

This song gave great offence to the many sincere personal friends whom Scott numbered among the upper ranks of the Whigs; and, in particular, it created a marked coldness towards him on the part of the accomplished and amiable Countess of Rosslyn (a very intimate friend of his favorite patroness, Lady Dalkeith), which, as his letters show, wounded his feelings severely, — the more so, I have no doubt, because a little reflection must have made him repent not a few of its allusions.¹ He was consoled, however, by abundant testimonies of Tory approbation; and, among others, by the following note from Mr. Canning: —

TO WALTER SCOTT, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

LONDON, July 14, 1806.

DEAR SIR, — I should not think it necessary to trouble you with a direct acknowledgment of the very acceptable present

¹ Mr. W. Savage Landor, a man of great learning and great abilities, has in a recent collective edition of his writings reproduced many uncharitable judgments on distinguished contemporaries, which the reflection of advanced life might have been expected to cancel. Sir Walter Scott has his full share in these, but he suffers in good company. I must, however, notice the distinct assertion (vol. i. p. 339) that Scott "composed and sang a triumphal song on the death of a minister whom, in his lifetime, he had flattered, and who was just in his coffin when the minstrel sang *The fox is run to earth*. Constable of Edinburgh heard him, and related the fact to Curran, who expressed his incredulity with great vehemence, and his abhorrence was greater than his incredulity." The only possible foundation on which this story can have been built is the occurrence in one stanza of the song mentioned in my text of the words, *Tally-ho to the Fox*. The song was written and sung in June, 1806. Mr. Fox was then minister, and died in September, 1806. The lines which Mr. Landor speaks of as "flattering Fox during his lifetime" are very celebrated lines: they appeared in the epistle prefixed to the first canto of *Marmion*, which was published in February, 1808, and their subject is the juxtaposition of the tombs of Pitt and Fox in Westminster Abbey. Everybody who knew Scott knows that he never sang a song in his life; and if that had not been notorious, who but Mr. Landor could have heard without "incredulity" that he sang a triumphal song on the death of Fox in the presence of the publisher of *Marmion* and proprietor of the *Edinburgh Review*? I may add, though it is needless, that Constable's son-in-law and partner, Mr. Cadell, "never heard of such a song as that described by Mr. Landor." — (1848.)