit and thirst of plunder.

p. 362. ——— *our comrades' strife*

The laws of the *Buccaneers*, and their successors the *Pirates*, however severe and equitable, were, like other laws, often set aside by the stronger party. Their quarrels about the division of the spoil fill their history, and they as frequently arose out of mere frolic, or the tyrannical humour of their chiefs. An anecdote of Teach, (called *Blackbeard*), shows that their habitual indifference for human life extended to their companions, as well as their enemies and captives:

"One night, drinking in his cabin with Hands, the pilot, and another man, *Blackbeard*, without any provocation, privately draws out a small pair of pistols, and cocks them under the table, which, being perceived by the man, he withdrew upon deck, leaving Hands, the pilot, and the captain together. When the pistols were ready, he blew out the candles, and crossing his hands, discharged them at his company. Hands, the master, was shot through the knee, and lamed for life; the other pistol did no execution."—*Johnson's History of Pirates.*

p. 366. ——— *Rere-cross on Stanmore.*

This is a fragment of an old cross called *Rere-cross* or *Re-cross*, with its pediment surrounded by an intrenchment, upon the very summit of the waste ridge of *Stanmore*, near a small house of entertainment called the *Spittal*. The situation of the cross, and the care taken to defend it, seem to indicate that it was intended for a land-mark of importance.

p. 366. ——— *When Denmark's raven soar'd on high,
Triumphant through Northumbrian sky.*

About the year of God 866, the Danes, under their celebrated leaders *Ingvar*, and *Hubba*, sons, it is said, of the still more celebrated *Regnar Lodbrog*, invaded *Northumberland*, bringing with them the magical standard, so often mentioned in poetry, called *REAFEN*, or *Rumfan*, from its bearing the figure of a raven.

- p. 369. *Who has not heard how brave O'Neale
In English blood imbrued his steel?*

The O'Neale here meant (for more than one succeeded to the chieftainship during the reign of Elizabeth), was Hugh, the grandson of Con O'Neale, called Con Bacco, or the Lame. His father, Matthew O'Kelly, was illegitimate, and, being the son of a blacksmith's wife, was usually called Matthew the Blacksmith. His father, nevertheless, destituted his succession to him; and he was created, by Elizabeth, Baron of Dunganon. Upon the death of Con Bacco, this Matthew was slain by his brother. Hugh narrowly escaped the same fate, and was protected by the English. Shane O'Neale, his uncle, called Shane Dymas, was succeeded by Turrough Lynogh O'Neale; after whose death Hugh, having assumed the chieftainship, became nearly as formidable to the English as any by whom it had been possessed. He rebelled repeatedly, and as often made submissions, of which it was usually a condition that he should not any longer assume the title of O'Neale; in lieu of which he was created Earl of Tyrone. But this condition he never observed longer than until the pressure of superior force was withdrawn. His baffling the gallant Earl of Essex in the field, and overreaching him in a treaty, was the induction to that nobleman's tragedy. Lord Mountjoy succeeded in finally subjngating O'Neale; but it was not till the succession of James, to whom he made personal submission, and was received with civility at court.

- p. 369. *But chief arose his victor pride,
When that brave Marshal fought and died.*

The chief victory which Tyrone obtained over the English was in a battle fought near Blackwater, while he besieged a fort garrisoned by the English, which commanded the passes into his country.

- p. 369. *The Tanist he to great O'Neale.*

"*Eudox.* What is that which you call Tanist and Tanistry? These be names and terms never heard of nor known to us.

"*Iren.* It is a custom amongst all the Irish, that presently after the death of one of their chiefe lords or captaines, they doe presently assemble themselves to a place generally appointed and knowne unto them, to choose another in his stead, where they do nominate and elect, for the most part not the eldest sonne, nor any of the children of the lord deceased, but the next to him in blood, that is, the eldest and worthiest, as commonly the next brother unto him, if he have any, or the next cousin, or so forth, as any is elder in that kindred or sept; and then next to them doe they choose the next of the blood to be Tanist, who shall next succeed him in the said captainry, if he live thereunto."—*Spenser's View of the State of Ireland*, apud Works, Lond. 1805.

The Tanist, therefore, of O'Neale, was the heir-apparent of his power. This kind of succession appears also to have regulated, in very remote times, the succession to the crown of Scotland. It would have been imprudent, if not impossible, to have asserted a minor's right of succession in those stormy days, when the principles of policy were summed up in my friend Mr Wordsworth's lines:—

— "the good old rule
Sufficeth them; the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

- o. 370. *With wild majestic port and tone,
Like envoy of some barbarous throne.*

The Irish chiefs, in their intercourse with the English, and with each other, were wont to assume the language and style of independent royalty.

p. 373. *Great Nial of the Pledges Nine.*

Neal Naighvallach, or Of the Nine Hostages, is said to have been Monarch of all Ireland, during the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century. He exercised a predatory warfare on the coast of England and of Bretagne, or Armorica; and from the latter country brought off the celebrated Saint Patrick, a youth of sixteen, among other captives, whom he transported to Ireland.

p. 373 *Shane-Dymas Wild.*

This Shane-Dymas, or John the Wanton, held the title and power of O'Neale in the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign, against whom he rebelled repeatedly.

"This chieftain is handed down to us as the most proud and profligate man on earth. He was immoderately addicted to women and wine. He is said to have had 200 tuns of wine at once in his cellar at Dandram, but usquebaugh was his favourite liquor. He spared neither age nor condition of the fair sex. Altho' so illiterate that he could not write, he was not destitute of address, his understanding was strong, and his courage daring. He had 600 men for his guard; 4000 foot, 1000 horse for the field. He claimed superiority over all the lords of Ulster, and called himself king thereof."—*Camden's Britannia.*

p. 374. ——— *his page—the next degree,
In that old time, to chivalry.*

Originally the order of chivalry embraced three ranks:—1. The Page; 2. The Squire; 3. The Knight; a gradation which seems to have been imitated in the mystery of free-masonry. But, before the reign of Charles I., the custom of serving as a squire had fallen into disuse, though the order of the page was still, to a certain degree, in observance.

p. 383. *Seem'd half abandon'd to decay.*

The ancient castle of Rokeby stood exactly upon the site of the present mansion, by which a part of its walls is enclosed. It is surrounded by a profusion of fine wood, and the park in which it stands is adorned by the junction of the Greta and of the Tees.

p. 387. *The Filea of O'Neale was he.*

The Filea, or Ollamh Re Dan, was the proper bard, or, as the name literally implies, poet. Each chieftain of distinction had one or more in his service, whose office was usually hereditary.

p. 388. *Ah, Clandeboy! thy friendly floor,
Slieve-Donard's oak shall light no more.*

Clandeboy is a district of Ulster, formerly possessed by the sept of the O'Neales, and Slieve-Donard, a romantic mountain in the same province. The clan was ruined after Tyrone's great rebellion, and their places of abode laid desolate.

p. 389. *Marwood-chase and Toller Hill.*

Marwood-chase is the old park extending along the Durham side of the Tees, attached to Barnard Castle. Toller Hill is an eminence on the Yorkshire side of the river, commanding a superb view of the ruins.

p. 391. *The ancient English minstrel's dress.*

Among the entertainments presented to Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle, was the introduction of a person designed to represent a travelling minstrel, who entertained her with a solemn story out of the Acts of King Arthur. Of this person's dress and appearance Mr Lancham has given us a very accurate account, transferred by Bishop Percy to the preliminary Dissertation on Minstrels, prefixed to his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, vol. 1.

NOTES TO THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

p. 426. *Thy rugged halls, Artornish! rung.*

The ruins of the Castle of Artornish are situated upon a promontory, on the Morven, or mainland side of the Sound of Mull—a name given to the deep arm of the sea which divides that island from the continent. The situation is wild and romantic in the highest degree, having on the one hand a high and precipitous chain of rocks overhanging the sea, and on the other the narrow entrance to the beautiful salt-water lake, called Loch Alline, which is in many places finely fringed with copse-wood. The ruins of Artornish are not now very considerable, and consist chiefly of the remains of an old keep, or tower, with fragments of outward defences. But, in former days, it was a place of great consequence, being one of the principal strongholds, which the Lords of the Isles, during the period of their stormy independence, possessed upon the mainland of Argyleshire.

It is almost opposite to the Bay of Aros, in the Island of Mull, where there was another castle, the occasional residence of the Lords of the Isles.

p. 426. *Rude Heiskar's seal, through surges dark,
Will long pursue the minstrel's bark.*

The seal displays a taste for music, which could scarcely be expected from his habits and local predilections. They will long follow a boat in which any musical instrument is played, and even a tune simply whistled has attractions for them. The Dean of the Isles says of Heiskar, a small uninhabited rock about twelve (Scottish) miles from the Isle of Uist, that an infinite slaughter of seals takes place there.

p. 428. *————— a turret's airy head,
Slender and steep, and battled round,
O'erlook'd dark Mull! thy mighty Sound.*

The Sound of Mull, which divides that island from the continent of Scotland, is one of the most striking scenes which the Hebrides afford to the traveller. Sailing from Oban to Aros, or Tobermory, through a narrow channel, yet deep enough to bear vessels of the largest burden, he has on his left the bold and mountainous shores of Mull; on the right, those of that district of Argyleshire called Morven, or Morvern, successively indented by deep salt-water lochs, running up many miles inland. To the south-eastward arise a prodigious range of mountains, among which Cruachan-Ben is pre-eminent. And to the north-east is the no less huge and picturesque range of the Adnamurchan hills. Many ruinous castles, situated generally upon cliffs, overhanging the ocean, add interest to the scene.

p. 429. *The heir of mighty Somerled.*

Somerled was thane of Argyll, and Lord of the Isles, about the middle of the twelfth century. He seems to have exercised his authority in both capacities, independent of the crown of Scotland, against which he often stood in hostility. He made various incursions upon the western lowlands during the reign of Malcolm IV., and seems to have made

peace with him upon the terms of an independent prince, about the year 1157. In 1164 he resumed the war against Malcolm, and invaded Scotland with a large, but probably a tumultuary army, collected in the isles in the mainland of Argyleshire, and in the neighbouring provinces of Ireland. He was defeated and slain in an engagement with a very inferior force, near Renfrew.

p 429.

Lord of the Isles.

The representative of this independent principality, for such it seems to have been, though acknowledging occasionally the pre-eminence of the Scottish crown, was, at the period of the poem, Angus, called Angus Og; but the name has been, *euphonia gratia*, exchanged for that of Ronald, which frequently occurs in the genealogy. Angus was a protector of Robert Bruce, whom he received in his Castle of Dunnaverty, during the time of his greatest distress.

p. 430.

The House of Lorn.

The House of Lorn was, like the Lord of the Isles, descended from a son of Somerled, slain at Renfrew in 1164. This son obtained the succession of his mainland territories, comprehending the greater part of the three districts of Lorn, in Argyleshire, and of course might rather be considered as petty princes than feudal barons. They assumed the patronymic appellation of Mac-Dougal, by which they are distinguished in the history of the middle ages.

p. 434.

*Awaked before the rushing prow,
The mimic fires of ocean glow,
Those lightnings of the wave.*

The phenomenon called by sailors Sea-fire, is one of the most beautiful and interesting which is witnessed in the Hebrides. At times the ocean appears entirely illuminated around the vessel, and a long train of lambent coruscations are perpetually bursting upon the sides of the vessel, or pursuing her wake through the darkness.

p. 439.

And that keen knight, De Argentine.

Sir Egidius, or Giles de Argentine, was one of the most accomplished knights of the period. He had served in the wars of Henry of Luxemburg with such high reputation, that he was, in popular estimation, the third worthy of the age. Those to whom fame assigned precedence over him were, Henry of Luxemburg himself, and Robert Bruce. Argentine had warred in Palestine, encountered thrice with the Saracens, and had slain two antagonists in each engagement:—an easy matter, he said, for one Christian knight to slay two Pagan dogs.

p 439.

*"Fill me the mighty cup!" he said,
"Erst own'd by royal Somerled."*

A Hebridean drinking-cup, of the most ancient and curious workmanship, has been long preserved in the castle of Dunvegan, in Skye, the romantic seat of Mac-Leod of Macleod, the chief of that ancient and powerful clan. The horn of Rorie More, preserved in the same family, and recorded by Dr Johnson, is not to be compared with this piece of antiquity, which is one of the greatest curiosities in Scotland.

p. 441

*— the rebellious Scottish crew,
Who to Rath-Erin's shelter drew,
With Carrick's outlaw'd Chief!*

It must be remembered by all who have read the Scottish history, that after he had slain Comyn at Dumfries, and asserted his right to the Scottish crown, Robert Bruce was reduced to the greatest extremity by the English and their adherents. He was crowned at Scone by the general

consent of the Scottish barons, but his authority endured but a short time. According to the phrase said to have been used by his wife, he was for that year "a summer king, but not a winter one."

p. 442.

The Brooch of Lorn.

It has been generally mentioned in the preceding notes, that Robert Bruce, after his defeat at Methven, being hard pressed by the English, endeavoured, with the dispirited remnant of his followers, to escape from Breadalbane and the mountains of Perthshire into the Argyleshire Highlands. But he was encountered and repulsed, after a very severe engagement, by the Lord of Lorn. Bruce's personal strength and courage were never displayed to greater advantage than in this conflict. There is a tradition in the family of the Mac-Dougals of Lorn, that their chieftain engaged in personal battle with Bruce himself, while the latter was employed in protecting the retreat of his men; that Mac-Dougal was struck down by the king, whose strength of body was equal to his vigour of mind, and would have been slain on the spot had not two of Lorn's vassals, a father and son, whom tradition terms Mac-Keoch, rescued him, by seizing the mantle of the monarch, and dragging him from above his adversary. Bruce rid himself of these foes by two blows of his redoubted battle-axe, but was so closely pressed by the other followers of Lorn, that he was forced to abandon the mantle, and brooch which fastened it, clasped in the dying grasp of the Mac-Keochs. A studded brooch, said to have been that which King Robert lost upon this occasion, was long preserved in the family of Mac-Dougal, and was lost in a fire which consumed their temporary residence.

p. 436-442

*When Comyn fell beneath the knife,
Of that fell homicide The Bruce.*

*Vain Kirkpatrick's bloody dirk,
Making sure of murder's work*

Every reader must recollect that the proximate cause of Bruce's asserting his right to the crown of Scotland, was the death of John, called the Red Comyn. The causes of this act of violence, equally extraordinary from the high rank both of the perpetrator and sufferer, and from the place where the slaughter was committed, are variously related by the Scottish and English historians, and cannot now be ascertained. The fact that they met at the high altar of the Minorites, or Greyfriar's Church in Dumfries, that their difference broke out into high and insulting language, and that Bruce drew his dagger and stabbed Comyn, is certain. Rushing to the door of the church, Bruce met two powerful barons, Kirkpatrick of Closeburn, and James de Lindsay, who eagerly asked him what tidings? "Bad tidings," answered Bruce; "I doubt I have slain Comyn."—"Doubtest thou?" said Kirkpatrick; "I make sicker," (*i.e.*, sure.) With these words, he and Lindsay rushed into the church, and despatched the wounded Comyn. The Kirkpatricks of Closeburn assumed, in memory of this deed, a hand holding a dagger, with the memorable words, "I make sicker."

p. 442.

*Barendown fled fast away,
Fled the fiery De la Haye.*

These knights are enumerated by Barbour among the small number of Bruce's adherents, who remained in arms with him after the battle of Methven.

p. 447.

*Was 't not enough, to Ronald's bower
I brought thee, like a paramour.*

It was anciently customary in the Highlands to bring the bride to the house of the husband. Nay, in some cases the complaisance was stretched so far, that she remained there upon trial for a twelvemonth; and the bridegroom, even after this period of cohabitation, retained an option of

refusing to fulfil his engagement. It is said that a desperate feud ensued between the clans of Mac-Donald of Sleate and Mac-Leod, owing to the former chief having availed himself of this license to send back to Dunvegan a sister, or daughter of the latter. Mac-Leod, resenting the indignity, observed, that since there was no wedding bonfire, there should be one to solemnise the divorce. Accordingly, he burned and laid waste the territories of Mac-Donald, who retaliated, and a deadly feud, with all its accompaniments, took place in form.

- v. 448. *Since matchless Wallace first had been
In mock'ry crown'd with wreaths of green.*

There is something singularly doubtful about the mode in which Wallace was taken. That he was betrayed to the English is indubitable; and popular fame charges Sir John Menteith with the indelible infamy. "Accursed," says Arnold Blair, "be the day of nativity of John de Menteith, and may his name be struck out of the book of life!" But John de Menteith was all along a zealous favourer of the English interest, and was governor of Dumbarton Castle by commission from Edward the First; and therefore, as the accurate Lord Hailes has observed, could not be the friend and confidant of Wallace, as tradition states him to be. The truth seems to be, that Menteith, thoroughly engaged in the English interest, pursued Wallace closely, and made him prisoner through the treachery of an attendant, whom Peter Langtoft calls Jack Short.

The infamy of seizing Wallace must, therefore, rest between a degenerate Scottish nobleman, the vassal of England, and a domestic, the obscure agent of his treachery; between Sir John Menteith, son of Walter, Earl of Menteith, and the traitor Jack Short.

- p. 443. *Was not the life of Athole shed,
To soothe the tyrant's sicken'd bed?*

John de Strathbogie, Earl of Athole, had attempted to escape out of the kingdom, but a storm cast him upon the coast, when he was taken, sent to London, and executed, with circumstances of great barbarity, being first half strangled, then let down from the gallows while yet alive, barbarously dismembered, and his body burnt. Matthew of Westminster tells us that King Edward, then extremely ill, received great ease from the news that his relative was apprehended—"Quo audito, Rex Angliæ, etsi gravissimo morbo tunc langueret, levius tamen tulit dolorem." To this singular expression the text alludes.

- p. 449. *While I the blessed cross advance,
And expiate this unhappy chance
In Palestine, with sword and lance.*

Bruce uniformly professed, and probably felt, compunction for having violated the sanctuary of the church by the slaughter of Comyn; and finally, in his last hours, in testimony of his faith, penitence, and zeal, he requested James, Lord Douglas, to carry his heart to Jerusalem, to be there deposited in the Holy Sepulchre.

- p. 450. *De Bruce! I rose with purpose dread
To speak my curse upon thy head.*

So soon as the notice of Comyn's slaughter reached Rome, Bruce and his adherents were excommunicated. It was published first by the Archbishop of York, and renewed at different times, particularly by Lamberton, Bishop of St Andrews, in 1308; but it does not appear to have answered the purpose which the English monarch expected. Indeed, for reasons which it may be difficult to trace, the thunders of Rome descended upon the Scottish mountains with less effect than in more fertile countries. Probably the comparative poverty of the benefices occasioned that fewer foreign clergy settled in Scotland; and the interests of the native churchmen were linked with that of their country. Many of

the Scottish prelates, Lambyrton the primate particularly, declared for Bruce, while he was yet under the ban of the church, although he afterwards again changed sides.

p. 450.

*A hunted wanderer on the wild,
On foreign shores a man exiled.*

This is not metaphorical. The echoes of Scotland did actually

“ring

With the bloodhounds that bayed for her fugitive king.”

A very curious and romantic tale is told by Barbour upon this subject, which may be abridged as follows:—

When Bruce had again got footing in Scotland in the spring of 1306, he continued to be in a very weak and precarious condition, gaining, indeed, occasional advantages, but obliged to fly before his enemies whenever they assembled in force. Upon one occasion, while he was lying with a small party in the wilds of Cumnock, in Ayrshire, Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, with his inveterate foe John of Lorn, came against him suddenly with eight hundred Highlanders, besides a large body of men-at-arms. They brought with them a slough-dog, or bloodhound, which, some say, had been once a favourite with the Bruce himself, and therefore was least likely to lose the trace.

Bruce, whose force was under four hundred men, continued to make head against the cavalry, till the men of Lorn had nearly cut off his retreat. Perceiving the danger of his situation, he acted as the celebrated and ill-requited Mina is said to have done in similar circumstances. He divided his force into three parts, appointed a place of rendezvous, and commanded them to retreat by different routes. But when John of Lorn arrived at the spot where they divided, he caused the hound to be put upon the trace, which immediately directed him to the pursuit of that party which Bruce headed. This, therefore, Lorn pursued with his whole force, paying no attention to the others. The king again subdivided his small body into three parts, and with the same result, for the pursuers attached themselves exclusively to that which he led in person. He then caused his followers to disperse, and retained only his foster brother in his company. The slough-dog followed the trace, and, neglecting the others, attached himself and his attendants to the pursuit of the king. Lorn became convinced that his enemy was nearly in his power, and detached five of his most active attendants to follow him, and interrupt his flight. They did so with all the agility of mountaineers. “What aid wilt thou make?” said Bruce to his single attendant, when he saw the five men gain ground on him. “The best I can,” replied his foster-brother. “Then,” said Bruce, “here I make my stand.” The five pursuers came up fast. The king took three to himself, leaving the other two to his foster-brother. He slew the first who encountered him; but observing his foster-brother hard pressed, he sprang to his assistance, and despatched one of his assailants. Leaving him to deal with the survivor, he returned upon the other two, both of whom he slew before his foster-brother had despatched his single antagonist. When this hard encounter was over, with a courtesy which in the whole work marks Bruce’s character, he thanked his foster-brother for his aid. “It likes you to say so,” answered his follower; “but you yourself slew four of the five.”—“True,” said the king, “but only because I had better opportunity than you. They were not apprehensive of me when they saw me encounter three, so I had a moment’s time to spring to thy aid, and to return equally unexpectedly upon my own opponents.”

In the meanwhile Lorn’s party approached rapidly, and the king and his foster-brother betook themselves to a neighbouring wood. Here they sat down, for Bruce was exhausted by fatigue, until the cry of the slough-hound came so near that his foster-brother entreated Bruce to provide for his safety by retreating further. “I have heard,” answered the king, “that whosoever will wade a bowsnot length down a running stream, shall make the slough-hound lose scent. Let us try the experi-

riment, for were yon devilish hound silenced, I should care little for the rest."

Lorn in the meanwhile advanced, and found the bodies of his slain vassals, over whom he made his moan, and threatened the most deadly vengeance. Then he followed the hound to the side of the brook, down which the king had waded a great way. Here the hound was at fault, and John of Lorn, after long attempting in vain to recover Bruce's trace, relinquished the pursuit.

"Others," says Barbour, "affirm, that upon this occasion the king's life was saved by an excellent archer who accompanied him, and who perceiving they would be finally taken by means of the bloodhound, hid himself in a thicket, and shot him with an arrow. In which way," adds the metrical biographer, "this escape happened, I am uncertain, but at that brook the king escaped from his pursuers."

p. 454. *"Alas! dear youth, the unhappy time,"
Answer'd the Bruce, "must bear the crime,
Since guillier far than you,
Even I"—he paused; for Falkirk's woes
Upon his conscious soul arose.*

I have followed the vulgar and inaccurate tradition, that Bruce fought against Wallace, and the array of Scotland, at the fatal battle of Falkirk. The story, which seems to have no better authority than that of Blind Harry, bears, that having made much slaughter during the engagement, he sat down to dine with the conquerors without washing the filthy witness from his hands:—

*"Fasting he was, and had been in great need,
Blooded were all his weapons and his weed;
Southeron lords scorn'd him in terms rude,
And said, Behold yon Scot eats his own blood.*

*"Then rued he sore, for reason had he known,
That blood and land alike should be his own;
With them he long was, ere he got away,
But contrair Scots he fought not from that day."*

The account given by most of our historians, of the conversation between Bruce and Wallace over the Carron river, is equally apocryphal. There is full evidence that Bruce was not at that time on the English side, nor present at the battle of Falkirk; nay, that he acted as a guardian of Scotland, along with John Comyn, in the name of Balliol, and in opposition to the English.

p. 456. *These are the savage wilds that lie
North of Strathnardill and Dunskye.*

The extraordinary piece of scenery which I have here attempted to describe, is, I think, unparalleled in any part of Scotland, at least in any which I have happened to visit. It lies just upon the frontier of the Laird of MacLeod's country, which is thereabouts divided from the estate of Mr Maccalister of Strath-Aird, called Strathnardill by the Dean of the Isles.

p. 463 *And mermaid's alabaster grot,
Who bathes her limbs in sunless well
Deep in Strathaird's enchanted cell.*

Imagination can hardly conceive anything more beautiful than the extraordinary grotto discovered not many years since upon the estate of Alexander Mac-Allister, Esq., of Strathaird. It has since been much and deservedly celebrated, and a full account of its beauties has been published by Dr Mac-Leay of Oban. The general impression may perhaps be gathered from the following extract from a journal, which, written under the feelings of the moment, is likely to be more accurate than any

attempt to recollect the impressions then received :—"The first entrance to this celebrated cave is rude and unpromising; but the light of the torches, with which we were provided, was soon reflected from the roof, floor, and walls, which seem as if they were sheeted with marble, partly smooth, partly rough with frost-work and rustic ornaments, and partly seeming to be wrought into statuary. The floor forms a steep and difficult ascent, and might be fancifully compared to a sheet of water, which, while it rushed whitening and foaming down a declivity, had been suddenly arrested and consolidated by the spell of an enchanter. Upon attaining the summit of this ascent, the cave opens into a splendid gallery, adorned with the most dazzling crystallisations, and finally descends with rapidity to the brink of a pool, of the most limpid water, about four or five yards broad. There opens beyond this pool a portal arch, formed by two columns of white spar, with beautiful chasing upon the sides, which promises a continuation of the cave. One of our sailors swam across, for there is no other mode of passing, and informed us (as indeed we partly saw by the light he carried) that the enchantment of Macalister's cave terminates with this portal, a little beyond which there was only a rude cavern, speedily choked with stones and earth. But the pool, on the brink of which we stood, surrounded by the most fanciful mouldings, in a substance resembling white marble, and distinguished by the depth and purity of its waters, might have been the bathing grotto of a naiad. The groups of combined figures projecting, or embossed, by which the pool is surrounded, are exquisitely elegant and fanciful. A statuary might catch beautiful hints from the singular and romantic disposition of those stalactites. There is scarce a form, or group, on which active fancy may not trace figures or grotesque ornaments, which have been gradually moulded in this cavern by the dropping of the calcareous water hardening into petrifications. Many of those fine groups have been injured by the senseless rage of appropriation of recent tourists; and the grotto has lost (I am informed), through the smoke of torches, something of that vivid silver tint which was originally one of its chief distinctions. But enough of beauty remains to compensate for all that may be lost."—Mr Mac-Allister of Strathaird has, with great propriety, built up the exterior entrance to this cave, in order that strangers may enter properly attended by a guide, to prevent any repetition of the wanton and selfish injury which this singular scene has already sustained.

p. 467.

*Yet to no sense of selfish wrongs,
Bear witness with me, Heaven, belongs
My joy o'er Edward's bier.*

The generosity which does justice to the character of an enemy, often marks Bruce's sentiments, as recorded by the faithful Barbour. He seldom mentions a fallen enemy without praising such good qualities as he might possess. I shall only take one instance. Shortly after Bruce landed in Carrick, in 1306, Sir Ingram Bell, the English governor of Ayr, engaged a wealthy yeoman, who had hitherto been a follower of Bruce, to undertake the task of assassinating him. The king learned this treachery, as he is said to have done other secrets of the enemy, by means of a female with whom he had an intrigue. Shortly after he was possessed of this information, Bruce, resorting to a small thicket at a distance from his men, with only a single page to attend him, met the traitor, accompanied by two of his sons. They approached him with their wonted familiarity, but Bruce, taking his page's bow and arrow, commanded them to keep at a distance. As they still pressed forward with professions of zeal for his person and service, he, after a second warning, shot the father with the arrow; and being assailed successively by the two sons, despatched first one, who was armed with an axe; then as the other charged him with a spear, avoided the thrust, struck the head from the spear, and cleft the skull of the assassin with a blow of his two-handed sword.

p. 470.

*And Ronin's mountains dark have sent
Their hunters to the shore.*

Ronin popularly called Rnm, a name which a poet may be pardoned for avoiding if possible) is a very rough and mountainous island, adjacent to those of Eigg and Cannay. There is almost no arable ground upon it, so that, except in the plenty of the deer, which of course are now nearly extirpated, it still deserves the description bestowed by the Archdean of the Isles:—"Ronin, sixteen myle north-wast from the ile of Coll, lyes ane ile callit Ronan Ile, of sixteen myle long, and six in bredthe in the narrowest, ane forest of heigh mountains, and abundance of little deer in it, quhilk deer will never be slane downwith, but the principa. saittis man be in the height of the hill, because the deer will be callit upwart ay be the tainchell, or without tynchel they will pass upwart porforce. In this ile will be gotten about Britane als many wild nests upon the plane mure as men pleasis to gadder, and yet by resson the fowls hes few to start them except deer This ile lyes from the west to the east in lenth, and pertains to M'Kenabrey of Colla. Many solan geese are in this ile."—*Monro's Description of the Western Isles*, p. 18.

p. 470.

*On Scoreeigg next a warning light
Summon'd her warriors to the fight;
A numerous race, ere stern MacLeod
O'er their bleak shores in vengeance strode.*

These, and the following lines of the stanza, refer to a dreadful tale of feudal vengeance, of which unfortunately there are relics that still attest the truth. Scor-Eigg is a high peak in the centre of the small Isle of Eigg, or Egg, one of the caverns in which was the scene of a horrid feudal vengeance. This noted cave has a very narrow opening, through which one can hardly creep on his knees and hands. It rises steep and lofty within, and runs into the bowels of the rock to the depth of 255 measured feet; the height at the entrance may be about three feet, but rises within to eighteen or twenty, and the breadth may vary in the same proportion. The rude and stony bottom of this cave is strewn with the bones of men, women, and children, the sad relics of the ancient inhabitants of the island, 200 in number, who were slain on the following occasion:—The Mac-Donalds of the Isle of Egg, a people dependent on Clan-Ronald, had done some injury to the laird of Mac-Leod. The tradition of the isle says, that it was by a personal attack on the chieftain, in which his back was broken. But that of the other isles bears, more probably, that the injury was offered to two or three of the Mac-Leods, who, landing upon Egg, and using some freedom with the young women, were seized by the islanders, bound hand and foot, and turned adrift in a boat, which the winds and waves safely conducted to Skye. To avenge the offence given, Mac-Leod sailed with such a body of men, as rendered resistance hopeless. The natives fearing his vengeance, concealed themselves in this cavern and, after a strict search, the Mac-Leods went on board their galleys, after doing what mischief they could, concluding the inhabitants had left the isle, and betaken themselves to the Long Island, or some of Clan-Ronald's other possessions. But next morning they espied from the vessels a man upon the island, and immediately landing again, they traced his retreat by the marks of his footsteps, a light snow being unhappily on the ground. Mac-Leod then surrounded the cavern, summoned the subterranean garrison, and demanded that the individuals who had offended him should be delivered up to him. This was peremptorily refused. The chieftain then caused his people to divert the course of a rill of water, which, falling over the entrance of the cave, would have prevented his purposed vengeance. He then kindled at the entrance of the cavern a huge fire, composed of turf and fern, and maintained it with unrelenting assiduity, until all within were destroyed by suffocation. The date of this dreadful deed must have been recent, if one may judge from the fresh appearance of those relics. I brought off, in spite of the prejudice of our sailors, a skull from among the numerous specimens of

mortality which the cavern afforded. Before re-embarking we visited another cave, opening to the sea, but of a character entirely different, being a large open vault, as high as that of a cathedral, and running back a great way into the rock at the same height. The height and width of the opening gives ample light to the whole. Here, after 1745, when the Catholic priests were scarcely tolerated, the priest of Eigg used to perform the Roman Catholic service, most of the islanders being of that persuasion. A huge ledge of rocks, rising about half-way up one side of the vault, served for altar and pulpit; and the appearance of a priest and Highland congregation in such an extraordinary place of worship, might have engaged the pencil of Salvator.

p. 471. *Scenes sung by him who sings no more.*

The ballad entitled "Macphail of Colonsay, and the Mermaid of Corrie-vrekin" was composed by John Leyden, from a tradition which he found while making a tour through the Hebrides about 1801, soon before his fatal departure for India, where, after having made farther progress in Oriental literature than any man of letters who had embraced those studies, he died a martyr to his zeal for knowledge, in the island of Java, immediately after the landing of our forces, near Batavia, in September 1811.

p. 472. *Up Tarbat's western lake they bore,
And dragg'd their bark the isthmus o'er.*

The peninsula of Cantyre is joined to South Knapdale by a very narrow isthmus, formed by the western and eastern Loch of Tarbat. These two salt-water lakes, or bays, encroach so far upon the land, and the extremities come so near to each other, that there is not above a mile of land to divide them.

p. 472. *The sun, ere yet he sunk behind
Ben-Ghoil, "the Mountain of the Wind,"
Gave his grim peaks a greeting kind,
And bade Loch Ranza smile.*

Loch Ranza is a beautiful bay, on the northern extremity of Arran, opening towards East Tarbat Loch. It is well described by Pennant:—"The approach was magnificent; a fine bay in front, about a mile deep, having a ruined castle near the lower end, on a low far projecting neck of land, that forms another harbour, with a narrow passage: but within has three fathom of water, even at the lowest ebb. Beyond is a little plain watered by a stream, and inhabited by the people of a small village. The whole is environed with a theatre of mountains; and in the background the serrated crags of Grianan-Athol soar above."—*Pennant's Tour to the Western Isles*, pp. 191, 192. Ben-Ghaoil, "the mountain of the winds," is generally known by its English, and less poetical, name of Goatfield.

p. 475. *Each to Loch Ranza's margin spring;
That blast was winded by the King!*

The passage in Barbour, describing the landing of Bruce, and his being recognised by Douglas, and those of his followers who had preceded him, by the sound of his horn, is in the original singularly simple and affecting.—The king arrived in Arran with thirty-three small row-boats. He interrogated a female if there had arrived any warlike men of late in that country. "Surely, sir," she replied, "I can tell you of many who lately came hither, discomfited the English governor, and blockaded his castle of Brodick. They maintain themselves in a wood at no great distance." The king, truly conceiving that this must be Douglas and his followers, who had lately set forth to try their fortune in Arran, desired the woman to conduct him to the wood. She obeyed:—

*"The king then blew his horn on high;
And gert his men that were him by,
Hold them still, and all privy;
And syne again his horne blew he*

James of Dowglas heard him blow,
 And at the last alone gan know,
 And said, 'Soothly yon is the king;
 I know long while since his blowing.'
 The third time therewithall he blew,
 And then Sir Robert Boid it knew:
 And said, 'Yon is the king, but dread,
 Go we forth till him, better speed'
 Then went they till the king in hye,
 And him inclined courteously.
 And blithly welcomed them the king,
 And was joyful of their meeting,
 And kissed them; and speared¹ syne
 How they had fared in hunting?
 And they him told all, but lesing:²
 Syne laud they God of their meeting.
 Syne with the king till his harbourye
 Went both joyfn' and jolly."

Barbour's Bruce, Book v. pp. 115, 116.

p. 476.

————— *His brother blamed,
 But shared the weakness, while ashamed.*

The kind, and yet fiery character of Edward Bruce, is well painted by Barbour, in the account of his behaviour after the battle of Bannockburn. Sir Walter Ross, one of the very few Scottish nobles who fell in that battle, was so dearly beloved by Edward, that he wished the victory had been lost, so Ross had lived.

p. 479.

*And thou didst bid thy little band
 Upon the instant turn and stand.*

This incident, which illustrates so happily the chivalrous generosity of Bruce's character, is one of the many simple and natural traits recorded by Barbour. It occurred during the expedition which Bruce made to Ireland, to support the pretensions of his brother Edward to the throne of that kingdom.

p. 484.

*O'er chasms he pass'd, where fractures wide
 Craved wary eye and ample stride.*

The interior of the Island of Arran abounds with beautiful Highland scenery. The hills, being very rocky and precipitous, afford some cataracts of great height, though of inconsiderable breadth. There is one pass over the river Machrai, renowned for the dilemma of a poor woman, who, being tempted by the narrowness of the ravine to step across, succeeded in making the first movement, but took fright when it became necessary to move the other foot, and remained in a posture equally 'udicrous and dangerous, until some chance passenger assisted her to extricate herself. It is said she remained there some hours.

p. 484.

Old Brodick's Gothic towers were seen.

Brodick or Brathwick Castle, in the Isle of Arran, is an ancient fortress, near an open roadstead called Brodick-Bay, and not far distant from a tolerable harbour, closed in by the Island of Lamash. This important place had been assailed a short time before Bruce's arrival in the island. James, Lord Douglas, who accompanied Bruce to his retreat in Ruchrine, seems, in the spring of 1306, to have tired of his abode there, and set out accordingly, in the phrase of the times, to see what adventure God would send him. Sir Robert Boyd accompanied him: and his knowledge of the localities of Arran appears to have directed his course thither. They landed in the island privately, and appear to have laid an ambush for Sir John Hastings, the English governor of Brodwick, and surprised a considerable supply of arms and provisions, and nearly took

¹ Asked.

² Without lying.

the castle itself. Indeed, that they actually did so, has been generally averred by historians, although it does not appear from the narrative of Barbour. . . . The castle is now much modernised, but has a dignified appearance, being surrounded by flourishing plantations.

p. 484.

*Of, too, with unaccustom'd ears,
A language much unmeet he hears.*

Barbour, with great simplicity, gives an anecdote, from which it would seem that the vice of profane swearing, afterwards too general among the Scottish nation, was, at this time, confined to military men. As Douglas, after Bruce's return to Scotland, was roving about the mountainous country of Tweeddale, near the water of Line, he chanced to hear some persons in a farm-house say "*the devil*." Concluding from this hardy expression, that the house contained warlike guests, he immediately assailed it, and had the good fortune to make prisoners Thomas Randolph, afterwards the famous Earl of Murray, and Alexander Stuart, Lord Bonkle. Both were then in the English interest, and had come into that country with the purpose of driving out Douglas. They afterwards ranked among Bruce's most zealous adherents.

p. 489.

*Now ask you whence that wondrous light,
Whose fairy glow beguil'd their sight?—
It ne'er was known.*

The following are the words of an ingenious correspondent, to whom I am obliged for much information respecting Turnberry and its neighbourhood:—"The only tradition now remembered of the landing of Robert the Bruce in Carrick, relates to the fire seen by him from the Isle of Arran. It is still generally reported, and religiously believed by many, that this fire was really the work of supernatural power, unassisted by the hand of any mortal being; and it is said, that, for several centuries, the flame rose yearly on the same hour of the same night of the year, on which the king first saw it from the turrets of Brodick Castle; and some go so far as to say, that if the exact time were known, it would be still seen. That this superstitious notion is very ancient, is evident from the place where the fire is said to have appeared, being called the Bogles' Brae, beyond the remembrance of man. In support of this curious belief, it is said that the practice of burning heath for the improvement of land was then unknown; that a spunkie (Jack o'lanthorn) could not have been seen across the breadth of the Forth of Clyde between Ayrshire and Arran; and that the conrier of Bruce was his kinsman, and never suspected of treachery."—Letter from Mr Joseph Train, of Newton-Stewart.

p. 497.

The Bruce hath won his father's hall!

I have followed the flattering and pleasing tradition, that the Bruce, after his descent upon the coast of Ayrshire, actually gained possession of his maternal castle. But the tradition is not accurate. The fact is, that he was only strong enough to alarm and drive in the outposts of the English garrison, then commanded, not by Clifford, as assumed in the text, but by Percy. Neither was Clifford slain upon this occasion, though he had several skirmishes with Bruce. He fell afterwards in the battle of Bannockburn. Bruce, after alarming the Castle of Turnberry, and surprising some part of the garrison, who were quartered without the walls of the fortress, retreated into the mountainous part of Carrick, and there made himself so strong, that the English were obliged to evacuate Turnberry, and at length the Castle of Ayr. Many of his benefactions and royal gifts attest his attachment to the hereditary followers of his house, in this part of the country.

p. 498.

*When Bruce's banner had victorious flow'd
O'er Loudoun's mountain and in Ury's vale.*

The first important advantage gained by Bruce, after landing at Turnberry, was over Aymer de Vallance, Earl of Pembroke, the same by whom he had been defeated near Mothven. They met, as has been said, by ap-

pointment, at Loudonhill, in the west of Scotland. Pembroke sustained a defeat; and from that time Bruce was at the head of a considerable flying army. Yet he was subsequently obliged to retreat into Aberdeenshire, and was there assailed by Comyn, Earl of Buchan, desirous to avenge the death of his relative, the Red Comyn, and supported by a body of English troops under Philip de Moubray. Bruce was ill at the time of a scrofulous disorder, but took horse to meet his enemies, although obliged to be supported on either side. He was victorious, and it is said that the agitation of his spirits restored his health.

. 498. *When English blood oft deluged Douglas-dale.*

The "good Lord James of Douglas," during these commotions, often took from the English his own Castle of Douglas, but being unable to garrison it, contented himself with destroying the fortifications, and retiring into the mountains. As a reward to his patriotism, it is said to have been prophesied, that how often soever Douglas Castle should be destroyed, it should always again rise more magnificent from its ruins. Upon one of these occasions he used fearful cruelty, causing all the store of provisions, which the English had laid up in his castle, to be heaped together, bursting the wine and beer casks among the wheat and flour, slaughtering the cattle upon the same spot, and upon the top of the whole cutting the throats of the English prisoners. This pleasantry of the "good Lord James" is commemorated under the name of the *Douglas' Larder*.

p. 498. *And fiery Edward routed stout St John.*

"John de St John, with 15,000 horsemen, had advanced to oppose the inroad of the Scots. By a forced march he endeavoured to surprise them, but intelligence of his motions was timeously received. The courage of Edward Bruce, approaching to temerity, frequently enabled him to achieve what men of more judicious valour would never have attempted. He ordered the infantry, and the meaner sort of his army, to intrench themselves in strong narrow ground. He himself, with fifty horsemen well harnessed, issued forth under cover of a thick mist, surprised the English on their march, attacked and dispersed them."—*Dalrymple's Annals of Scotland*, quarto, Edinburgh, 1779, p. 25

p. 498. *When Randolph's war-cry swell'd the southern gale.*

Thomas Randolph, Bruce's sister's son, a renowned Scottish chief, was in the early part of his life not more remarkable for consistency than Bruce himself. He espoused his uncle's party when Bruce first assumed the crown, and was made prisoner at the fatal battle of Methven, in which his relative's hopes appeared to be ruined. Randolph, accordingly, not only submitted to the English, but took an active part against Bruce; appeared in arms against him; and, in the skirmish where he was so closely pursued by the bloodhound, it is said his nephew took his standard with his own hand. But Randolph was afterwards made prisoner by Douglas in Tweeddale, and brought before King Robert. Some harsh language was exchanged between the uncle and nephew, and the latter was committed for a time to close custody. Afterwards, however, they were reconciled, and Randolph was created Earl of Moray about 1312. After this period he eminently distinguished himself, first by the surprise of Edinburgh Castle, and afterwards by many similar enterprises, conducted with equal courage and ability.

p. 499. *Stirling's towers,
Beleagu'rd by King Robert's powers;
And they took term of truce.*

When a long train of success, actively improved by Robert Bruce, had made him master of almost all Scotland, Stirling Castle continued to hold out. The care of the blockade was committed by the King to his brother Edward, who concluded a treaty with Sir Philip Mowbray, the governor,

that he should surrender the fortress, if it were not succoured by the King of England before St John the Baptist's day. The King severely blamed his brother for the impolicy of a treaty which gave time to the King of England to advance to the relief of the castle with all his assembled forces, and obliged himself either to meet them in battle with an inferior force, or to retreat with dishonour. "Let all England come," answered the reckless Edward; "we would fight them were they more." The consequence was, of course, that each kingdom mustered its strength for the expected battle; and as the space agreed upon reached from Lent to Midsummer, full time was allowed for that purpose.

v. 499. *And Cambria, but of late subdued,
Sent forth her mountain-multitude.*

Edward the First, with the usual policy of a conqueror, employed the Welsh, whom he had subdued, to assist him in his Scottish wars, for which their habits, as mountaineers, particularly fitted them. But this policy was not without its risks. Previous to the battle of Falkirk, the Welsh quarrelled with the English men-at-arms, and after bloodshed on both parts, separated themselves from his army, and the feud between them, at so dangerous and critical a juncture, was reconciled with difficulty. Edward II. followed his father's example in this particular, and with no better success. They could not be brought to exert themselves in the cause of their conquerors. But they had an indifferent reward for their forbearance. Without arms, and clad only in scanty dresses of linen cloth, they appeared naked in the eyes even of the Scottish peasantry; and after the rout of Bannockburn, were massacred by them in great numbers, as they retired in confusion towards their own country. They were under command of Sir Maurice de Berkeley.

p. 499. *And Connoght pour'd from waste and wood
Her hundred tribes, whose sceptre rude
Dark Eth O'Connor sway'd.*

There is in the *Fœdera* an invitation to Eth O'Connor, chief of the Irish of Connaught, setting forth that the king was about to move against his Scottish rebels, and therefore requesting the attendance of all the force he could muster, either commanded by himself in person, or by some nobleman of his race. These auxiliaries were to be commanded by Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster.

p. 503. *The Monarch rode along the van.*

The English vanguard, commanded by the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, came in sight of the Scottish army upon the evening of the 23d of June. Bruce was then riding upon a little palfrey, in front of his foremost line, putting his host in order. It was then that the personal encounter took place betwixt him and Sir Henry de Bohun, a gallant English knight, the issue of which had a great effect upon the spirits of both armies.

p. 507. *Responsive from the Scottish host,
Pipe-clang and bugle-sound were toss'd.*

There is an old tradition that the well-known Scottish tune of "Hey, tutti, tutti," was Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn. The late Mr Ritson, no granter of propositions, doubts whether the Scots had any martial music, quotes Froissart's account of each soldier in the host bearing a little horn, on which, at the onset, they would make such a horrible noise, as if all the devils of hell had been among them. He observes, that these horns are the only music mentioned by Barbour, and concludes, that it must remain a moot point whether Bruce's army were cheered by the sound even of a solitary bagpipe.—*Historical Essay prefixed to Ritson's Scottish Songs.* It may be observed in passing, that the Scottish of this period certainly observed some musical cadence, even in winding their horns, since Bruce was at once recognised by his followers from his

mode of blowing. See Note on p. 475. But the tradition, true or false, has been the means of securing to Scotland one of the finest lyrics in the language, the celebrated war-song of Burns,—“Scots, wha hae w’ Wallace bled.”

p. 508. *See where yon barefoot Abbot stands,
And blesses them with lifted hands.*

“Maurice, abbot of Inchaffray, plaing himself on an eminence, celebrated mass in sight of the Scottish army. He then passed along the front, barefooted, and bearing a cruceifix in his hands, and exhorting the Scots, in few and forcible words, to combat for their rights and their liberty. The Scots kneeled down. ‘They yield,’ cried Edward; ‘see, they implore mercy.’ ‘They do,’ answered Ingelram de Umfraville, ‘but not ours. On that field they will be victorious, or die.’”—*Annals of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 47.

p. 509. *Forth, Marshal, on the peasant foe!*

The English archers commenced the attack with their usual bravery and dexterity. But against a force, whose importance he had learned by fatal experience, Bruce was provided. A small but select both of cavalry were detached from the right, under command of Sir Robert Keith. They rounded, as I conceive, the marsh called Milton-bog, and, keeping the firm ground, charged the left flank and rear of the English archers. As the bowmen had no spears nor long weapons fit to defend themselves against horse, they were instantly thrown into disorder, and spread through the whole English army a confusion from which they never fairly recovered.

Although the success of this manœuvre was evident, it is very remarkable that the Scottish generals do not appear to have profited by the lesson. Almost every subsequent battle which they lost against England, was decided by the archers, to whom the close and compact array of the Scottish phalanx afforded an exposed and unresisting mark. The bloody battle of Halidoun-hill, fought scarce twenty years afterwards, was so completely gained by the archers, that the English are said to have lost only one knight, one esquire, and a few foot soldiers. At the battle of Neville’s Cross, in 1346, where David II. was defeated and made prisoner, John de Graham, observing the loss which the Scots sustained from the English bowmen, offered to charge and disperse them, if a hundred men-at-arms were put under his command. “*But, to confess the truth,*” says Fordun, “he could not procure a single horseman for the service proposed.” Of such little use is experience in war, where its results are opposed by habit or prejudice.

p. 510. *Each braggart churl could boast before,
Twelve Scottish lives his baldric bore!*

Roger Ascham quotes a similar Scottish proverb, “whereby they give the whole praise of shooting honestly to Englishmen, saying thus, ‘that every English archer beareth under his girdle twenty-four Scottes. Indeed Toxophilus says before, and truly of the Scottish nation, ‘The Scottes surely be good men of warre in theyre owne feates as can be; but as for shootinge, they can neither use it to any profite, nor yet challenge it for any praise.’”—*Works of Ascham*, edited by Bennet, 4to, p. 110.

It is said, I trust incorrectly, by an ancient English historian, that the “good Lord James of Douglas” dreaded the superiority of the English archers so much, that when he made any of them prisoner, he gave him the option of losing the forefinger of his right hand, or his right eye, either species of mutilation rendering him incapable to use the bow. I have mislaid the reference to this singular passage.

p. 510. *Down! down! in headlong overthrow,
Horseman and horse, the foremost go.*

It is generally alleged by historians, that the English men-at-arms fell into the hidden snare which Bruce had prepared for them. Barbour does

not mention the circumstance. According to his account, Randolph, seeing the slaughter made by the cavalry on the right wing among the archers, advanced courageously against the main body of the English, and entered into close combat with them. Douglas and Stuart, who commanded the Scottish centre, led their division also to the charge, and the battle becoming general along the whole line, was obstinately maintained on both sides for a long space of time; the Scottish archers doing great execution among the English men-at-arms after the bowmen of England were dispersed.

p. 510.

And steeds that shriek in agony!

I have been told that this line requires an explanatory note; and, indeed, those who witness the silent patience with which horses submit to the most cruel usage, may be permitted to doubt, that, in moments of sudden and intolerable anguish, they utter a most melancholy cry. Lord Erskine, in a speech made in the House of Lords, upon a bill for enforcing humanity towards animals, noticed this remarkable fact, in language which I will not mutilate by attempting to repeat it. It was my fortune, upon one occasion, to hear a horse, in a moment of agony, utter a thrilling scream, which I still consider the most melancholy sound I ever heard.

p. 512.

*Lord of the Isles, my trust in thee
Is firm as Ailsa Rock.*

When the engagement between the main bodies had lasted some time, Bruce made a decisive movement, by bringing up the Scottish reserve. It is traditionally said, that at this crisis, he addressed the Lord of the Isles in a phrase used as a motto by some of his descendants, "My trust is constant in thee." Barbour intimates, that the reserve "assembled on one field," that is, on the same line with the Scottish forces already engaged; which leads Lord Hailes to conjecture that the Scottish ranks must have been much thinned by slaughter, since, in that circumscribed ground, there was room for the reserve to fall into the line. But the advance of the Scottish cavalry must have contributed a good deal to form the vacancy occupied by the reserve.

p. 513.

*To arms they flew,—are, club, or spear,—
And mimic ensigns hig'ly they rear.*

The followers of the Scottish camp observed from the Gillies' Hill in the rear, the impression produced upon the English army by the bringing up of the Scottish reserve, and, prompted by the enthusiasm of the moment, or the desire of plunder, assumed, in a tumultuary manner, such arms as they found nearest, fastened sheets to tent-poles and lances, and shewed themselves like a new army advancing to battle.

The unexpected apparition, of what seemed a new army, completed the confusion which already prevailed among the English, who fled in every direction, and were pursued with immense slaughter.

NOTES TO MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.

THOMAS THE RHYMER.

p. 519. *She pu'd an apple frae a tree, &c.*

The traditional commentary upon this ballad informs us that the apple was the produce of the Fatal Tree of Knowledge, and that the garden was the terrestrial paradise. The repugnance of Thomas to be debarred the use of falsehood, when he might find it convenient, has a comic effect.

p. 519. PART SECOND.

The prophecies ascribed to Thomas of Erclidoune have been the principal means of securing to him remembrance "amongst the sons of his people." The author of *Sir Tristrem* would long ago have joined, in the vale of oblivion, "Clerk of Tranent," who wrote the adventures of "*Schir Gawain*," if, by good hap, the same current of ideas respecting antiquity, which causes Virgil to be regarded as a magician by the Lazaroni of Naples, had not exalted the bard of Erclidoune to the prophetic character. His prophecies are alluded to by Barbour, by Wintoun, and by Henry the Minstrel, or *Blind Harry*. None of these authors, however, give the words of any of the Rhymer's vaticinations, but merely narrate historically his having predicted the events of which they speak. The earliest of the prophecies ascribed to him is supposed to be a response to a question from *Black Agnes* of Dunbar, the heroic Countess of March. But as her gallant defence of the castle of Dunbar took place in the year 1337, and the Rhymer died previous to the year 1299, it seems very improbable that the Countess of Dunbar could ever have an opportunity of consulting Thomas the Rhymer, since that would infer that she was engaged in state matters previous to 1299; whereas she is described as a young woman at the period of her being besieged in the fortress, which she so well defended.

p. 520. *Is by a burn that's call'd of bread.*

One of Thomas's rhymes preserved by tradition, runs thus:—

"The burn of breid,
Shall run fow reid."

Bannockburn is the brook here meant. The Scots give the name of *bannock* to a thick round cake of unleavened bread made of oatmeal.

p. 521. *Then all by donny Coldingknow.*

An ancient tower near Erclidoune, belonging to a family of the name of Home. One of Thomas's prophecies is said to have run thus:

Vengeance! vengeance! when and where?
On the house of Coldingknow, now and ever mair!

The spot is rendered classical by its having given name to the beautiful melody called the *Broom of the Cowdenknous*.

p. 521. *They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.*

Torwoodlee and Caddenhead are places in Salkirkshire

GLENFINLAS.

p. 525. *Well can the Saxon widows tell.*

The term *Sassnach*, or *Saxon*, is applied by the Highlanders to their low-country neighbours.

p. 525. *How blazed Lord Ronald's beltane-tree.*

The fires lighted by the Highlanders on the first of May, in compliance with a custom derived from the Pagan times, are termed, "The Beltane-Tree." It is a festival celebrated with various superstitious rites, both in the North of Scotland and in Wales.

p. 527. *Will good Saint Oran's rule prevail.*

St Oran was a friend and follower of St Columba, and was buried at Icolmkill. His pretensions to be a saint were rather dubious. According to the legend, he consented to be buried alive, in order to propitiate certain demons of the soil, who obstructed the attempts of Columba to build a chapel. Columba caused the body of his friend to be dug up, after three days had elapsed; when Oran, to the horror and scandal of the assistants, declared that there was neither a God, a judgment, nor a future state! He had no time to make further discoveries, for Columba caused the earth once more to be shovelled over him with the utmost despatch. The chapel, however, and the cemetery, was called *Relig Ouran*; and, in memory of his rigid celibacy, no female was permitted to pay her devotions, or be buried in that place. This is the rule alluded to in the poem.

p. 530. *And thrice Saint Fillan's powerful prayer.*

St Fillan has given his name to many chapels, holy fountains, &c. in Scotland. He was, according to Camerarius, an Abbot of Pittenweem in Fife; from which situation he retired, and died a hermit in the wilds of Glenurchy, A.D. 649. While engaged in transcribing the Scriptures, his left hand was observed to send forth such a splendour, as to afford light to that with which he wrote; a miracle which saved many candles to the convent, as St Fillan used to spend whole nights in that exercise. The 9th of January was dedicated to this saint, who gave his name to Kilfillan, in Renfrew, and St Phillana, or Forgend, in Fife. Lesley, lib. vii. tells us, that Robert the Bruce was possessed of Fillan's miraculous and luminous arm, which he enclosed in a silver shrine, and had it carried at the head of his army. Previous to the battle of Bannockburn, the king's chaplain, a man of little faith, abstracted the relic, and deposited it in a place of security, lest it should fall into the hands of the English. But, lo! while Robert was addressing his prayers to the empty casket, it was observed to open and shut suddenly; and, on inspection, the saint was found to have himself deposited his arm in the shrine as an assurance of victory. Such is the tale of Lesley. But though Bruce little needed that the arm of St Fillan should assist his own, he dedicated to him, in gratitude, a priory at Killin, upon Loch Tay.

THE EVE OF ST JOHN

p. 531.

Smylho'me, or Smalbholme Tower, the scene of the following ballad, is situated on the northern boundary of Roxburghshire, among a cluster of wild rocks, called Sandiknow Crags, the property of Hugh Scott, Esq. of Harden. The catastrophe of the tale is founded on a well known Irish tradition.

p. 531

Battle of Ancram Moor.

Lord Evers, and Sir Brian Latoun, during the year 1544, committed the most dreadful ravages upon the Scottish frontiers, compelling most of the inhabitants, and especially the men of Liddesdale, to take assurance under the King of England. Upon the 17th November, in that year, the sum total of their depredations stood thus in the bloody ledger of Lord Evers:—

| | |
|--|--------|
| Towns, towers, barnekynes, paryshe churches, bastill houses, burned and destroyed, | 192 |
| Scots slain, | 403 |
| Prisoners taken, | 816 |
| Nolt (cattle), | 10,386 |
| Shepe, (sheep), | 12,492 |
| Nags and geldings, | 1296 |
| Gayt, | 200 |
| Bolls of corn, | 850 |
| Insight gear, &c. (furniture), an incalculable quantity. | |

Murdin's State Papers, vol. i. p. 51.

In a second incursion they even exceeded their former cruelty. As they returned towards Jedburgh they were followed by the Scots, and defeated at the battle of Ancram Moor. In the battle there fell Lord Evers, his son, Sir Brian Latoun, and 800 English, among whom were many persons of rank. One thousand prisoners were taken. The spot on which the battle was fought was called Lyliards Edge.

p. 532.

So by the black rood stone.

This was a crucifix of black marble in Melrose, held as of superior sanctity.

p. 535.

That nun who ne'er beholds the day.

The circumstance of the nun, "who never saw the day," is not entirely imaginary. About 50 years ago, an unfortunate female wanderer took up her residence in a dark vault, among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, which, during the day, she never quitted. When night fell, she issued from this miserable habitation, and went to the house of Mr Haliburton of Newmains, the Editor's great-grandfather, or to that of Mr Erskine of Sheilfield, two gentlemen of the neighbourhood. From their charity she obtained such necessaries as she could be prevailed upon to accept. At twelve each night she lighted her candle, and returned to her vault, assuring her friendly neighbours, that, during her absence, her habitation was arranged by a spirit, to whom she gave the uncouth name of *Fallips*: describing him as a little man, wearing heavy iron shoes, with which he trampled the clay floor of the vault, to dispel the damps. This circumstance caused her to be regarded, by the well-informed, with compassion, as deranged in her understanding; and by the vulgar, with some degree of terror.

CADYOW CASTLE.

p. 538.

Stern Claud replied.

Lord Claud Hamilton, second son of the Duke of Chatterhault, and commendator of the Abbey of Paisley, acted a distinguished part during the troubles of Queen Mary's reign, and remained unalterably attached to the cause of that unfortunate princess. He led the van of her army at the fatal battle of Langside, and was one of the commanders at the raid of Stirling, which had so nearly given complete success to the Queen's faction. He was ancestor to the present Marquis of Abercorn.

p. 538.

Few suns have set since Woodhouselee.

This barony, stretching along the banks of the Esk, near Auchendinny

belonged to Bothwellhagh, in right of his wife. The ruins of the mansion, from whence she was expelled in the brutal manner which occasioned her death, are still to be seen in a hollow glen beside the river.

p. 538. *Drives to the leap his jaded steed.*

Birrell informs us, that Bothwellhagh, being closely pursued, "after that spur and wand had falled him, he drew forth his dagger, and strocke his horse behind, whilk caused the horse to leap a very brode stanke [i. e. ditch,] by whilk means he escapit, and gat away from all the rest of the horses."

p. 539. *With hackbut bent.*

The carbine, with which the regent was shot, is preserved at Hamilton Palace. It is a brass piece, of a middling length, very small in the bore, and, what is rather extraordinary, appears to have been rifled or indented in the barrel. It had a match-lock, for which a modern fire-lock has been injudiciously substituted.

p. 539. *The wild Macfarlanes' plaided clan.*

This clan of Lennox Highlanders were attached to the Regent Murray. Hollinshed, speaking of the battle of Langside, says—"In this batayle the valiance of an Hieland gentleman, named Macfarlane, stood the Regent's part in great steede; for in the hottest brunte of the fighte, he came up with two hundred of his friendes and countrymen, and so manfully gave in upon the flankes of the Queen's people, that he was a great cause of the disordering of them. This Macfarlane had been lately before, as I have heard, condemned to die, for some outrage by him committed, and obtayning pardon through snyte of the Countess of Murray, be recompensed that clemencie by this piece of service now at this batayle."

p. 539. *— haggard Lindsay's iron eye,
That saw fair Mary weep in vain.*

Lord Lindsay, of the Byres, was the most ferocious and brutal of the Regent's faction, and, as such, was employed to extort Mary's signature to the deed of resignation presented to her in Lochleven castle. He discharged his commission with the most savage rigour; and it is even said, that when the weeping captive, in the act of signing, averted her eyes from the fatal deed, he pinched her arm with the grasp of his iron glove.

p. 539. *So close the minions crowded nigh.*

Not only had the Regent notice of the intended attempt upon his life, but even of the very house from which it was threatened. With that infatuation at which men wonder, after such events have happened, he deemed it would be a sufficient precaution to ride briskly past the dangerous spot. But even this was prevented by the crowd: so that Bothwellhagh had time to take a deliberate aim.—*Spottiswood*, p. 223. *Buchanan*.

THE GRAY BROTHER.

SCENERY OF THE ESK.

p. 542. *From that fair dome, where suit is paid
By blast of bugle free.*

The barony of Pennycuick, the property of Sir George Clerk, Bart., is held by a singular tenure; the proprietor being bound to sit upon a

large rocky fragment called the Buckstane, and wind three blasts of a horn, when the King shall come to hunt on the Borough Muir, near Edinburgh. Hence the family have adopted as their crest a demi-forester proper, winding a horn, with the motto, *Free for a blast*. The beautiful mansion-house of Pennycuik is much admired, both on account of the architecture and surrounding scenery.

p. 542. *To Auchendinny's hazel glade.*

Auchendinny, situated upon the Esk, below Pennycuik, the present residence of the ingenious H. Mackenzie, Esq., author of the *Man of Feeling*, &c.

p. 542. *Who knows not Melville's beechy grove?*

Melville Castle, the seat of the Right Honourable Lord Melville, to whom it gives the title of viscount, is delightfully situated upon the Esk, near Lasswade.

p. 542. *And Roslin's rocky glen.*

The ruins of Roslin Castle, the baronial residence of the ancient family of St Clair. The Gothic chapel, which is still in beautiful preservation, with the romantic and woody dell in which they are situated, belong to the Right Honourable the Earl of Rosslyn, the representative of the former Lords of Roslin.

p. 542. *Dalkeith, which all the virtues love.*

The village and castle of Dalkeith belonged of old to the famous Earl of Morton, but the latter is now the residence of the noble family of Buccleuch. The park extends along the Esk, which is there joined by its sister stream of the same name.

p. 542. *And classic Hawthornden.*

Hawthornden, the residence of the poet Drummond. A house of more modern date is enclosed, as it were, by the ruins of the ancient castle, and overhangs a tremendous precipice upon the banks of the Esk, perforated by winding caves, which in former times were a refuge to the oppressed patriots of Scotland. Here Drummond received Ben Jonson, who journeyed from London on foot in order to visit him. The beauty of this striking scene has been much injured of late years by the indiscriminate use of the axe.

WAR SONG OF THE EDINBURGH LIGHT DRAGOONS.

p. 544. *Oh! had they marked the avenging call*

The allusion is to the massacre of the Swiss Guards on the fatal 10th August 1791. It is painful, but not useless, to remark, that the passive temper with which the Swiss regarded the death of their bravest countrymen, mercilessly slaughtered in discharge of their duty, encouraged and authorised the progressive injustice by which the Alps, once the seat of the most virtuous and free people upon the Continent, have at length been converted into the citadel of a foreign and military despot. A State degraded is half enslaved.



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