

# THE LADY OF THE LAKE

## CANTO FIRST

### THE CHASE

HARP of the North!<sup>1</sup> that mouldering long hast hung  
On the witch-elm<sup>2</sup> that shades Saint Fillan's<sup>3</sup> spring,  
And down the fitful breeze thy numbers<sup>4</sup> flung,  
Till envious ivy did around thee cling,  
Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,—

5

O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep?  
Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring,  
Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep,  
Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon,<sup>5</sup>

10

Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,  
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,  
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.

At each according pause<sup>6</sup> was heard aloud  
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!

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<sup>1</sup> **Harp of the North**—These introductory stanzas in Spenserian verse, "inspired by the spirit of the old Scottish minstrelsy," serve as an introduction to the poem as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> **Witch-elm**—The bending or drooping elm.

<sup>3</sup> **Saint Fillan**—A Scottish saint of the seventh century. The spring of St. Fillan was a few miles from Loch Lomond.

<sup>4</sup> **Numbers**—Music.

<sup>5</sup> **Caledon**—Caledonia, the ancient Roman name of Scotland.

<sup>6</sup> **According pause**—A pause in the song filled with the music of the harp, which blended harmoniously with the song.