

spired with an Homeric power of rapid narration, bold description, lively or pathetic touches of sentiment."—HALLAM.

These concluding verses are exquisitely beautiful. The *melancholy sentiment* is again prominent (see Canto i.), and chimes here very sweetly with the gloom of approaching night. The first stanza very happily strikes this meditative or pensive chord by suggestive particulars; the whole stanza is an *accumulation of picturesque* (i.e., easily imagined) *circumstances* that suggest evening, and, by their *associated ideas*, that *poetic musing* belonging peculiarly to evening. An apt illustration of this effect is had from the opening lines of Gray's "Elegy," where the same sentiment is awakened by similar means:—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds;
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant fold."

The only difference between the scenes is Scott's "wild breeze," which would seem to break the solemn spell, but it is characteristic of Scott, who loved the wild, the irregular, the grand in nature or man; it is also in keeping with the "wizard elm." The "deer" and "fountain" are objects suited to the rural scene and add a further grace to the picture. The *taste* shown in *selecting* them is evident; they are both *beautiful* in themselves and *suggestive* of the beauty, the simplicity and the pleasure of nature's charms in solitude; the fountain also suggests an additional pleasure in the *sweet sound*; the student will not fail to notice the prominence given to sounds here. In the calmness of evening sounds are much more distinctly heard than in the day time; hence the force of "distant echo."

Purple. Note the *method of description*—(1) "purple peaks," (2) "hills grow dark," (3) the *twilight* copse with the glow worm and deer.

Couvert is lit. *covered*: it is the p.p. of French *couvrir*, to cover, from Lat. *cooperio*, from *con* and *aperto*, to open.

Numbers = poetry or song. A meaning *numerous* (a number) had in Latin, referring to the numbered feet in the line. Cf. Milton's "numerous line."

If we compare this with the "Invocation" we will find a somewhat similar scene. The harp there flung its numbers down the "fitful breeze" till "envious ivy" muffled it; but the ivy is now removed and the sweeter sounds must no longer keep their silence.

Nature's vespers = the various sounds he mentions, which are, as it were, the evening hymn of nature—a *metaphor*. There is a *personified metaphor* in the address to the Harp, and *alliteration* is very skillfully employed.

Yet once again. A pleasing *anaphora*. How regretfully we say farewell to those we love; so the poet lingers on it here by *repetition*.

Feeble sway. Modest *self-depreciation*. See Canto i.

Idly cavit. It was rather severely criticized by Jeffrey, but it remains his most popular poem.