

EDINBURGH AFTER FLODDEN

News of battle ! news of battle !—

Hark ! 'tis ringing down the street :
And the archways and the pavement
Bear the clang of hurrying feet.
News of battle ! who hath brought it ?
News of triumph ! who should bring
Tidings from our noble army,
Greetings from our gallant King ?
All last night we watched the beacons
Blazing on the hills afar,
Each one bearing, as it kindled,
Message of the opened war.
All night long the northern streamers¹
Shot across the trembling sky :
Fearful lights, that never beacon
Save when kings or heroes die.

News of battle ! who hath brought it ?

All are thronging to the gate ;—
“Warder, warder ! open quickly !
Man—is this a time to wait ?”
And the heavy gates are opened :
Then a murmur long and loud,
And a cry of fear and wonder
Bursts from out the bending crowd.
For they see in battered harness
Only one hard-stricken man ;
And his weary steed is wounded,
And his cheek is pale and wan :

¹ *Northern streamers* : northern lights.