

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.

366

—“Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
 And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
 Rest thee in Castle Ravenshuch,
 Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“The blackening wave is edged with white:
 To inch¹ and rock the sea-mews fly;
 The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,²
 Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

368

“Last night the gifted Seer³ did view
 A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
 Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:
 Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?”—

369

“’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.

370

“’Tis not because th⁴ ring⁴ they ride,
 And Lindesay at the ring rides well,

¹ **Inch**—Small island.

² **Water-Sprite**—A spirit that by means of unearthly noises gave warning of the destruction of ships and the drowning of men and women.

³ **Seer**—Prophet.

⁴ **The ring**—Tilting at the ring, the carrying away of a suspended ring with the lance while riding at full speed, was a favourite sport of the knighthood at this time.