

THE BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE

This selection is taken from the sixth canto of *The Lady of the Lake*. The Earls of Moray and Mar had been sent against the stronghold of Roderick, chief of Clan Alpine, and were surprised and attacked by the Highlanders in a narrow gorge. In the meantime Roderick had been severely wounded and captured by King James, who, in the guise of James Fitz-James had penetrated the mountain fastness of the outlaw chief. The battle takes place as described in the text. Just as the combatants are about to engage again in the struggle a messenger from the king arrives who commands that the battle should cease, and announces the capture of Roderick. The selection is the story of the battle sung to Roderick by the aged minstrel who had sought his master in prison.

"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, 5
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—
 There is no breeze upon the fern,
 No ripple on the lake,
 Upon her eyry nods the erne,
 The deer has sought the brake; 10
 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. 15
 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 20
 That on the thicket streams,
 Or do they flash on spear and lance
 The sun's retiring beams?—