

Outline of Canto III.

1. The next morning dawns clear and peaceful. On the shore of the island Roderick watches his vassals prepare for sending out the Fiery Cross; while Brian the hermit stands ready to perform the customary rites. The cross is made from the wood of a yew tree from the burial place of Clan Alpine; and while it is seared with fire and quenched in blood, Brian pronounces a deadly curse on all who fail to heed the summons.

2. Roderick then seizes the cross, gives it to Malise, his henchman, and speeds him on his errand. Wherever the cross appears it is a signal for the clansmen to rise in arms. At Duncraggan the funeral of Duncan is in progress, but Angus the heir of Duncan takes the cross and carries it on. At the chapel of St. Bride he meets a wedding procession,—but Norman, the bridegroom, seizes the cross and speeds on his way, singing as he goes.

3. In the meantime Roderick, who has been surveying the country to the south, returns, and crosses Benvenue above the Goblin's Cave, where Ellen and her father have taken refuge. He is too proud to see Ellen again, but when near the cave he stops to listen for the sound of her voice, and hears her singing a hymn to the virgin. Then he hastens on his way to Lanrick Mead, where his clansmen have already gathered.

Questions on Canto III.

1. What relation has the first section to the remainder of the Canto?
2. What are we told of (a) Brian's birth place; (b) his boyhood; (c) his education; and (d) how he was regarded by others?
3. Why does the poet give so much of Brian's history before telling of the preparation of the Fiery Cross?
4. The curse pronounced by Brian is divided into three parts. What does each part deal with?
5. What means does the poet use to make the journey of Malise especially vivid?
6. Why does the poet introduce a funeral and a wedding into his account of the passage of the Fiery Cross?
7. Point out two comparisons which make the description especially vivid.
8. Why does the poet think it necessary to describe the Goblin-cave so fully?