

S. :—Pardon me, I appreciate its merits much ; I assure you that I am no peevish fault-finder. On the contrary, I instantly recognized two great excellencies it possessed, namely, that it cannot be attributed to a man-poet, and that it might have been of much greater length.

Q. :—Your cynicism is a surprise to me, and I would fain perceive its foundation. Let us examine the work specifically and fairly. To begin with,—the plot is admirable. The lordly castle of Linteged stands massive and looming gigantic amid the blood-red sunset. It is besieged by five hundred archers who on this, the fifteenth day, had, with their comrades in arms, almost effected a breach of the sturdy castle-wall. What is the ‘*causa belli*’? Three months ago Sir Guy of Linteged had married the Duchess May. There were those who bitterly re-ented this happening. The Duchess May had become an orphan in her early girlhood, and her guardian, the Earl of Leigh, actuated by the greed of gain (for his ward was rich), had betrothed her at twelve years of age to his churlish son Lord Leigh. But when his charge had blossomed into winsome womanhood, she defied the Leighs, father and son, repudiated the arbitrary engagement, and announced her intention of marrying Sir Guy of Linteged. Their jeers and expostulations were un-availing, and before that midnight she had carried out her resolve, and fled with Sir Guy through the wild wind and rain, hotly pursued by her kinsmen. Sir Guy’s noble charger proved his worth and bore them safely to the castle court-yard, where they received the servitors’ loud welcome. And now, three months after, the Leighs are besieging the castle. Young Lord Leigh taunts the newly-made bride with the approaching defeat and death of Sir Guy, and her inevitable marriage to himself. The Duchess May laughs him to scorn, and in her undaunted, unfeeling lightsomeness, attires herself in all the rich bridal paraphernalia (which hitherto she had never worn,) both to inspire her husband’s courage and to emphasize her contempt for Leigh. But Sir Guy leans silently, anguish-laden, upon his sword, fearing the worst. The sword snaps asunder, and its owner regards it as an omen that further resistance is useless, and, ruminating, decides to sacrifice himself for the sake of the remaining beleaguered band. He requires his men to cease hostilities and orders his horse to be led up the turret-stair