

thing less than a fourth romance, in verse; the theme, during the English civil wars of Charles I., and the scene, your own domain of Rokehy. I want to build my cottage a little better than my limited finances will permit out of my ordinary income; and although it is very true that an author should not hazard his reputation, yet, as Boh Acres says, I really think Reputation should take some care of the gentleman in return. Now, I have all your scenery deeply imprinted in my memory, and moreover, be it known to you, I intend to refresh its traces this ensuing summer, and to go as far as the borders of Lancashire, and the caves of Yorkshire, and so perhaps on to Derbyshire. I have sketched a story which pleases me, and I am only anxious to keep my theme quiet, for its being piddled upon by some of your *Ready-to-catch* literati, as John Bunyan calls them, would be a serious misfortune to me. I am not without hope of seducing you to be my guide a little way on my tour. Is there not some book (sense or nonsense, I care not) on the beauties of Teesdale — I mean a descriptive work? If you can point it out or lend it me, you will do me a great favor, and no less if you can tell me any traditions of the period. By which party was Barnard Castle occupied? It strikes me that it should be held for the Parliament. Pray, help me in this, by truth, or fiction, or tradition, — I care not which, if it be picturesque. What the deuce is the name of that wild glen, where we had such a clamber on horseback up a stone staircase? — Cat's Cradle, or Cat's Castle, I think it was. I wish also to have the true edition of the traditionary tragedy of your old house at Mortham, and the ghost thereunto appertaining, and you will do me yeoman's service in compiling the relics of so valuable a legend. Item — Do you know anything of a striking ancient castle belonging, I think, to the Duke of Leeds, called Coningsburgh?¹ Grose notices it, hut in a very flimsy manner. I once flew past it on the mail-coach,

¹ See note, *Ivanhoe*, chap. xlii.