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# MORANG'S LITERATURE SERIES

Scott's  
**The Lady of the  
Lake**

EDITED WITH NOTES BY  
JOHN C. SAUL, M.A.

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MORANG'S LITERATURE SERIES

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# THE LADY OF THE LAKE

BY  
SIR WALTER SCOTT

EDITED WITH NOTES  
BY  
JOHN C. SAUL, M.A.

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## INTRODUCTION

WALTER SCOTT was born in Edinburgh on August 15, 1771. His father was a lawyer and in good circumstances, so that the boy had the advantage of a cultured home and a sound school education. At the age of eighteen months, he had a severe attack of fever, which for many years injured his health and left him lame for life. This lameness, however, was not so serious as to disable him, but his health was so delicate that he was sent to the country for some time. Here he roamed over the hills, visiting the cottages of the peasants, and picking up many of the stories which he afterwards wove into his poems and novels.

In 1778 Scott was sent to the High School at Edinburgh. Here he did not distinguish himself at his studies, but was popular among the boys for his genial disposition and his fondness for relating tales of romance and adventure. Even at the University, which he entered after leaving the High School, this love for the old romances continued, and he and his friend Irving spent even more time among the old Scottish stories than they did at their more serious studies. At this time, too, Scott began the making of a collection of ancient ballads. In 1786 he was apprenticed to his father, and six years later was called to the bar. His love for the ancient legends of his own and other countries interfered very much with his legal studies, so that he did not make a brilliant success of his work as a lawyer.

In 1797 Scott married Miss Charlotte Charpentier and in 1799 was made sheriff of Selkirkshire, an office which left him considerable leisure. At this time he was engaged in historical and antiquarian researches, and, in addition, found time to be an active member of the Edinburgh Light Horse. The results of his love for ballads and folklore were seen as early as 1796,



when he published translations of Burger's *Lenore* and *The Wild Huntsman*. This was followed soon after by some ballads of his own, and in 1802 by *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, a collection of Border ballads. In 1805 *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was published and proved an instantaneous success. *Marmion* was published in 1808 and *The Lady of the Lake* in 1810. *Don Roderick*, *Rokeby*, *The Bridal of Triermain*, *The Lord of the Isles* and *Harold the Dauntless*, his most important remaining poems, were produced within the next few years.

In 1812 Scott removed to Abbotsford, his famous residence on the banks of the Tweed, near Melrose. Here for the next fifteen years he lived, surrounded by his friends, and in the enjoyment of honour and prosperity, although at times his health was poor. In 1814 he began the publication of his novels, the first, *Waverley*, appearing in that year. In 1820 he was made a baronet. The next six or seven years were probably the happiest of his life, but in 1826 the reverse came. He became involved in the failure of his publishers, Constable & Co., and found himself under the burden of a debt of £117,000, for which he became personally responsible. Scott at once set himself the task of wiping out this enormous load of debt. He worked early and late and before two years had paid to his creditors £40,000. The strain, however, was telling on him. He was forced to cease all extra work on account of failing health, and in September, 1831, he left Abbotsford on a trip to Naples in a warship which had been placed at his disposal by the British government. He knew himself that his end was near, and his only desire was to get back to Scotland to breathe his last in his native land. He reached Abbotsford very weak in body, and on the 21st of September, 1832, passed away surrounded by the members of his family who had been watching by his bedside.

*The Lady of the Lake* was published in 1810 and at once proved successful, over 8,000 copies being sold in little more than a year. Scott says himself in his Introduction to the poem: "The ancient manners, the habits and customs of the aboriginal race by whom the Highlands of Scotland were inhabited, had always appeared to me peculiarly adapted to poetry. The change in their manners, too, had taken place almost within my own time, or at least I had learned many particulars concerning the ancient state of the Highlands from the old men of the last generation. I had always thought the old Scottish Gael highly adapted for poetical composition. The feuds and political dissensions which, half a century earlier, would have rendered the richer and wealthier part of the kingdom indisposed to countenance a poem, the scene of which was laid in the Highlands, were now sunk in the generous compassion which the English, more than any other nation, feel for the misfortunes of an honourable foe. The Poems of Ossian had by their popularity sufficiently shown that, if writings on Highland subjects were qualified to interest the reader, mere national prejudices were, in the present day, very unlikely to interfere with their success.

"I had also read a great deal, seen much, and heard more, of that romantic country where I was in the habit of spending some time every autumn; and the scenery of Loch Katrine was connected with the recollection of many a dear friend and merry expedition of former days. This poem, the action of which lay among scenes so beautiful and so deeply imprinted on my recollections, was a labour of love, and it was no less so to recall the manners and incidents introduced. The frequent custom of James IV, and particularly of James V, to walk through their kingdom in disguise, afforded me the hint of an incident which never fails to be interesting if managed with the slightest address or dexterity.

"I took uncommon pains to verify the accuracy of the local circumstances of this story. I recollect, in particular, that to ascertain whether I was telling a probable tale, I went into Perthshire, to see whether King James could actually have ridden from the banks of Loch Vennachar to Stirling Castle within the time supposed in the poem, and had the pleasure to satisfy myself that it was quite practicable."

While there is a certain basis of historical fact in the poem, yet the poet has allowed himself the utmost freedom in its treatment. "He left himself great freedom in the invention of persons and incidents true in kind or species to the period chosen. The Lowland kings all along had great difficulties with their Highland neighbours. This long-standing historical enmity is embodied in Roderick Dhu and Clan Alpine. But the chief is an imaginary chief, and even the clan is an imaginary clan. Clan Alpine has a certain verisimilitude to the Clan Gregor, and is placed by the poet in Macgregor territory, but there was not in the time of James V a real united clan within the district traversed by Roderick's fiery cross. The ambition of the powerful family of Douglas, and its rivalry with the royal authority, is also a matter of history. But James of Bothwell is an imaginary personage. So with Malcolm Græme, Roderick's neighbour. He is placed in veritable Graham territory; he is heir to lands in Menteith and Strath-Endrick, of which Grahams were long the lords; but there was no such royal ward in the reign of James V. It is enough for the poet's purpose that there might have been."

The Douglas family play a most important part in the poem. The reason for the enmity of the king towards the Douglas is thus explained by Scott in his notes: "The Earl of Angus, it will be remembered, had married the queen dowager, and availed himself of the right which he thus acquired, as well as of his ex-

tensive power, to retain the king in a sort of tutelage, which approached very near to captivity. Several open attempts were made to rescue James from this thralldom, with which he was well known to be deeply disgusted; but the valour of the Douglasses, and their allies, gave them the victory in every conflict. At length, the king, while residing at Falkland, contrived to escape by night out of his own court and palace, and rode full speed to Stirling Castle, where the governor, who was of the opposite faction, joyfully received him. Being thus at liberty, James speedily summoned round him such peers as he knew to be most inimical to the domination of Angus, and laid his complaint before them, says Pitscottie, 'with great lamentations: showing to them how he was holden in subjection, thir years bygone, by the Earl of Angus, and his kin and friends, who, oppressed the whole country, and spoiled it, under the pretence of justice and his authority; and had slain many of his lieges, kinsmen, and friends, because they would have had it mended at their hands, and put him at liberty, as he ought to have been, at the counsel of his whole lords, and not have been subjected and corrected with no particular men, by the rest of his nobles: Therefore, said he, I desire, my lords, that I may be satisfied of the said earl, his kin, and friends; for I avow, that Scotland shall not hold us both, while [*i.e.*] till I be revenged on him and his.

“The lords hearing the king's complaint and lamentation, and also the great rage, fury, and malice, that he bore toward the Earl of Angus, his kin and friends, they concluded all and thought it best, that he should be summoned to underly the law; if he fand not caution, nor yet compear himself, that he should be put to the horn, with all his kin and friends, so many as were contained in the letters. And further, the lords ordained, by advice of his majesty, that his brother and

friends should be summoned to find caution to underly the law within a certain day, or else be put to the horn. But the earl appeared not, nor none for him; and so he was put to the horn, with all his kin and friends: so many as were contained in the summons, that compeared not, were banished, and holden traitors to the king."



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# 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!

15

---

<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.

Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;  
 For still the burden of thy minstrelsy  
 Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's  
 matchless eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand  
 That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray; 20  
 O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command  
 Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:  
 Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,  
 And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,  
 Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway, 25  
 The wizard note has not been touched in vain.  
 Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

## I

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,  
 Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,<sup>1</sup>  
 And deep his midnight lair had made 30  
 In lone Glenartney's<sup>2</sup> hazel shade;  
 But when the sun his beacon red  
 Had kindled on Benvoirlich's<sup>3</sup> head,  
 The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay  
 Resounded up the rocky way, 35  
 And faint, from farther distance borne,  
 Were heard the clanging hoof and horn.

## II

As Chief, who hears his warder call,  
 "To arms! the foemen storm the wall,"

---

<sup>1</sup> **Monan's rill**—Monan was a Scottish martyr, but the rill is purely imaginary.

<sup>2</sup> **Glenartney**—A valley in Perthshire through which runs the River Artney.

<sup>3</sup> **Benvoirlich**—A mountain to the north of the Artney, rising to the height of about 2,000 feet.

The antlered monarch of the waste  
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.  
But ere his fleet career he took,  
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;  
Like crested leader proud and high  
Tossed his beamed <sup>1</sup> frontlet to the sky;  
A moment gazed adown the dale,  
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,  
A moment listened to the cry,  
That thickened as the cha e drew nigh;  
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,  
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,  
And, stretching forward free and far,  
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.<sup>2</sup>

40

45

50

## III

Yelled on the view <sup>3</sup> the opening pack;  
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;  
To many a mingled sound at once  
The awakened mountain gave response.  
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,  
Clattered a hundred steeds along,  
Their peal the merry horns rung out,  
A hundred voices joined the shout;  
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,  
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.  
Far from the tumult fled the roe,  
Close in her covert cowered the doe,  
The falcon, from her cairn on high,  
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,  
Till far beyond her piercing ken  
The hurricane had swept the glen.

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<sup>1</sup> **Beamed**—Antlered.

<sup>2</sup> **Uam-Var**—A mountain lying to the south of the Artney.  
The name means "great cavern."

<sup>3</sup> **On the view**—At the first sight of the stag.



Faint, and more faint, its failing din  
 Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,<sup>1</sup>  
 And silence settled, wide and still,  
 On the lone wood and mighty hill.

70

## IV

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war<sup>2</sup>  
 Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,  
 And roused the cavern where, 't is told,  
 A giant made his den of old;  
 For ere that steep ascent was won,  
 High in his pathway hung the sun,  
 And many a gallant, stayed perforce,  
 Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,  
 And of the trackers of the deer  
 Scarce half the lessening pack was near;  
 So shrewdly<sup>3</sup> on the mountain-side  
 Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

75

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## V

The noble stag was pausing now  
 Upon the mountain's southern brow,  
 Where broad extended, far beneath,  
 The varied realms of fair Menteith.<sup>4</sup>  
 With anxious eye he wandered o'er  
 Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,  
 And pondered refuge from his toil,  
 By far Lochard<sup>5</sup> or Aberfoyle.

90

<sup>1</sup> **Linn**—A pool of water, or, sometimes, a ravine.

<sup>2</sup> **Sylvan war**—War carried on in the forest—the chase.

<sup>3</sup> **Shrewdly**—Severely.

<sup>4</sup> **Menteith**—The country in the south-western part of Perthshire through which the River Teith flows.

<sup>5</sup> **Lochard**—Loch Ard is a lake about five miles from Lake Katrine, with the village of Aberfoyle about two miles to the east.

But nearer was the copsewood gray  
 That waved and wept on Loch Achray,<sup>1</sup> 9  
 And mingled with the pine-trees blue  
 On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.<sup>2</sup>  
 Fresh vigour with the hope returned,  
 With flying foot the heath he spurned,  
 Held westward with unwearied race, 100  
 And left behind the panting chase.

## VI

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,  
 As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;<sup>3</sup>  
 What reins were tightened in despair, 105  
 When rose Benledi's<sup>4</sup> ridge in air;  
 Who flagged upon Bochastle's<sup>5</sup> heath,  
 Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,<sup>6</sup>—  
 For twice that day, from shore to shore,  
 The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.  
 Few were the stragglers following far, 110  
 That reached the lake of Vennachar;<sup>7</sup>  
 And when the Brigg of Turk<sup>8</sup> was won,  
 The headmost horseman rode alone.

<sup>1</sup> **Achray**—One of a chain of three lakes—Katrine and Vennachar being the other two—in this section of Perthshire.

<sup>2</sup> **Benvenue**—A mountain to the south of Lake Katrine.

<sup>3</sup> **Cambusmore**—An estate on the banks of the Keltie, a tributary of the River Teith.

<sup>4</sup> **Benledi**—A mountain about 2,000 feet in height, near Loch Achray. The word means "Mountain of God."

<sup>5</sup> **Bochastle**—A moor near the eastern end of Lake Vennachar.

<sup>6</sup> **Teith**—A tributary of the River Forth.

<sup>7</sup> **Vennachar**—One of the lakes of the district in which the scene of the poem lies. The word means "The Lake of the Fair Valley."

<sup>8</sup> **Brigg of Turk**—"The Bridge of the Wild Boar." A bridge spanning the stream that joins Vennachar and Achray.

## VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,  
 That horseman plied the scourge and steel; 115  
 For jaded now, and spent with toil,  
 Embossed with foam,<sup>1</sup> and dark with soil,  
 While every gasp with sobs he drew,  
 The labouring stag strained full in view.  
 Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's<sup>2</sup> breed, 120  
 Unnatched for courage, breath, and speed,  
 Fast on his flying traces came,  
 And all but won that desperate game;  
 For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,  
 Vindictive toiled the bloodhounds stanch; 125  
 Nor nearer might the dogs attain,  
 Nor farther might the quarry strain.  
 Thus up the margin of the lake,  
 Between the precipice and brake,  
 O'er stock<sup>3</sup> and rock their race they take. 130

## VIII

The Hunter marked that mountain high,  
 The lone lake's western boundary,  
 And deemed the stag must turn to bay,  
 Where that huge rampart barred the way;  
 Already glorying in the prize, 135  
 Measured his antlers with his eyes;  
 For the death-wound and death-halloo  
 Mustered his breath, his whinyard<sup>4</sup> drew:—  
 But thundering as he came prepared,  
 With ready arm and weapon bared, 140

<sup>1</sup> **Embossed with foam**—Foaming at the mouth.

<sup>2</sup> **Saint Hubert's breed**—The hounds of the abbots of St. Hubert, a famous breed during this period.

<sup>3</sup> **Stock**—The stumps of the trees.

<sup>4</sup> **Whinyard**—A short sword or knife.

The wily quarry shunned the shock,  
And turned him from the opposing rock;  
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,  
Soon lost to hound and Hunter's ken,  
In the deep Trosachs' <sup>1</sup> wildest nook 145  
His solitary refuge took.  
There, while close couched the thicket shed  
Cold dews and wild flowers on his head,  
He heard the baffled dogs in vain  
Rave through the hollow pass amain,<sup>2</sup> 150  
Chiding the rocks that yelled again.

## IX

Close on the hounds the Hunter came,  
To cheer them on the vanished game;  
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,  
The gallant horse exhausted fell. 155  
The impatient rider strove in vain  
To rouse him with the spur and rein,  
For the good steed, his labours o'er,  
Stretched his stiff limbs, to rise no more;  
Then, touched with pity and remorse, 160  
He sorrowed o'er the expiring horse.  
"I little thought when first thy rein  
I slacked upon the banks of Seine,  
That Highland eagle e'er should feed  
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed! 165  
Woe worth <sup>3</sup> the chase, woe worth the day,  
That costs thy life, my gallant gray!"

---

<sup>1</sup> **Trosachs**—"The rough or bristled territory." The country in the neighbourhood of Lakes Achray, Vennachar and Katrine.

<sup>2</sup> **Amain**—With full force.

<sup>3</sup> **Woe worth**—Evil be to.

## X

Then through the dell his horn resounds,  
 From vain pursuit to call the hounds.  
 Back limped, with slow and crippled pace, 170  
 The sulky leaders of the chase;  
 Close to their master's side they pressed,  
 With drooping tail and humbled crest;  
 But still the dingle's<sup>1</sup> hollow throat  
 Prolonged the swelling bugle-note. 175  
 The owlets started from their dream,  
 The eagles answered with their scream,  
 Round and around the sounds were cast,  
 Till echo seemed an answering blast;  
 And on the Hunter hied his way, 180  
 To join some comrades of the day,  
 Yet often paused, so strange the road,  
 So wondrous were the scenes it showed.

## XI

The western waves of ebbing day  
 Rolled o'er the glen their level way; 185  
 Each purple peak, each flinty spire,  
 Was bathed in floods of living fire.  
 But not a setting beam could glow  
 Within the dark ravines below,  
 Where twined the path in shadow hid, 190  
 Round many a rocky pyramid,  
 Shooting abruptly from the dell  
 Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;  
 Round many an insulated mass, 195  
 The native bulwarks of the pass,  
 Huge as the tower which builders vain  
 Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **Dingle**—A narrow valley.

<sup>2</sup> **Shinar's plain**—See Genesis xi, 1-9.



The rocky summits, split and rent,  
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,  
Or seemed fantastically set 200  
With cupola or minaret,  
Wild crests as pagod <sup>1</sup> ever decked,  
Or mosque of Eastern architect.  
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,  
Nor lacked they many a banner fair; 205  
For, from their shivered brows displayed,  
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,  
All twinkling with the dewdrop sheen,<sup>2</sup>  
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,  
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes 210  
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

## XII

Boon <sup>3</sup> nature scattered, free and wild,  
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.  
Here eglantine embalmed the air,  
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there; 215  
The primrose pale and violet flower  
Found in each clift a narrow bower;  
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,  
Emblems of punishment and pride,  
Grouped their dark hues with every stain 220  
The weather-beaten crags retain.  
With boughs that quaked at every breath,  
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;  
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak  
Cast anchor in the rifted rock; 225  
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung  
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,  
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,  
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Pagod**—Pagoda.<sup>2</sup> **Sheen**—Bright.<sup>3</sup> **Boon**—Bountiful.

Highest of all, where white peaks glanced, 230  
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,  
The wanderer's eye could barely view  
The summer heaven's delicious blue;  
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem  
The scenery of a fairy dream. 235

## XIII

Onward amid the copse 'gan peep  
A narrow inlet, still and deep,  
Affording scarce such breadth of brim  
As served the wild duck's brood to swim.  
Lost for a space, through thickets veering, 240  
But broader when again appearing,  
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face  
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;  
And farther as the Hunter strayed,  
Still broader sweep its channels made. 245  
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,  
Emerging from entangled wood,  
But, wave-encircled, seemed to float,  
Like castle girdled with its moat;  
Yet broader floods extending still 250  
Divide them from their parent hill,  
Till each, retiring, claims to be  
An islet in an inland sea.

## XIV

And now, to issue from the glen,  
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken 255  
Unless he climb with footing nice  
A far-projecting precipice.  
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,  
The hazel saplings lent their aid;  
And thus an airy point he won, 260

Where, gleaming with the setting sun,  
One burnished sheet of living gold,  
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,  
In all her length far winding lay,  
With promontory, creek, and bay, 265  
And islands that, empurpled bright,  
Floated amid the livelier <sup>1</sup> light,  
And mountains that like giants stand  
To sentinel enchanted land.  
High on the south, huge Benvenue 270  
Down to the lake in masses threw  
Crag, knoll, and mounds, confusedly hurled,  
The fragments of an earlier world;  
A wildering forest feathered o'er  
His ruined sides and summit hoar, 275  
While on the north, through middle air,  
Ben-an <sup>2</sup> heaved high his forehead bare.

## XV

From the steep promontory gazed  
The stranger, raptured and amazed,  
And, "What a scene were here," he cried, 280  
"For princely pomp or churchman's pride!  
On this bold brow, a lordly tower;  
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;  
On yonder meadow far away,  
The turrets of a cloister <sup>3</sup> gray; 285  
How blithely might the bugle-horn  
Chide on the lake the lingering morn!  
How sweet at eve the lover's lute  
Chime when the groves were still and mute!  
And when the midnight moon should lave 290

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<sup>1</sup> **Livelier**—Brighter because in motion.

<sup>2</sup> **Ben-an**—A mountain nearly 2,000 feet high, to the north of the Trosachs.

<sup>3</sup> **Cloister**—Monastery.

Her forehead in the silver wave,  
 How solemn on the ear would come  
 The holy matins' distant hum,  
 While the deep peal's commanding tone  
 Should wake, in yonder islet lone, 295  
 A sainted hermit from his cell,  
 To drop a bead<sup>1</sup> with every knell!  
 And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,  
 Should each bewildered stranger call  
 To friendly feast and lighted hall. 300

## XVI

"Blithe were it then to wander here!  
 But now—beshrew<sup>2</sup> yon nimble deer—  
 Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,  
 The copse must give my evening fare;  
 Some mossy bank my couch must be, 305  
 Some rustling oak my canopy.  
 Yet pass we that; the war and chase  
 Give little choice of resting-place;—  
 A summer night in greenwood spent  
 Were but to-morrow's merriment: 310  
 But hosts may in these wilds abound,  
 Such as are better missed than found;  
 To meet with Highland plunderers here  
 Were worse than loss of steed or deer. —  
 I am alone; — my bugle-strain 315  
 May call some straggler of the train;  
 Or, fall the worst that may betide,  
 Ere now this falchion has been tried."

## XVII

But scarce again his horn he wound,<sup>3</sup>  
 When lo! forth starting at the sound, 320

<sup>1</sup> **Drop a bead**—Say a prayer.

<sup>2</sup> **Beshrew**—Curse.

<sup>3</sup> **Wound**—Blew.

From underneath an aged oak  
That slanted from the islet rock,  
A damsel guider of its way,  
A little skiff shot to the bay,  
That round the promontory steep 325  
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,  
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,  
The weeping willow twig to lave,  
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,  
The beach of pebbles bright as snow. 330  
The boat had touched this silver strand  
Just as the Hunter left his stand,  
And stood concealed amid the brake,  
To view this Lady of the Lake.  
The maiden paused, as if again 335  
She thought to catch the distant strain.  
With head upraised, and look intent,  
And eye and ear attentive bent,  
And locks flung back, and lips apart,  
Like monument of Grecian art, 340  
In listening mood, she seemed to stand,  
The guardian Naiad<sup>1</sup> of the strand.

## XVIII

And ne'er did Grecian chisel trace  
A Nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,  
Of finer form or lovelier face! 345  
What though the sun, with ardent frown,  
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown, —  
The sportive toil, which, short and light,  
Had dyed her glowing hue so bright,  
Served too in hastier swell to show, 350  
Short glimpses of a breast of snow:  
What though no rule of courtly grace

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<sup>1</sup> **Naiad**—The Naiads were the water-nymphs or guardians of the streams in the Greek mythology.

To measured mood had trained her pace,—  
 A foot more light, a step more true,  
 Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew; 355  
 E'en the slight harebell raised its head,  
 Elastic from her airy tread:  
 What though upon her speech there hung  
 The accents of the mountain tongue,—  
 Those silver sounds, so soft, so dear, 360  
 The listener held his breath to hear!

## XIX

A chieftain's daughter seemed the maid;  
 Her satin snood,<sup>1</sup> her silken plaid,  
 Her golden brooch, such birth betrayed. 365  
 And seldom was a snood amid  
 Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,  
 Whose glossy black to shame might bring  
 The plumage of the raven's wing;  
 And seldom o'er a breast so fair  
 Mantled a plaid with modest care, 370  
 And never brooch the folds combined  
 Above a heart more good and kind.  
 Her kindness and her worth to spy,  
 You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;  
 Not Katrine in her mirror blue 375  
 Gives back the shaggy banks more true,  
 Than every free-born glance confessed  
 The guileless movements of her breast;  
 Whether joy danced in her dark eye,  
 Or woe or pity claimed a sigh, 380  
 Or filial love was glowing there,  
 Or meek devotion poured a prayer,  
 Or tale of injury called forth  
 The indignant spirit of the North.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Snood**—The ribbon that tied her hair; the sign of maidenhood. See Canto III., lines 485 and 487.



One only passion unrevealed 385  
With maiden pride the maid concealed,  
Yet not less purely felt the flame; —  
O, need I tell that passion's name?

## XX

Impatient of the silent horn,  
Now on the gale her voice was borne: — 390  
"Father!" she cried; the rocks around  
Loved to prolong the gentle sound.  
Awhile she paused, no answer came; —  
"Malcolm, was thine the blast?" the name 395  
Less resolutely uttered fell,  
The echoes could not catch the swell.  
"A stranger I," the Huntsman said,  
Advancing from the hazel shade.  
The maid, alarmed, with hasty oar  
Pushed her light shallop from the shore, 400  
And when a space was gained between,  
Closer she drew her bosom's screen; —  
So forth the startled swan would swing,  
So turn to prune<sup>1</sup> his ruffled wing.  
Then safe, though fluttered and amazed, 405  
She paused, and on the stranger gazed.  
Not his the form, nor his the eye,  
That youthful maidens wont to fly.

## XXI

On his bold visage middle age  
Had slightly pressed its signet sage, 410  
Yet had not quenched the open truth  
And fiery vehemence of youth;  
Forward and frolic glee was there,  
The will to do, the soul to dare,

---

<sup>1</sup> **Prune**—Arrange his plumage.



The sparkling glance, soon blown to fire, 415  
 Of hasty love or headlong ire.  
 His limbs were cast in manly mould  
 For hardy sports or contest bold;  
 And though in peaceful garb arrayed, 420  
 And weaponless except his blade,  
 His stately mien as well implied  
 A high-born heart, a martial pride,  
 As if a baron's crest he wore,  
 And sheathed in armour trode the shore.  
 Slighting<sup>1</sup> the petty need he showed, 425  
 He told of his benighted road;  
 His ready speech flowed fair and free,  
 In phrase of gentlest courtesy,  
 Yet seemed that tone and gesture bland  
 Less used to sue than to command. 430

## XXII

Awhile the maid the stranger eyed,  
 And, reassured, at length replied,  
 That Highland halls were open still  
 To wildered wanderers of the hill.  
 "Nor think you unexpected come 435  
 To yon lone isle, our desert home;  
 Before the heath had lost the dew,  
 This morn, a couch was pulled for you;  
 On yonder mountain's purple head  
 Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled, 440  
 And our broad nets have swept the mere,<sup>2</sup>  
 To furnish forth your evening cheer."—  
 "Now, by the rood,<sup>3</sup> my lovely maid,  
 Your courtesy has erred," he said;  
 "No right have I to claim, misplaced, 445

<sup>1</sup> **Slighting**—Making light of.

<sup>2</sup> **Mere**—Lake.

<sup>3</sup> **Rood**—Cross.

The welcome of expected guest.  
A wanderer, here by fortune tost,  
My way, my friends, my courser lost,  
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,  
Have ever drawn your mountain air, 450  
Till on this lake's romantic strand  
I found a fay in fairy land!"—

## XXIII

"I well believe," the maid replied,  
As her light skiff approached the side,—  
"I well believe that ne'er before 455  
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;  
But yet, as far as yesternight,  
Old Allan-bane<sup>1</sup> foretold your plight,—  
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent  
Was on the visioned future bent. 460  
He saw your steed, a dappled gray,  
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;  
Painted exact your form and mien,  
Your hunting-suit of Lincoln green,<sup>2</sup>  
That tasselled horn so gayly gilt, 465  
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,  
That cap with heron plumage trim,  
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.  
He bade that all should ready be  
To grace a guest of fair degree;<sup>3</sup> 470  
But light I held his prophecy,  
And deemed it was my father's horn  
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne.

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<sup>1</sup> **Bane**—Fair-haired.

<sup>2</sup> **Lincoln green**—A favourite cloth worn by hunters, made in Lincoln.

<sup>3</sup> **Fair degree**—High rank.

## XXIV

The stranger smiled: — “Since to your home  
 A destined errant-knight <sup>1</sup> I come, 475  
 Announced by prophet sooth <sup>2</sup> and old,  
 Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,  
 I’ll lightly front each high emprise <sup>3</sup>  
 For one kind glance of those bright eyes.  
 Permit me first the task to guide 480  
 Your fairy frigate o’er the tide.”  
 The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,  
 The toil unwonted saw him try;  
 For seldom, sure, if e’er before,  
 His noble hand had grasped an oar: 485  
 Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,  
 And o’er the lake the shallop flew;  
 With heads erect and whimpering cry,  
 The hounds behind their passage ply.  
 Nor frequent does the bright oar break 490  
 The darkening mirror of the lake,  
 Until the rocky isle they reach,  
 And moor their shallop on the beach.

## XXV

The stranger viewed the shore around;  
 ’T was all so close with copsewood bound, 495  
 Nor track nor pathway might declare  
 That human foot frequented there,  
 Until the mountain maiden showed  
 A clambering unsuspected road,  
 That winded through the tangled screen, 500  
 And opened on a narrow green,  
 Where weeping birch and willow round

<sup>1</sup> **Errant-knight**—A knight wandering in search of adventures.

<sup>2</sup> **Sooth**—True.

<sup>3</sup> **Emprise**—Enterprise.

With their long fibres swept the ground.  
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,  
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

505

## XXVI

It was a lodge of ample size,  
But, strange of structure and device;  
Of such materials as around  
The workman's hand had readiest found.  
Lopped of their boughs, their hoar trunks bared,<sup>510</sup>  
And by the hatchet rudely squared,  
To give the walls their destined height,  
The sturdy oak and ash unite;  
While moss and clay and leaves combined  
To fence each crevice from the wind. 515  
The lighter pine-trees overhead  
Their slender length for rafters spread,  
And withered heath and rushes dry  
Supplied a russet canopy.  
Due westward, fronting to the green, 520  
A rural portico was seen,  
Aloft on native pillars borne,  
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,  
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine,  
The ivy and Idæan vine,<sup>1</sup> 525  
The clematis, the favoured flower  
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,  
And every hardy plant could bear  
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.  
An instant in this porch she stayed, 530  
And gayly to the stranger said:  
"On heaven and on thy lady call,  
And enter the enchanted hall!"

<sup>1</sup> **Idæan vine**—Perhaps the red whortleberry, although this is not a climber. Idæan is from Mount Ida, in Asia Minor, famous for its vines.

## XXVII

"My hope, my heaven, my trust must be,  
 My gentle guide, in following thee!"— 535  
 He crossed the threshold, — and a clang  
 Of angry steel that instant rang.  
 To his bold brow his spirit rushed,  
 But soon for vain alarm he blushed,  
 When on the floor he saw displayed, 540  
 Cause of the din, a naked blade  
 Dropped from the sheath, that careless flung  
 Upon a stag's huge antlers swung;  
 For all around, the walls to grace,  
 Hung trophies of the fight or chase: 545  
 A target<sup>1</sup> there, a bugle here,  
 A battle-axe, a hunting-spear,  
 And broadswords, bows, and arrows store,  
 With the tusked trophies of the boar.  
 Here grins the wolf as when he died, 550  
 And there the wild-cat's brindled hide  
 The frontlet of the elk adorns,  
 Or mantles o'er the bison's horns;  
 Pennons and flags defaced and stained,  
 That blackening streaks of blood retained. 555  
 And deer-skins, dappled, dun, and white,  
 With otter's fur and seal's unite,  
 In rude and uncouth tapestry all,  
 To garnish forth the sylvan hall.

## XXVIII

The wondering stranger round him gazed, 560  
 And next the fallen weapon raised: —  
 Few were the arms whose sinewy strength  
 Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.  
 And as the brand he poised and swayed,

---

<sup>1</sup> **Target**—A small shield or buckler.

"I never knew but one," he said, 565  
"Whose stalwart arm might brook<sup>1</sup> to wield  
A blade like this in battle-field."  
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:  
"You see the guardian champion's sword;  
As light it trembles in his hand 570  
As in my grasp a hazel wand:  
My sire's tall form might grace the part  
Of Ferragus<sup>2</sup> or Ascabart,<sup>3</sup>  
But in the absent giant's hold  
Are women now, and menials old." 575

## XXIX

The mistress of the mansion came,  
Mature of age, a graceful dame,  
Whose easy step and stately port  
Had well become a princely court,  
To whom, though more than kindred knew, 580  
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.  
Meet welcome to her guest she made,  
And every courteous right was paid  
That hospitality could claim,  
Though all unasked his birth and name. 585  
Such then the reverence to a guest,  
That fellest foe might join the feast,  
And from his deadliest foeman's door

---

<sup>1</sup> **Brook**—Endure.

<sup>2</sup> **Ferragus**—A giant celebrated in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. He was forty feet high and had the strength of twenty men. Having dropped his helmet into a river he took an oath never to wear another until he had won that of Orlando, but when he met that warrior in combat he was slain.

<sup>3</sup> **Ascabart**—A giant who appears in the old English romance of *Bevis of Hampton*. He was thirty feet high and so strong that he carried off Sir Bevis, his wife and his horse under his one arm. He was conquered by Bevis and compelled to become a servant.



Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.  
 At length his rank the stranger names, 590  
 "The Knight of Snowdoun,<sup>1</sup> James Fitz-James;  
 Lord of a barren heritage,  
 Which his brave sires, from age to age,  
 By their good swords had held with toil;  
 His sire had fallen in such turmoil, 595  
 And he, God wot,<sup>2</sup> was forced to stand  
 Oft for his right with blade in hand.  
 This morning with Lord Moray's train  
 He chased a stalwart stag in vain,  
 Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer, 600  
 Lost his good steed, and wandered here."

## XXX

Fain would the Knight in turn require  
 The name and state of Ellen's sire.  
 Well showed the elder lady's mien  
 That courts and cities she had seen; 605  
 Ellen, though more her looks displayed  
 The simple grace of sylvan maid,  
 In speech and gesture, form and face,  
 Showed she was come of gentle race.  
 'T were strange in ruder rank to find 610  
 Such looks, such manners, and such mind.  
 Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,  
 Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;  
 Or Ellen, innocently gay,  
 Turned all inquiry light away:— 615  
 "Weird women<sup>3</sup> we! by dale and down  
 We dwell, afar from tower and town.  
 We stem the flood, we ride the blast,  
 On wandering knights our spells we cast;  
 While viewless minstrels touch the string, 620

<sup>1</sup> **Snowdoun**—An ancient name of Stirling.

<sup>2</sup> **Wot**—Knows.

<sup>3</sup> **Weird women**—Witches.



'Tis thus our charmed<sup>1</sup> rhymes we sing.''  
She sung, and still a harp unseen  
Filled up the symphony between.

## XXXI

## SONG

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,  
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking; 625  
Dream of battled fields no more,  
Days of danger, nights of waking.  
In our isle's enchanted hall,  
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,  
Fairy strains of music fall, 630  
Every sense in slumber dewing.  
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,  
Dream of fighting fields no more;  
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,  
Morn of toil, nor night of waking. 635

"No rude sound shall reach thine ear,  
Armour's clang or war-steed champing,  
Trump nor pibroch<sup>2</sup> summon here  
Mustering clan or squadron tramping. 640  
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come  
At the daybreak from the fallow,  
And the bittern sound his drum,  
Booming from the sedgy shallow.  
Ruder sounds shall none be near,  
Guards nor warders challenge here, 645  
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,  
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping."

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<sup>1</sup> Charmed—To be used as charms.

<sup>2</sup> Pibroch—The music of the bagpipes.

## XXXII

She paused, — then, blushing, led the lay,<sup>1</sup>  
 To grace the stranger of the day.  
 Her mellow notes awhile prolong  
 The cadence of the flowing song,  
 Till to her lips in measured frame  
 The minstrel verse spontaneous came.

650

## SONG CONTINUED

“Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;  
 While our slumbrous spells assail ye,  
 Dream not, with the rising sun,  
 Bugles here shall sound reveillé.<sup>2</sup>  
 Sleep! the deer is in his den;  
 Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying;  
 Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen  
 How thy gallant steed lay dying.  
 Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;  
 Think not of the rising sun,  
 For at dawning to assail ye  
 Here no bugles sound reveillé.”

655

660

665

## XXXIII

The hall was cleared, — the stranger's bed,  
 Was there of mountain heather spread,  
 Where oft a hundred guests had lain,  
 And dreamed their forest sports again.  
 But vainly did the heath-flower shed  
 Its moorland fragrance round his head;  
 Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest  
 The fever of his troubled breast.

670

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<sup>1</sup> **Led the lay**—Turned the song.

<sup>2</sup> **Reveille**—The morning summons.

In broken dreams the image rose  
Of varied perils, pains, and woes: 675  
His steed now flounders in the brake,  
Now sinks his barge upon the lake;  
Now leader of a broken host,  
His standard falls, his honour's lost,  
Then, — from my couch may heavenly might 680  
Chase that worst phantom of the night! —  
Again returned the scenes of youth,  
Of confident, undoubting truth;  
Again his soul he interchanged<sup>1</sup>  
With friends whose hearts were long estranged. 685  
They come, in dim procession led,  
The cold, the faithless, and the dead;  
As warm each hand, each brow as gay,  
As if they parted yesterday.  
And doubt distracts him at the view, — 690  
O were his senses false or true?  
Dreamed he of death or broken vow,  
Or is it all a vision now?

## XXXIV

At length with Ellen in a grove  
He seemed to walk and speak of love; 695  
She listened with a blush and sigh,  
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.  
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,  
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:  
The phantom's sex was changed and gone, 700  
Upon its head a helmet shone;  
Slowly enlarged to giant size,  
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,  
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,  
To Ellen still a likeness bore. — 705

---

<sup>1</sup> **Interchanged**—Exchanged confidences.

He woke, and, panting with affright,  
 Recalled the vision of the night.  
 The hearth's decaying brands were red,  
 And deep and dusky lustre shed,  
 Half showing, half concealing, all 710  
 The uncouth trophies of the hall.  
 Mid those the stranger fixed his eye  
 Where that huge falchion hung on high,  
 And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,  
 Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along, 715  
 Until, the giddy whirl to cure,  
 He rose and sought the moonshine pure.

## XXXV

The wild rose, eglantine, and broom  
 Wasted around their rich perfume;  
 The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm; 720  
 The aspens slept beneath the calm;  
 The silver light, with quivering glance,  
 Played on the water's still expanse,—  
 Wild were the heart whose passion's sway  
 Could rage beneath the sober ray! 725  
 He felt its calm, that warrior guest,  
 While thus he communed with his breast:—  
 “Why is it, at each turn I trace  
 Some memory of that exiled race?  
 Can I not mountain maiden spy, 730  
 But she must bear the Douglas<sup>1</sup> eye?  
 Can I not view a Highland brand,<sup>2</sup>  
 But it must match the Douglas hand?  
 Can I not frame a fevered dream,  
 But still the Douglas is the theme? 735  
 I'll dream no more, — by manly mind

<sup>1</sup> Douglas—See Introduction, pages 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> Brand—Sword.

Not even in sleep is will resigned.  
 My midnight orisons<sup>1</sup> said o'er,  
 I'll turn to rest, and dream no more."  
 His midnight orisons he told, 740  
 A prayer with every bead of gold,  
 Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,  
 And sunk in undisturbed repose,  
 Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,  
 And morning dawned on Benvenue. 745

## CANTO SECOND

## THE ISLAND

## I

At morn the black-cock trims his jetty wing,  
 'T is morning prompts the linnet's blithest lay,  
 All Nature's children feel the matin<sup>2</sup> spring  
 Of life reviving, with reviving day;  
 And while yon little bark glides down the bay, 5  
 Wafting the stranger on his way again,  
 Morn's genial influence roused a minstrel gray,  
 And sweetly o'er the lake was heard thy strain,  
 Mixed with the sounding harp, O white-haired Allan-  
 bane!

## II

## SONG.

"Not faster yonder rowers' might 10  
 Flings from their oars the spray,  
 Not faster yonder rippling bright,  
 That tracks the shallop's course in light

<sup>1</sup> Orisons—Prayers.<sup>2</sup> Matin—Morning.

Melts in the lake away,  
 Than men from memory erase 15  
 The benefits of former days;  
 Then stranger, go! good speed the while,  
 Nor think again of the lonely isle.

“High place to thee in royal court,  
 High place in battled line. 20  
 Good hawk and hound for sylvan sport!  
 Where beauty sees the brave resort,<sup>1</sup>  
 The honoured meed be thine!  
 True be thy sword, thy friend sincere,  
 Thy lady constant, kind, and dear, 25  
 And lost in love’s and friendship’s smile  
 Be memory of the lonely isle!

## III

## SONG CONTINUED

“But if beneath yon southern sky  
 A plaided stranger<sup>2</sup> roam,  
 Whose drooping crest and stifled sigh, 30  
 And sunken cheek and heavy eye,  
 Pine for his Highland home;  
 Then, warrior, then be thine to show  
 The care that soothes a wanderer’s woe:  
 Remember then thy hap<sup>3</sup> erewhile, 35  
 A stranger in the lonely isle.

“Or if on life’s uncertain main<sup>4</sup>  
 Mishap shall mar thy sail;  
 If faithful, wise, and brave in vain,

---

<sup>1</sup> **Resort**—At the tournament where the knights, in the presence of the ladies, contend for the prize of valour.

<sup>2</sup> **Plaided stranger**—A Highlander.

<sup>3</sup> **Thy hap**—What befell thee. <sup>4</sup> **Main**—Ocean.



Woe, want, and exile thou sustain  
Beneath the fickle gale;  
Waste not a sigh on fortune changed,  
On thankless courts, or friends estranged,  
But come where kindred worth shall smile,  
To greet thee **in** the lonely isle."

## IV

As died the sounds upon the tide,  
The shallop reached the mainland side,  
And ere his onward way he took,  
The stranger cast a lingering look,  
Where easily his eye might reach  
The Harper on the islet beach,  
Reclined against a blighted tree,  
As wasted, gray, and worn as he.  
To minstrel meditation given,  
His reverend brow was raised to heaven,  
As from the rising sun to claim  
A sparkle of inspiring flame.  
His hand, reclined upon the wire,  
Seemed watching the awakening fire ;  
So still he sat as those who wait  
Till judgment speak the doom of fate ;  
So still, as if no breeze might dare  
To lift one lock of hoary hair ;  
So still, as life itself were fled  
In the last sound his harp had sped.

## V

Upon a rock with lichens wild,  
Beside him Ellen sat and smiled.—  
Smiled she to see the stately drake  
Lead forth his fleet<sup>1</sup> upon the lake.

<sup>1</sup> **Fleet**—Of ducks.



While her exed spaniel from the beach  
 Bayed at the prize beyond his reach?  
 Yet tell me, then, the maid who knows,  
 Why deepened on her cheek the rose?—  
 Forgive, forgive, Fidelity!  
 Perchance the maiden smiled to see  
 Yon parting lingerer wave adieu,  
 And stop and turn to wave anew;  
 And, lovely ladies, ere your ire  
 Condemn the heroine of my lyre,  
 Show me the fair would scorn to spy  
 And prize such conquest of her eye!

70

75

80

## VI

While yet he loitered on the spot,  
 It seemed as Ellen marked him not;  
 But when he turned him to the glade,  
 One courteous parting sign she made;  
 And after, oft the knight would say,  
 That not when prize of festal day  
 Was dealt him by the brightest fair  
 Who e'er wore jewel in her hair,  
 So highly did his bosom swell  
 As at that simple mute farewell.  
 Now with a trusty mountain-guide,  
 And his dark stag-hounds by his side,  
 He parts, — the maid, unconscious still,  
 Watched him wind slowly round the hill;  
 But when his stately form was hid,  
 The guardian in her bosom chid,—  
 “Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!”  
 ’T was thus upbraiding conscience said,—  
 “Not so had Malcolm idly hung  
 On the smooth phrase of Southern tongue;  
 Not so had Malcolm strained his eye  
 Another step than thine to spy.”—

85

90

95

100

"Wake, Allan-bane," aloud she cried  
 To the old minstrel by her side,— 105  
 "Arouse thee from thy moody dream  
 I'll give thy harp heroic theme,  
 And warm thee with a noble name;  
 Pour forth the glory of the Græme!"<sup>1</sup>  
 Scarce from her lip the word had rushed, 110  
 When deep the conscious maiden blushed;  
 For of his clan, in hall and bower,<sup>2</sup>  
 Young Malcolm Græme was held the flower.

## VII

The minstrel waked his harp, — three times  
 Arose the well-known martial chimes, 115  
 And thrice their high heroic pride  
 In melancholy murmurs died.  
 "Vainly thou bidst, O noble maid,"  
 Claspings his withered hands, he said,  
 "Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain, 120  
 Though all unwont to bid in vain.  
 Alas! than mine a mightier hand  
 Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!  
 I touch the chords of joy, but low  
 And mournful answer notes of woe; 125  
 And the proud march which victors tread  
 Sinks in the wailing for the dead.  
 O, well for me, if mine alone  
 That dirge's deep prophetic tone!  
 If, as my tuneful fathers said, 130  
 This harp, which erst Saint Modan<sup>3</sup> swayed,

<sup>1</sup> **Græme**—The Græmes or Grahams were a very ancient and powerful family, celebrated in Scottish history.

<sup>2</sup> **Hall and bower**—Among men and women. The hall was the principal living room in the ancient castles, while the bower was the name given to the private apartments of the women.

<sup>3</sup> **Saint Modan**—A Scottish abbot of the seventh century.

Can thus its master's fate foretell,  
Then welcome be the minstrel's knell!

## VIII

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed,  
The eve thy sainted mother died; 155  
And such the sounds which, while I strove  
To wake a lay of war or love,  
Came marring all the festal mirth,  
Appalling me who gave them birth,  
And, disobedient to my call, 140  
Wailed loud through Bothwell's<sup>1</sup> bannered hall,  
Ere Douglasses, to ruin driven,<sup>2</sup>  
Were exiled from their native heaven.<sup>3</sup>—  
O! if yet worse mishap and woe  
My master's house must undergo, 145  
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair  
Brood in these accents of despair,  
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling  
Triumph or rapture from thy string;  
One short, one final strain shall flow, 150  
Fraught with unutterable woe,  
Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,  
Thy master cast him down and die!"

## IX

Soothing she answered him: "Assuage,  
Mine honoured friend, the fears of age; 155  
All melodies to thee are known  
That harp has rung or pipe has blown,

<sup>1</sup> **Bothwell**—The principal castle belonging to the Douglas family. It is on the banks of the Clyde, about six miles from Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup> **To ruin driven**—See Introduction, pages 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> **Heaven**—Sky, country.

In Lowland vale or Highland glen,  
From Tweed to Spey<sup>1</sup> — what marvel, then,  
At times unbidden notes should rise, 160  
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,  
Entangling as they rush along,  
The war-march with the funeral song? —  
Small ground is now for boding fear;  
Obscure, but safe, we rest us here. 165  
My sire, in native virtue great,  
Resigning lordship, lands, and state,  
Not then to fortune more resigned  
Than yonder oak might give the wind;  
The graceful foliage storms may reave, 170  
The noble stem they cannot grieve.  
For me''— she stooped, and, looking round,  
Plucked a blue harebell from the ground,—  
"For me whose memory scarce conveys 175  
An image of more splendid days,  
This little flower that loves the lea  
May well my simple emblem be;  
It drinks heaven's dew as blithe as rose  
That in the King's own garden grows; 180  
And when I place it in my hair,  
Allan, a bard is bound to swear  
He ne'er saw coronet so fair."  
Then playfully the chaplet wild  
She wreathed in her dark locks and smiled.

## X

Her smile, her speech, with winning sway, 185  
Wiled the old Harper's mood away.  
With such a look as hermits throw,  
When angels stoop to soothe their woe,

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<sup>1</sup> **Tweed to Spey**—From one end of the country to the other, the Tweed being on the southern boundary of Scotland and the Spey on the far north.

He gazed till fond regret and pride  
 Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied: 190  
 "Loveliest and best! thou little know'st  
 The rank, the honours, thou hast lost!  
 O, might I live to see thee grace,  
 In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,  
 To see my favourite's step advance 195  
 The lightest in the courtly dance.  
 The cause of every gallant's sigh,  
 And leading star of every eye,  
 And theme of every minstrel's art,  
 The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"<sup>1</sup> 200

## XI

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,—  
 Light was her accent, yet she sighed,—  
 "Yet is this mossy rock to me  
 Worth splendid chair and canopy;  
 Nor would my footstep spring more gay 205  
 In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,<sup>2</sup>  
 Nor half so pleased mine ear incline  
 To royal minstrel's lay as thine.  
 And then for suitors proud and high,  
 To bend before my conquering eye,— 210  
 Thou, flattering bard! thyself wilt say,  
 That grim Sir Roderick owns its sway.  
 The Saxon scourge, Clan-Alpine's<sup>3</sup> pride,

<sup>1</sup> **Bleeding Heart**—The cognizance of the Douglas family, worn from the time that Lord James Douglas attempted to carry the heart of Robert Bruce for burial in the Holy Land and died on the way in a battle with the Moors in Spain.

<sup>2</sup> **Strathspey**—A Highland dance which is said to have had its origin in the Strath or valley of the Spey.

<sup>3</sup> **Clan-Alpine**—The Macgregors, the descendants of Gregor, one of the early Scottish kings, are called McAlpine from Alpin, the father of Gregor.

The terror of Loch Lomond's <sup>1</sup> side,  
Would, at my suit, thou know'st, delay 215  
A Lennox foray — for a day."—

## XII

The ancient bard her glee repressed:  
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!  
For who, through all this western wild,  
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled? 220  
In Holy-Rood <sup>2</sup> a knight he slew;  
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,  
Courtiers give place before the stride  
Of the undaunted homicide;  
And since, though outlawed, hath his hand 225  
Full sternly kept his mountain land.  
Who else dared give — ah! woe the day,  
That I such hated truth should say!—  
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,  
Disowned by every noble peer, 230  
Even the rude refuge we have here?  
Alas, this wild marauding Chief  
Alone might hazard our relief,  
And now thy maiden charms expand,  
Looks for his guerdon <sup>3</sup> in thy hand; 235  
Full soon may dispensation <sup>4</sup> sought,  
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.  
Then, though an exile on the hill,

---

<sup>1</sup> **Lomond**—The most beautiful of the Scottish lakes, about twenty-three miles long and five miles broad. The district, the home of the Lennox family, that surrounded it at its southern end, through which runs the River Leven, was of extraordinary fertility and frequently the prey of Highland marauders.

<sup>2</sup> **Holy-Rood**—The royal palace at Edinburgh.

<sup>3</sup> **Guerdon**—Reward.

<sup>4</sup> **Dispensation**—Roderick and Helen were cousins and consequently could not marry without special license from the Pope.



Thy father, as the Douglas, still  
 Be held in reverence and fear; 240  
 And though to Roderick thou'rt so dear  
 That thou mightst guide with silken thread,  
 Slave of thy will, this chieftain dread,  
 Yet, O loved maid, thy mirth refrain!  
 Thy hand is on a lion's mane.'— 245

## XIII

"Minstrel," the maid replied, and high  
 Her father's soul glanced from her eye,  
 "My debts to Roderick's house I know;  
 All that a mother could bestow  
 To Lady Margaret's care I owe, 250  
 Since first an orphan in the wild  
 She sorrowed o'er her sister's child;  
 To her brave chieftain son, from ire  
 Of Scotland's king who shrouds my sire,  
 A deeper, holier debt is owed; 255  
 And, could I pay it with my blood,  
 Allan! Sir Roderick should command  
 My blood, my life,— but not my hand.  
 Rather will Ellen Douglas dwell  
 A votaress in Maronnan's cell;<sup>1</sup> 260  
 Rather through realms beyond the sea,  
 Seeking the world's cold charity,  
 Where ne'er was spoke a Scottish word,  
 And ne'er the name of Douglas heard,  
 An outcast pilgrim will she rove, 265  
 Than wed the man she cannot love.

## XIV

"Thou shak'st, good friend, thy tresses gray,—  
 That pleading look, what can it say

<sup>1</sup> Maronnan's cell—A chapel at the eastern extremity of Loch Lomond.



But what I own? — I grant him brave,  
But wild as Bracklinn's<sup>1</sup> thundering wave; 270  
And generous,— save vindictive mood  
Or jealous transport chafe his blood:  
I grant him true to friendly band,  
As his claymore is to his hand;  
But O! that very blade of steel 275  
More mercy for a foe would feel:  
I grant him liberal to fling  
Among his clan the wealth they bring,  
When back by lake and glen they wind,  
And in the Lowland leave behind, 280  
Where once some pleasant hamlet stood,  
A mass of ashes slaked with blood.  
The hand that for my father fought  
I honour, as his daughter ought;  
But can I clasp it reeking red 285  
From peasants slaughtered in their shed?  
No! wildly while his virtues gleam,  
They make his passions darker seem,  
And flash along his spirit high,  
Like lightning o'er the midnight sky. 290  
While yet a child,— and children know,  
Instinctive taught, the friend and foe,—  
I shuddered at his brow of gloom,  
His shadowy plaid and sable plume;  
A maiden grown, I ill could bear 295  
His haughty mien and lordly air:  
But, if thou join'st a suitor's claim,  
In serious mood, to Roderick's name,  
I thrill with anguish! or, if e'er  
A Douglas knew the word, with fear. 300  
To change such odious theme were best,—  
What think'st thou of our stranger guest?"—

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<sup>1</sup> **Bracklinn**—A beautiful waterfall on the River Keltie, near Callander.

## XV

"What think I of him? — woe the while  
 That brought such wanderer to our isle!  
 Thy father's battle-brand, of yore 305  
 For Tine-man<sup>1</sup> forged by fairy lore,  
 What time he leagued, no longer foes,  
 His Border spears with Hotspur's<sup>2</sup> bows,  
 Did, self-unsabarded,<sup>3</sup> foreshow  
 The footstep of a secret foe. 310  
 If courtly spy hath harboured here,  
 What may we for the Douglas fear?  
 What for this island, deemed of old  
 Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?  
 If neither spy nor foe, I pray 315  
 What yet may jealous Roderick say?—  
 Nay, wave not thy disdainful head!  
 Bethink thee of the discord dread  
 That kindled when at Beltane<sup>4</sup> game  
 Thou ledst the dance with Malcolm Græme; 320  
 Still, though thy sire the peace renewed,  
 Smoulders in Roderick's breast the feud:  
 Beware! — But hark! what sounds are these?  
 My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,

<sup>1</sup> **Tine-man**—Archibald, the third Earl of Douglas, was called the Tine-man because he tined or lost so many of his followers in every battle he fought. He was finally killed, along with about two thousand of his followers, in a battle in France.

<sup>2</sup> **Hotspur**—Harry Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, defeated and captured Douglas at the battle of Homildon Hill in 1402. Soon after the Percies rebelled against Henry IV. and Douglas was released on condition that he would assist them against the king. Henry, however, was victorious and Douglas was again taken prisoner. See Shakespeare's *Henry IV.*, Part I.

<sup>3</sup> **Self-unsabarded**—A serious omen; the sword had fallen from the scabbard of its own accord.

<sup>4</sup> **Beltane**—A Celtic festival on the first day of May in connection with which great fires were lighted on the hills, followed by games and dancing.

No weeping birch nor aspens wake,  
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake;  
Still is the canna's<sup>1</sup> hoary beard,  
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard —  
And hark again! some pipe of war  
Sends tne bold pibroch from afar." 325  
330

## XVI

Far up the lengthened lake were spied  
Four darkening specks upon the tide,  
That, slow enlarging on the view,  
Four manned and masted barges grew,  
And, bearing downwards from Glengyle,<sup>2</sup>  
Steered full upon the lonely isle;  
The point of Brianchoil they passed,  
And, to the windward as they cast,  
Against the sun they gave to shine  
The bold Sir Roderick's bannered Pine.<sup>3</sup>  
Nearer and nearer as they bear,  
Spears, pikes, and axes flash in air.  
Now might you see the tartans brave,<sup>4</sup>  
And plaids and plumage dance and wave:  
Now see the bonnets sink and rise,  
As his tough oar the rower plies;  
See, flashing at each sturdy stroke,  
The wave ascending into smoke;  
See the proud pipers on the bow,  
And mark the gaudy streamers flow  
From their loud chanter's<sup>5</sup> down, and sweep  
The furrowed bosom of the deep, 335  
340  
345  
350

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<sup>1</sup> **Canna**—The cotton-grass.

<sup>2</sup> **Glengyle**—A valley at the head of Loch Katrine.

<sup>3</sup> **Pine**—The emblem of Clan-Alpine.

<sup>4</sup> **Brave**—Beautiful.

<sup>5</sup> **Chanters**—Streamers were attached to the pipes of the instruments.

As, rushing through the lake amain,  
They plied the ancient Highland strain.

## XVII

Ever, as on they bore, more loud 355  
And louder rung the pibroch proud.  
At first the sounds, by distance tame,  
Mellowed along the waters came,  
And, lingering long by cape and bay,  
Wailed every harsher note away, 360  
Then bursting bolder on the ear,  
The clan's shrill Gathering<sup>1</sup> they could hear,  
Those thrilling sounds that call the might  
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.  
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when 365  
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,  
And hurrying at the signal dread,  
The battered earth returns their tread,  
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,  
Expressed their merry marching on, 370  
Ere peal of closing battle rose,  
With mingled outcry, shrieks, and blows;  
And mimic din of stroke and ward,  
As broadsword upon target jarred;  
And groaning pause, ere yet again, 375  
Condensed, the battle yelled amain:  
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,  
Retreat borne headlong into rout,  
And bursts of triumph, to declare  
Clan-Alpine's conquest — all were there. 380  
Nor ended thus the strain, but slow  
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,  
And changed the conquering clarion swell  
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

<sup>1</sup> Gathering—The tune used to summon the clan to battle

Hail  
H  
Long  
Fl

G

Ours

1 V  
2 E  
3 I  
desce

## XVIII

The war-pipes ceased, but lake and hill 385  
 Were busy with their echoes still;  
 And, when they slept, a vocal strain  
 Bade their hoarse chorus wake again,  
 While loud a hundred clansmen raise  
 Their voices in their Chieftain's praise. 390  
 Each boatman, bending to his oar,  
 With measured sweep the burden bore.  
 In such wild cadence as the breeze  
 Makes through December's leafless trees.  
 The chorus first could Allan know, 395  
 "Roderick Vich Alpine,<sup>1</sup> ho! iro!"  
 And near, and nearer as they rowed,  
 Distinct the martial ditty flowed.

## XIX

## BOAT SONG

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!  
 Honoured and blest be the ever-green Pine! 400  
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,  
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!  
 Heaven send it happy dew,  
 Earth lend it sap anew,  
 Gayly to bourgeon<sup>2</sup> and broadly to grow, 405  
 While every Highland glen  
 Sends our shout back again,  
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu,<sup>3</sup> ho! ieroe!"

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,  
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade; 410

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<sup>1</sup> **Vich Alpine**—Son of Alpine.

<sup>2</sup> **Bourgeon**—Bud.

<sup>3</sup> **Dhu**—Black. The line means "Black Roderick, the descendant of Alpin."



When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf on the  
 mountain,  
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.  
 Moored in the rifted rock,  
 Proof to the tempest's shock,  
 Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow; 415  
 Menteith and Breadalbane,<sup>1</sup> then,  
 Echo his praise again,  
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

## XX

Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen Fruin,<sup>2</sup>  
 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied; 420  
 Glen Luss and Ross-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,  
 And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.  
 Widow and Saxon maid  
 Long shall lament our raid,  
 Think of Clan-Alpine with fear and with woe; 425  
 Lennox and Leven-glen<sup>3</sup>  
 Shake when they hear again,  
 "Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!  
 Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine! 430  
 O that the rosebud<sup>4</sup> that graces yon islands  
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!  
 O that some seedling gem,  
 Worthy such noble stem,

<sup>1</sup> **Breadalbane**—The country to the north of Loch Lomond around Loch Tay.

<sup>2</sup> **Glen Fruin**—A valley to the south-west of Loch Lomond, once the scene of a bloody battle between the Macgregors and the Colquhouns in which more than two hundred of the latter clan were killed. The places mentioned in lines 420 and 421 are in the immediate neighbourhood.

<sup>3</sup> **Leven-glen**—The valley, the Leven, through which Loch Lomond empties into the Clyde.

<sup>4</sup> **Rosebud**—Ellen Douglas.



Honoured and blessed in their shadow might grow!<sup>435</sup>  
Loud should Clan-Alpine then  
Ring from her deepmost glen,  
“Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!”

## XXI

With all her joyful female band  
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand. 440  
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,  
And high their snowy arms they threw,  
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,  
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;  
While, prompt to please, with mother's art, 445  
The darling passion of his heart,  
The Dame called Ellen to the strand,  
To greet her kinsman ere he land:  
“Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,  
And shun to wreath a victor's brow?” 450  
Reluctantly and slow, the maid  
The unwelcome summoning obeyed,  
And when a distant bugle rung,  
In the mid-path aside she sprung:—  
“List, Allan-bane! From mainland cast 455  
I hear my father's signal blast.  
Be ours,” she cried, “the skiff to guide,  
And waft him from the mountain-side.”  
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,  
She darted to her shallop light, 460  
And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,  
For her dear form, his mother's band,  
The islet far behind her lay,  
And she had landed in the bay.

## XXII

Some feelings are to mortals given <sup>465</sup>  
With less of earth in them than heaven:

And if there be a human tear  
 From passion's dross refined and clear,  
 A tear so limpid and so meek  
 It would not stain an angel's cheek, 470  
 'T is that which pious fathers shed  
 Upon a duteous daughter's head!  
 And as the Douglas to his breast  
 His darling Ellen closely pressed,  
 Such holy drops her tresses steeped, 475  
 Though 't was an hero's eye that weeped.  
 Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue  
 Her filial welcomes crowded hung,  
 Marked she that fear — affection's proof —  
 Still held a graceful youth aloof; 480  
 No! not till Douglas named his name,  
 Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

## XXIII

Allan, with wistful look the while,  
 Marked Roderick landing on the isle;  
 His master piteously he eyed, 485  
 Then gazed upon the Chieftain's pride,  
 Then dashed with hasty hand away  
 From his dimmed eye the gathering spray;  
 And Douglas, as his hand he laid  
 On Malcolm's shoulder, kindly said: 490  
 "Canst thou, young friend, no meaning spy  
 In my poor follower's glistening eye?  
 I'll tell thee: — he recalls the day  
 When in my praise he led the lay  
 O'er the arched gate of Bothwell proud, 495  
 While many a minstrel answered loud,  
 When Percy's Norman pennon,<sup>1</sup> won

<sup>1</sup> **Norman pennon**—Captured by Douglas at Newcastle in 1388. It was in revenge for the invasion of his territory that Earl Percy led his followers into Scotland and fought the bloody battle of Otterbourne or Chevy Chase.

In bloody field, before me shone,  
 And twice ten knights, the least a name  
 As mighty as yon Chief may claim, 500  
 Gracing my pomp, behind me came.  
 Yet trust me, Malcolm, not so proud  
 Was I of all that marshalled crowd,  
 Though the waned crescent<sup>1</sup> owned my might,  
 And in my train trooped lord and knight, 505  
 Though Blantyre<sup>2</sup> hymned her holiest lays,  
 And Bothwell's bards flung back my praise,  
 As when this old man's silent tear,  
 And this poor maid's affection dear,  
 A welcome give more kind and true 510  
 Than aught my better fortunes knew.  
 Forgive, my friend, a father's boast,—  
 O, it out-beggars all I lost!"

## XXIV

Delightful praise! — like summer rose,  
 That brighter in the dew-drop glows, 515  
 The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,  
 For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.  
 The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,  
 The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;  
 The loved caresses of t e maid 520  
 The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;  
 And, at her whistle, on her hand  
 The falcon took his favourite stand,  
 Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,  
 Nor, though unhooded,<sup>3</sup> sought to fly. 525  
 And, trust, while in such guise she stood;

<sup>1</sup> **Waned crescent**—One of the badges of the Percies.

<sup>2</sup> **Blantyre**—The Priory of Blantyre was on the opposite bank of the Clyde from Bothwell Castle.

<sup>3</sup> **Unhooded**—The falcon with a hood over its head was usually carried on the wrist. When the prey was sighted the hood was taken off.

Like fabled Goddess of the wood,<sup>1</sup>  
 That if a father's partial thought  
 O'erweighed her worth and beauty aught,  
 Well might the lover's judgment fail 530  
 To balance with a juster scale;  
 For with each secret glance he stole,  
 The fond enthusiast sent his soul.

## XXV

Of stature fair, and slender frame,  
 But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme. 535  
 The belted plaid and tartan hose  
 Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;  
 His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,  
 Curled closely round his bonnet blue.  
 Trained to the chase, his eagle eye 540  
 The ptarmigan<sup>2</sup> in snow could spy;  
 Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,  
 He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;  
 Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe  
 When Malcolm bent his sounding bow, 545  
 And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,  
 Outstripped in speed the mountaineer:  
 Right up Ben Lomond<sup>3</sup> could he press,  
 And not a sob<sup>4</sup> his toil confess.  
 His form accorded with a mind 550  
 Lively and ardent, frank and kind;  
 A blither heart, till Ellen came,  
 Did never love nor sorrow tame;  
 It danced as lightsome in his breast  
 As played the feather on his crest. 555

<sup>1</sup> **Goddess of the wood**—Diana, the huntress goddess.

<sup>2</sup> **Ptarmigan**—This bird becomes white in winter.

<sup>3</sup> **Ben Lomond**—This mountain, on the shores of the lake,  
 is over three thousand feet in height.

<sup>4</sup> **Not a sob**—Without losing breath.

Yet friends, who nearest knew the youth,  
 His scorn of wrong, his zeal for truth,  
 And bards, who saw his features bold  
 When kindled by the tales of old,  
 Said, were that youth to manhood grown, 560  
 Not long should Roderick Dhu's renown  
 Be foremost voiced by mountain fame,  
 But quail to that of Malcolm Græme.

## XXVI

Now back they wend their watery way,  
 And, "O my sire!" did Ellen say, 565  
 "Why urge thy chase so far astray?  
 And why so late returned? And why?"—  
 The rest was in her speaking eye.  
 "My child, the chase I follow far,  
 'T is mimicry of noble war; 570  
 And with that gallant pastime reft  
 Were all of Douglas I have left.  
 I met young Malcolm as I strayed  
 Far eastward, in Glenfinlas' <sup>1</sup> shade;  
 Nor strayed I safe, for all around 575  
 Hunters and horsemen scoured the ground.  
 This youth, though still a royal ward,<sup>2</sup>  
 Risked life and land to be my guard,  
 And through the passes of the wood  
 Guided my steps, not unpursued; 580  
 And Roderick shall his welcome make,  
 Despite old spleen, for Douglas' sake.  
 Then must he seek Strath-Endrick <sup>3</sup> glen,  
 Nor peril aught for me again."

<sup>1</sup> **Glenfinlas**—The district lying to the north-east of the Trosachs.

<sup>2</sup> **Royal ward**—Malcolm being under age was under the guardianship of the king.

<sup>3</sup> **Strath-Endrick**—The district at the south-east corner of Loch Lomond.

## XXVII

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came, 585  
 Reddened at sight of Malcolm Græme,  
 Yet, not in action, word, or eye,  
 Failed aught in hospitality.  
 In talk and sport they whiled away  
 The morning of that summer day; 590  
 But at high noon a courier light  
 Held secret parley with the knight,  
 Whose moody aspect soon declared  
 That evil were the news he heard.  
 Deep thought seemed toiling in his head; 595  
 Yet was the evening banquet made  
 Ere he assembled round the flame  
 His mother, Douglas, and the Græme,  
 And Ellen too; then cast around  
 His eyes, then fixed them on the ground, 600  
 As studying phrase that might avail  
 Best to convey unpleasant tale.  
 Long with his dagger's hilt he played,  
 Then raised his haughty brow, and said:—

## XXVIII

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords, 605  
 Nor my plain temper, glozing words.<sup>1</sup>  
 Kinsman and father,—if such name  
 Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;  
 Mine honoured mother;—Ellen,—why, 610  
 My cousin, turn away thine eye?—  
 And Græme, in whom I hope to know  
 Full soon a noble friend or foe,  
 When age shall give thee thy command,  
 And leading in thy native land,—

<sup>1</sup> **Glozing words**—Words that do not convey a plain meaning.

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List all! — The King's vindictive pride 615  
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,<sup>1</sup>  
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came  
To share their monarch's sylvan game,  
Themselves in bloody toils were snared,  
And when the banquet they prepared, 620  
And wide their loyal portals flung,  
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.  
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,<sup>2</sup>  
From Yarrow braes and banks of Tweed,  
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide, 625  
And from the silver Teviot's side;  
The dales, where martial clans did ride,  
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.  
This tyrant<sup>3</sup> of the Scottish throne,  
So faithless and so ruthless known, 630  
Now hither comes; his end the same,  
The same pretext of sylvan game.

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<sup>1</sup> **Tamed the Border-side**—"In 1529, James made a convention at Edinburgh, for the purpose of considering the best mode of quelling the Border robbers, who, during the license of his minority, and the troubles which followed, had committed many exorbitances. Accordingly he assembled a flying army of ten thousand men, consisting of his principal nobility and their followers, who were directed to bring their hawks and dogs with them, that the monarch might refresh himself with sport during the intervals of military execution. With this array he swept through Ettrick Forest, where he hanged over the gates of his own castle Piers Cockburn of Henderland, who had prepared, according to tradition, a feast for his reception. He caused Adam Scott of Tushielaw also to be executed, who was distinguished by the title of King of the Border. But the most noted victim of justice during that expedition was John Armstrong of Gilnockie, famous in Scotch song, who, confiding in his own supposed innocence, met the King, with a retinue of thirty-six persons, all of whom were hanged at Carlenrig, near the source of the Teviot."—*Scott*.

<sup>2</sup> **Meggat's mead**—The meadows lying along the banks of the **Meggat**, a tributary of the **Yarrow**, which flows into the **Ettrick**. Both the **Ettrick** and the **Teviot** are branches of the **Tweed**.

<sup>3</sup> **Tyrant**—From the standpoint of the Highland chief.

What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye  
 By fate of Border chivalry.  
 Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green,  
 Douglas, thy stately form was seen.  
 This by espial sure I know:  
 Your counsel in the streight I show."<sup>1</sup>

635

## XXIX

Ellen and Margaret fearfully  
 Sought comfort in each other's eye,  
 Then turned their ghastly look, each one,  
 This to her sire, that to her son.  
 The hasty colour went and came  
 In the bold cheek of Malcolm Græme,  
 But from his glance it well appeared  
 'T was but for Ellen that he feared;  
 While sorrowful, but undismayed,  
 The Douglas thus his counsel said:  
 "Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,  
 It may but thunder and pass o'er;  
 Nor will I here remain an hour,  
 To draw the lightning on thy bower;  
 For well thou know'st, at this gray head  
 The royal bolt were fiercest sped.  
 For thee, who, at thy King's command,  
 Canst aid him with a gallant band,  
 Submission, homage, humbled pride,  
 Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.  
 Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,  
 Ellen and I will seek apart  
 The refuge of some forest cell,  
 There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,  
 Till on the mountain and the moor  
 The stern pursuit be passed and o'er,"—

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<sup>1</sup> Streight I show—"Difficulties I have revealed."

## XXX

“No, by mine honour,” Roderick said, 665  
“So help me Heaven, and my good blade!  
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,  
My father’s ancient crest and mine,  
If from its shade in danger part  
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart! 670  
Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid  
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;  
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,  
Will friends and allies flock enow;  
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief, 675  
Will bind to us each Western Chief.  
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,  
The Links of Forth<sup>1</sup> shall hear the knell,  
The guards shall start in Stirling’s porch;<sup>2</sup>  
And when I light the nuptial torch, 680  
A thousand villages in flames  
Shall scare the slumbers of King James! —  
Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,  
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;  
I meant not all my heat might say.— 685  
Small need of inroad or of fight,  
When the sage Douglas may unite  
Each mountain clan in friendly band,  
To guard the passes of their land,  
Till the foiled King from pathless glen 690  
Shall bootless turn him home again.”

## XXXI

There are who have, at midnight hour,  
In slumber scaled a dizzy tower,

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<sup>1</sup> **Links of Forth**—The windings of the River Forth near Stirling.

<sup>2</sup> **Stirling’s porch**—The gate of Stirling Castle, a favourite residence of the Scottish kings.

And, on the verge that beetled<sup>1</sup> o'er  
 The ocean tide's incessant roar, 695  
 Dreamed calmly out their dangerous dream,  
 Till wakened by the morning beam;  
 When, dazzled by the eastern glow,  
 Such startler cast his glance below,  
 And saw unmeasured depth around, 700  
 And heard unintermitted sound,  
 And thought the battled fence<sup>2</sup> so frail,  
 It waved like cobweb in the gale;—  
 Amid his senses' giddy wheel,  
 Did he not desperate impulse feel, 705  
 Headlong to plunge himself below,  
 And meet the worst his fears foreshow? —  
 Thus Ellen, dizzy and astound,  
 As sudden ruin yawned around,  
 By crossing terrors wildly tossed, 710  
 Still for the Douglas fearing most,  
 Could scarce the desperate thought withstand,  
 To buy his safety with her hand.

## XXXII

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy  
 In Ellen's quivering lip and eye, 715  
 And eager rose to speak,— but ere  
 His tongue could hurry forth his fear,  
 Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,  
 Where death seemed combating with life;  
 For to her cheek, in feverish flood, 720  
 One instant rushed the throbbing blood,  
 Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,  
 Left its domain as wan as clay.  
 "Roderick, enough! enough!" he cried,

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<sup>1</sup> Beetled—Projected.

<sup>2</sup> Battled fence—Battlements.

“My daughter cannot be thy bride; 725  
Not that the blush to wooer dear,  
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.  
It may not be,—forgive her, Chief,  
Nor hazard aught for our relief.  
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne’er 730  
Will level a rebellious spear.  
’T was I that taught his youthful hand  
To rein a steed and wield a brand;  
I see him yet, the princely boy!  
Not Ellen more my pride and joy; 735  
I love him still, despite my wrongs  
By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.  
O, seek the grace you well may find,  
Without a cause to mine combined!”

## XXXIII

Twice through the hall the chieftain strode; 740  
The waving of his tartans broad,  
And darkened brow, where wounded pride  
With ire and disappointment vied,  
Seemed, by the torch’s gloomy light,  
Like the ill Demon of the night, 745  
Stooping his pinions’ shadowy sway  
Upon the nighted pilgrim’s way:  
But, unrequited Love! thy dart  
Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,  
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung, 750  
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,  
While eyes that mocked at tears before  
With bitter drops were running o’er.  
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope  
Scarce in that ample breast had scope, 755  
But, struggling with his spirit proud,  
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Checkered shroud—Tartan plaid.



While every sob — so mute were all —  
 Was heard distinctly through the hall.  
 The son's despair, the mother's look,  
 Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;  
 She rose, and to her side there came,  
 To aid her parting steps, the Græme.

760

## XXXIV

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke —  
 As flashes flame through sable smoke,  
 Kindling its wreaths, long, dark, and low,  
 To one broad blaze of ruddy glow,  
 So the deep anguish of despair  
 Burst, in fierce jealousy, to air.  
 With stalwart grasp his hand he laid  
 On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:  
 "Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,  
 "Back minion! holdst thou thus at naught  
 The lesson I so lately taught?  
 This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,  
 Thank thou for punishment delayed."  
 Eager as greyhound on his game,  
 Fiercely with Roderick grappled Græme.  
 "Perish my name if aught afford  
 Its Chieftain safety save his sword!"  
 Thus as they strove their desperate hand  
 Griped to the dagger or the brand,  
 And death had been — but Douglas rose,  
 And thrust between the struggling foes  
 His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego!  
 I hold the first who strikes my foe.—  
 Madmen, forbear your frantic jar!  
 What! is the Douglas fallen so far,  
 His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil  
 Of such dishonourable broil?"  
 Sullen and slowly they unclasp,

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<sup>1</sup> Fell  
<sup>2</sup> Her  
 be read  
 of his  
 seat, at  
 watches  
 Scott.

<sup>3</sup> Safe



As struck with shame, their desperate grasp,  
And each upon his rival glared,  
With foot advanced and blade half bared.

## XXXV

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung, 795  
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,  
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream,  
As faltered through terrific dream.  
Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword,  
And veiled his wrath in scornful word: 800  
"Rest safe till morning; pity 't were  
Such cheek should feel the midnight air!  
Then mayst thou to James Stuart tell,  
Roderick will keep the lake and fell,<sup>1</sup>  
Nor lackey with his freeborn clan 805  
The pageant pomp of earthly man.  
More would he of Clan-Alpine know,  
Thou canst our strength and passes show.—  
Malise, what ho!"—his henchman<sup>2</sup> came:  
"Give our safe-conduct<sup>3</sup> to the Græme." 810  
Young Malcolm answered calm and bold:  
"Fear nothing for thy favourite hold;  
The spot an angel deigned to grace  
Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place.  
Thy churlish courtesy for those 815  
Reserve, who fear to be thy foes.  
As safe to me the mountain way  
At midnight as in blaze of day,  
Though with his boldest at his back

<sup>1</sup> **Fell**—Hill.

<sup>2</sup> **Henchman**—"This officer is a sort of secretary and is to be ready upon all occasions to venture his life in defence of his master; and at drinking bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from which his title is derived, and watches the conversation to see if anyone offends his patron."  
*Scott.*

<sup>3</sup> **Safe-conduct**—Guarantee of protection.

Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.— 820  
 Brave Douglas,— lovely Ellen,— nay,  
 Naught here of parting will I say.  
 Earth does not hold a lonesome glen  
 So secret but we meet again.—  
 Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"— 825  
 He said, and left the sylvan bower.

## XXXVI

Old Allan followed to the strand —  
 Such was the Douglas's command —  
 And anxious told, how, on the morn,  
 The stern Sir Roderick deep had sworn, 830  
 The Fiery Cross<sup>1</sup> should circle o'er  
 Dale, glen, and valley, down and moor.  
 Much were the peril to the Græme  
 From those who to the signal came;  
 Far up the lake 't were safest land, 835  
 Himself would row him to the strand.  
 He gave his counsel to the wind,  
 While Malcolm did, unheeding, bind,  
 Round dirk and pouch and broadsword rolled,  
 His ample plaid in tightened fold, 840  
 And stripped his limbs to such array  
 As best might suit the watery way,—

## XXXVII

Then spoke abrupt: "Farewell to thee,  
 Pattern of old fidelity!"  
 The Minstrel's hand he kindly pressed,— 845  
 "O, could I point a place of rest!  
 My sovereign holds in ward my land,  
 My uncle leads my vassal band;

<sup>1</sup> **Fiery Cross**—See Canto III, line 18.

To tame his foes, his friends to aid,  
 Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade. 850  
 Yet, if there be one faithful Græme  
 Who loves the chieftain of his name,  
 Not long shall honoured Douglas dwell  
 Like hunted stag in mountain cell;  
 Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare,— 855  
 I may not give the rest to air!  
 Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him naught,  
 Not the poor service of a boat,  
 To waft me to yon mountain-side.”  
 Then plunged he in the flashing tide. 860  
 Bold o’er the flood his head he bore,  
 And stoutly steered him from the shore;  
 And Allan strained his anxious eye,  
 Far mid the lake his form to spy,  
 Darkening across each puny wave, 865  
 To which the moon her silver gave.  
 Fast as the cormorant could skim,  
 The swimmer plied each active limb;  
 Then landing in the moonlight dell,  
 Loud shouted of his weal to tell. 870  
 The Minstrel heard the far halloo,  
 And joyful from the shore withdrew.

## CANTO THIRD

## THE GATHERING

## I

TIME rolls his ceaseless course. The race of yore,  
 Who danced our infancy upon their knee,  
 And told our marvelling boyhood legends store  
 Of their strange ventures happed <sup>1</sup> by land or sea,

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<sup>1</sup> Ventures happed—Adventures that happened.

How are they blotted from the things that be! 5

How few, all weak and withered of their force,  
Wait on the verge of dark eternity,  
Like stranded wrecks, the tide returning hoarse,  
To sweep them from our sight! Time rolls his ceaseless  
course.

Yet live there still who can remember well, 10

How, when a mountain chief his bugle blew,  
Both field and forest, dingle, cliff and dell,  
And solitary heath the signal knew;  
And fast the faithful clan around him drew,  
What time the warning note was keenly wound, 15  
What time aloft their kindred banner<sup>1</sup> flew,  
While clamorous war-pipes yelled the gathering  
sound,  
And while the Fiery Cross<sup>2</sup> glanced, like a meteor, round.

## II

The Summer dawn's reflected hue  
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue; 20

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<sup>1</sup> **Kindred banner**—Banner of the clan.

<sup>2</sup> **Fiery Cross**—"When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross, also Crean Tarigh, or the Cross of Shame, because disobedience to what the symbol implied inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal despatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbours, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal."—*Scoil*.

Mildly and soft the western breeze  
Just kissed the lake, just stirred the trees,  
And the pleased lake, like maiden coy,  
Trembled but dimpled not for joy:  
The mountain-shadows on her breast 25  
Were neither broken nor at rest;  
In bright uncertainty they lie,  
Like future joys to Fancy's eye.  
The water-lily to the light  
Her chalice reared of silver bright; 30  
The doe awoke, and to the lawn,  
Begemmed with dew-drops, led her fawn;  
The gray mist left the mountain-side,  
The torrent showed its glistening pride;  
Invisible in flecked sky 35  
The lark sent down her revelry;  
The blackbird and the speckled thrush  
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush;  
In answer cooed the cushat dove  
Her notes of peace and rest and love. 40

## III

No thought of peace, no thought of rest,  
Assuaged the storm in Roderick's breast.  
With sheathed broadsword in his hand,  
Abrupt he paced the islet strand, 45  
And eyed the rising sun, and laid  
His hand on his impatient blade.  
Beneath a rock, his vassals' care  
Was prompt the ritual to prepare,  
With deep and deathful meaning fraught;  
For such Antiquity had taught 50  
Was preface meet, ere yet abroad  
The Cross of Fire should take its road.  
The shrinking band stood oft aghast  
At the impatient glance he cast;—



Such glance the mountain eagle threw, 55  
 As, from the cliffs of Benvenue,  
 She spread her dark sails on the wind,  
 And, high in middle heaven reclined,  
 With her broad shadow on the lake,  
 Silenced the warblers of the brake. 60

## IV

A heap of withered boughs was piled,  
 Of juniper and rowan<sup>1</sup> wild,  
 Mingled with shivers from the oak,  
 Rent by the lightning's recent stroke.  
 Brian the Hermit by it stood, 65  
 Barefooted, in his frock and hood.  
 His grizzled beard and matted hair  
 Obscured a visage of despair;  
 His naked arms and legs, seamed o'er,  
 The scars of frantic penance<sup>2</sup> bore. 70  
 That monk, of savage form and face,  
 The impending danger of his race  
 Had drawn from deepest solitude,  
 Far in Benharrow's<sup>3</sup> bosom rude.  
 Not his the mien of Christian priest, 75  
 But Druid's,<sup>4</sup> from the grave released,  
 Whose hardened heart and eye might brook  
 On human sacrifice to look;  
 And much, 't was said, of heathen lore  
 Mixed in the charms he muttered o'er. 80  
 The hallowed creed gave only worse  
 And deadlier emphasis of curse.  
 No peasant sought that Hermit's prayer,

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<sup>1</sup> **Rowan**—The mountain ash.

<sup>2</sup> **Frantic penance**—Penance inflicted in his frenzy.

<sup>3</sup> **Benharrow**—A mountain near Loch Lomond.

<sup>4</sup> **Druids**—The priests of the ancient Britons, who were accustomed to offer up human sacrifices.



His cave the pilgrim shunned with care;  
The eager huntsman knew his bound, 85  
And in mid chase called off his hound;  
Or if, in lonely glen or strath,  
The desert-dweller<sup>1</sup> met his path,  
He prayed, and signed the cross between,  
While terror took devotion's mien. 90

## V

Of Brian's birth strange tales were told.  
His mother watched a midnight fold,  
Built deep within a dreary glen,  
Where scattered lay the bones of men  
In some forgotten battle slain, 95  
And bleached by drifting wind and rain.  
It might have tamed a warrior's heart  
To view such mockery of his art!  
The knot-grass fettered<sup>2</sup> there the hand  
Which once could burst an iron band; 100  
Beneath the broad and ample bone,  
That bucklered heart to fear unknown,  
A feeble and a timorous guest,  
The fieldfare framed her lowly nest;  
There the slow blindworm left his slime 105  
On the fleet limbs that mocked at time;  
And there, too, lay the leader's skull,  
Still wreathed with chaplet, flushed and full,  
For heath-bell with her purple bloom  
Supplied the bonnet and the plume. 110  
All night, in this sad glen the maid  
Sat shrouded in her mantle's shade:  
She said no shepherd sought her side,  
No hunter's hand her snood untied,

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<sup>1</sup> **Desert-dweller**—Hermit.

<sup>2</sup> **Fettered**—Grew over and then held down to the ground.

Yet ne'er again to braid her hair 115  
 The virgin snood did Alice wear;  
 Gone was her maiden glee and sport,  
 Her maiden girdle all too short,  
 Nor sought she, from that fatal night,  
 Or holy church or blessed rite, 120  
 But locked her secret in her breast,  
 And died in travail, unconfessed.

## VI

Alone, among his young compeers,  
 Was Brian from his infant years;  
 A moody and heart-broken boy, 125  
 Estranged from sympathy and joy,  
 Bearing each taunt with careless tongue  
 On his mysterious lineage flung.  
 Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale,  
 To wood and stream his hap to wail, 130  
 Till, frantic, he as truth received  
 What of his birth the crowd believed,  
 And sought, in mist and meteor fire,  
 To meet and know his Phantom Sire!  
 In vain, to soothe his wayward fate, 135  
 The cloister oped her pitying gate;  
 In vain the learning of the age  
 Unclasped the sable-lettered <sup>1</sup> page;  
 Even in its treasures he could find  
 Food for the fever of his mind. 140  
 Eager he read whatever tells  
 Of magic, cabala,<sup>2</sup> and spells,  
 And every dark pursuit allied  
 To curious <sup>3</sup> and presumptuous pride;

<sup>1</sup> **Sable-lettered**—Black-letter, the old English character, so called from the thick, black strokes.

<sup>2</sup> **Cabala**—Mysteries.

<sup>3</sup> **Curious**—Prying into things unknown.

Till with fired brain and nerves o'erstrung, 145  
And heart with mystic horrors wrung,  
Desperate he sought Benharrow's den,  
And hid him from the haunts of men.

## VII

The desert gave him visions wild,  
Such as might suit the spectre's child. 150  
Where with black cliffs the torrents toil,  
He watched the wheeling eddies boil,  
Till from their foam his dazzled eyes  
Beheld the River Demon<sup>1</sup> rise:  
The mountain mist took form and limb 155  
Of noontide hag or goblin grim;  
The midnight wind came wild and dread,  
Swelled with the voices of the dead;  
Far on the future battle-heath  
His eye beheld the ranks of death: 160  
Thus the lone Seer, from mankind hurled,  
Shaped forth a disembodied world.

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<sup>1</sup> **River Demon**—"The River Demon, or River-horse, for it is that form which he commonly assumes, is the Kelpy of the Lowlands, an evil and malicious spirit, delighting to forebode and to witness calamity. He frequents most Highland lakes and rivers; and one of his most memorable exploits was performed upon the banks of Loch Vennachar, in the very district which forms the scene of our action: it consisted in the destruction of a funeral procession, with all its attendants. The noontide hag, called in Gaelic, Glas-lich, a tall emaciated, gigantic female figure, is supposed in particular to haunt the district of Knoidart. A goblin dressed in antique armour, and having one hand covered with blood, called, from that circumstance, Lham-dearg, or Red-hand, is a tenant of the forests of Glenmore and Rothiemurcus. Other spirits of the desert, all frightful in shape and malignant in disposition, are believed to frequent different mountains and glens of the Highlands, where any unusual appearance, produced by mist, or the strange lights that are sometimes thrown upon particular objects, never fails to present an apparition to the imagination of the solitary and melancholy mountaineer."—*Scott*.

One lingering sympathy of mind  
 Still bound him to the mortal kind;  
 The only parent he could claim 165  
 Of ancient Alpine's lineage came.  
 Late had he heard, in prophet's dream,  
 The fatal Ben-Shie's<sup>1</sup> boding scream;  
 Sounds, too, had come in midnight blast  
 Of charging steeds, careering fast 170  
 Along Benharrow's shingly side,  
 Where mortal horseman ne'er might ride;  
 The thunderbolt had split the pine,—  
 All augured ill to Alpine's line.  
 He girt his loins, and came to show 175  
 The signals of impending woe,  
 And now stood prompt to bless or ban,  
 As bade the Chieftain of his clan.

## VIII

'T was all prepared; — and from the rock  
 A goat, the patriarch of the flock, 180  
 Before the kindling pile was laid,  
 And pierced by Roderick's ready blade.  
 Patient the sickening victim eyed  
 The life-blood ebb in crimson tide  
 Down his clogged beard and shaggy limb, 185  
 Till darkness glazed his eyeballs dim.  
 The grisly priest, with murmuring prayer,  
 A slender crosslet framed with care,

---

<sup>1</sup> **Ben-Shie**—"Most great families in the Highlands were supposed to have a tutelar, or rather a domestic, spirit, attached to them, who took an interest in their prosperity, and intimidated, by its wailings, any approaching disaster. The Ben-Shie implies the female fairy whose lamentations were often supposed to precede the death of a chieftain of particular families. When she is visible, it is in the form of an old woman, with a blue mantle and streaming hair. A superstition of the same kind is, I believe, universally received by the inferior ranks of the native Irish."—*Scott*.

A cubit's length in measure due;  
The shaft and limbs were rods of yew, 190  
Whose parents in Inch-Cailliach<sup>1</sup> wave  
Their shadows o'er Clan-Alpine's grave,  
And, answering Lomond's breezes deep,  
Soothe many a chieftain's endless sleep.  
The Cross thus formed he held on high, 195  
With wasted hand and haggard eye,  
And strange and mingled feelings woke,  
While his anathema he spoke:—

## IX

“Woe to the clansman who shall view  
This symbol of sepulchral yew, 200  
Forgetful that its branches grew  
Where weep the heavens their holiest dew  
On Alpine's dwelling low!  
Deserter of his Chieftain's trust,  
He ne'er shall mingle with their dust, 205  
But, from his sires and kindred thrust,  
Each clansman's execration just  
Shall doom him wrath and woe.”  
He paused; — the word the vassals took,  
With forward step and fiery look, 210  
On high their naked brands they shook,  
Their clattering targets wildly strook;  
And first in murmur low,  
Then, like the billow in his course,  
That far to seaward finds his source, 215  
And flings to shore his mustered force,  
Burst with loud roar their answer hoarse,  
“Woe to the traitor, woe!”

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<sup>1</sup> *Inch-Cailliach*—The “Island of old women” at the southern end of Loch Lomond, so called from a nunnery which formerly existed there, is still a burying-place of the Macgregors.



Ben-an's gray scalp the accents knew,  
 The joyous wolf from covert drew, 220  
 The exulting eagle screamed afar,—  
 They knew the voice of Alpine's war.

## X

The shout was hushed on lake and fell,  
 The Monk resumed his muttered spell:  
 Dismal and low its accents came, 225  
 The while he scathed the Cross with flame;  
 And the few words that reached the air,  
 Although the holiest name was there,  
 Had more of blasphemy than prayer.  
 But when he shook above the crowd 230  
 Its kindled points, he spoke aloud:—  
 "Woe to the wretch who fails to rear  
 At this dread sign the ready spear!  
 For, as the flames this symbol sear,  
 His home, the refuge of his fear, 235  
     A kindred fate shall know;  
 Far o'er its roof the volumed flame  
 Clan-Alpine's vengeance shall proclaim,  
 While maids and matrons on his name  
 Shall call down wretchedness and shame, 240  
     And infamy and woe."  
 Then rose the cry of females, shrill  
 As goshawk's whistle on the hill,  
 Denouncing misery and ill,  
 Mingled with childhood's babbling trill 245  
     Of curses stammered slow;  
 Answering with imprecation dread,  
 "Sunk be his home in embers red!  
 And cursed be the meanest shed  
 That e'er shall hide the houseless head 250  
     We doom to want and woe!"  
 A sharp and shrieking echo gave,

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2 Be

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 birch-  
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Coir-Uriskin,<sup>1</sup> thy goblin cave!  
And the gray pass where birches wave  
On Beala-nam-bo.<sup>2</sup>

255

## XI

Then deeper paused the priest anew,  
And hard his labouring breath he drew,  
While, with set teeth and clenched hand,  
And eyes that glowed like fiery brand,  
He meditated curse more dread,  
And deadlier, on the clansman's head  
Who, summoned to his chieftain's aid,  
The signal saw and disobeyed.

260

The crosslet's points of sparkling wood  
He quenched among the bubbling blood,  
And, as again the sign he reared,  
Hollow and hoarse his voice was heard:

265

"When flits this cross from man to man,  
Vich-Alpine's summons to his clan,  
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!

270

Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!  
May ravens tear the careless eyes,  
Wolves make the coward heart their prize!

As sinks that blood-stream in the earth,  
So may his heart's-blood drench his hearth!

275

As dies in hissing gore the spark,  
Quench thou his light, Destruction dark!

And be the grace to him denied,  
Bought by this sign to all beside!"

He ceased; no echo gave again

280

The murmur of the deep Amen.

<sup>1</sup> **Coir-Uriskin**—See Canto III., line 622, and also page 89.

<sup>2</sup> **Beala-nam-bo**—"Beleach-nam-bo, or the pass of the cattle, is a most magnificent glade, overhung with aged birch-trees, a little higher up the mountain than the Coir-nan-Uriskin treated of in a former note. The whole composes the most sublime piece of scenery that imagination can conceive."—*Scott*.

## XII

Then Roderick with impatient look  
 From Brian's hand the symbol took:  
 "Speed, Malise, speed!" he said, and gave  
 The crosslet to his henchman brave. 285  
 "The muster-place be Lanrick mead<sup>1</sup> —  
 Instant the time — speed, Malise, speed!"  
 Like heath-bird, when the hawks pursue,  
 A barge across Loch Katrine flew:  
 High stood the henchman on the prow; 290  
 So rapidly the barge-men row,  
 The bubbles, where they launched the boat,  
 Were all unbroken and afloat,  
 Dancing in foam and ripple still,  
 When it had neared the mainland hill; 295  
 And from the silver beach's side  
 Still was the prow three fathom wide,  
 When lightly bounded to the land  
 The messenger of blood and brand.

## XIII

Speed, Malise, speed! the dun deer's hide<sup>2</sup> 300  
 On fleeter foot was never tied.  
 Speed, Malise, speed! such cause of haste  
 Thine active sinews never braced.  
 Bend 'gainst the steepy hill thy breast,  
 Burst down like torrent from its crest; 305  
 With short and springing footstep pass  
 The trembling bog and false morass;  
 Across the brook like roebuck bound,  
 And thread the brake like questing<sup>3</sup> hound;

<sup>1</sup> **Lanrick mead**—A meadow at the north-western end of Lake Vennachar.

<sup>2</sup> **Dun deer's hide**—Shoes made of deer skin.

<sup>3</sup> **Questing**—Hunting.

The crag is high, the scaur<sup>1</sup> is deep, 310  
Yet shrink not from the desperate leap:  
Parched are thy burning lips and brow,  
Yet by the fountain pause not now;  
Herald of battle, fate, and fear,  
Stretch onward in thy fleet career! 315  
The wounded hind thou track'st not now,  
Pursuest not maid through greenwood bough,  
Nor pliest thou now thy flying pace  
With rivals in the mountain race;  
But danger, death, and warrior deed 320  
Are in thy course — speed, Malise, speed!

## XIV

Fast as the fatal symbol flies,  
In arms the huts and hamlets rise;  
From winding glen, from upland brown,  
They poured each hardy tenant down. 325  
Nor slack'd the messenger his pace;  
He showed the sign, he named the place,  
And, pressing forward like the wind,  
Left clamour and surprise behind. .  
The fisherman forsook the strand, 330  
The swarthy smith took dirk and brand;  
With changed cheer, the mower blithe  
Left in the half-cut swath his scythe;  
The herds without a keeper strayed,  
The plough was in mid-furrow stayed, 335  
The falconer tossed his hawk away,  
The hunter left the stag at bay;  
Prompt at the signal of alarms,  
Each son of Alpine rushed to arms;  
So swept the tumult and affray 340  
Along the margin of Achray.

---

<sup>1</sup> Scaur—Precipice.

Alas, thou lovely lake! that e'er  
 Thy banks should echo sounds of fear!  
 The rocks, the bosky<sup>1</sup> thickets, sleep  
 So stilly on thy bosom deep,  
 The lark's blithe carol from the cloud  
 Seems for the scene too gayly loud.

345

## XV

Speed, Malise, speed! The lake is past,  
 Duncraggan's<sup>2</sup> huts appear at last,  
 And peep, like moss-grown rocks, half seen,  
 Half hidden in the copse so green;  
 There mayst thou rest, thy labour done,  
 Their lord shall speed the signal on.—  
 As stoops the hawk upon his prey,  
 The henchman shot him down the way.  
 What woful accents load the gale?  
 The funeral yell, the female wail!  
 A gallant hunter's sport is o'er,  
 A valiant warrior fights no more.  
 Who, in the battle or the chase,  
 At Roderick's side shall fill his place!—  
 Within the hall, where torch's ray  
 Supplies the excluded beams of day,  
 Lies Duncan on his lowly bier,  
 And o'er him streams his widow's tear.  
 His stripling son stands mournful by,  
 His youngest weeps, but knows not why;  
 The village maids and matrons round  
 The dismal coronach<sup>3</sup> resound.

350

355

360

365

<sup>1</sup> **Bosky**—Bushy.

<sup>2</sup> **Duncraggan**—A small village lying between Lochs Ven-nachar and Achray.

<sup>3</sup> **Coronach**—"The coronach of the Highlanders was a wild expression of lamentation poured forth by the mourners over the body of a departed friend. When the words of it were articulate they expressed the praises of the deceased and the loss the clan would sustain by his death."—*Scott*.

<sup>1</sup> Fl  
<sup>2</sup> Co  
 is usu  
<sup>3</sup> Cu

## XVI

## CORONACH

He is gone on the mountain, 370  
He is lost to the forest,  
Like a summer-dried fountain,  
When our need was the sorest.  
The font, reappearing,  
From the rain-drops shall borrow, 375  
But to us comes no cheering,  
To Duncan no morrow!

The hand of the reaper  
Takes the ears that are hoary,  
But the voice of the weeper 380  
Wails manhood in glory.  
The autumn winds rushing  
Waft the leaves that are searest,  
But our flower was in flushing,<sup>1</sup>  
When blighting was nearest. 385

Fleet foot on the correi,<sup>2</sup>  
Sage counsel in cumber,<sup>3</sup>  
Red hand in the foray,  
How sound is thy slumber!  
Like the dew on the mountain, 390  
Like the foam on the river,  
Like the bubble on the fountain,  
Thou art gone, and forever!

## XVII

See Stumah, who, the bier beside,  
His master's corpse with wonder eyed, 395

---

<sup>1</sup> **Flushing**—Full bloom.

<sup>2</sup> **Correi**—A hollow on the side of the hill, where the game is usually found lying.

<sup>3</sup> **Cumber**—Trouble.

Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo  
 Could send like lightning o'er the dew,  
 Bristles his crest, and points his ears,  
 As if some stranger step he hears.  
 'T is not a mourner's muffled tread, 400  
 Who comes to sorrow o'er the dead,  
 But headlong haste or deadly fear  
 Urge the precipitate career.  
 All stand aghast: — unheeding all, 405  
 The henchman bursts into the hall;  
 Before the dead man's bier he stood,  
 Held forth the Cross besmeared with blood;  
 "The muster-place is Lanrick mead;  
 Speed forth the signal! clansmen, speed!"

## XVIII

Angus, the heir of Duncan's line, 410  
 Sprung forth and seized the fatal sign.  
 In haste the stripling to his side  
 His father's dirk and broadsword tied;  
 But when he saw his mother's eye  
 Watch him in speechless agony, 15  
 Back to her opened arms he flew,  
 Pressed on her lips a fond adieu,—  
 "Alas!" she sobbed,— "and yet be gone,  
 And speed thee forth, like Duncan's son!"  
 One look he cast upon the bier, 420  
 Dashed from his eye the gathering tear,  
 Breathed deep to clear his labouring breast,  
 And tossed aloft his bonnet crest,  
 Then, like the high-bred colt when, freed, 425  
 First he essays his fire and speed,  
 He vanished, and o'er moor and moss  
 Sped forward with the Fiery Cross.  
 Suspended was the widow's tear  
 While yet his footsteps she could hear;



And when she marked the henchman's eye 430  
 Wet with unwonted sympathy,  
 "Kinsman," she said, "his race is run  
 That should have sped thine errand on;  
 The oak has fallen,— the sapling bough  
 Is all Duncraggan's shelter now, 435  
 Yet trust I well, his duty done,  
 The orphan's God will guard my son.—  
 And you, in many a danger true,  
 At Duncan's hest your blades that drew,  
 To arms, and guard that orphan's head! 440  
 Let babes and women wail the dead."  
 Then weapon-clang and martial call  
 Resounded through the funeral hall,  
 While from the walls the attendant band  
 Snatched sword and targe with hurried hand; 445  
 And short and flitting energy  
 Glanced from the mourner's sunken eye,  
 As if the sounds to warrior dear  
 Might rouse her Duncan from his bier.  
 But faded soon that borrowed force; 450  
 Grief claimed his right, and tears their course.

## XIX

Benledi<sup>1</sup> saw the Cross of Fire,  
 It glanced like lightning up Strath-Ire.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Benledi**—"The first stage of the Fiery Cross is to Duncraggan, a place near the Brigg of Turk, where a short stream divides Loch Achray from Loch Vennachar. From thence it passes towards Callander, and then, turning to the left up the pass of Leny, is consigned to Norman at the Chapel of Saint Bride, which stood on a small and romantic knoll in the middle of the valley, called Strath-Ire. Tombea and Armandave, or Ardmandave, are names of places in the vicinity. The alarm is then supposed to pass along the Lake of Lubnaig, and through the various glens in the district of Balquidder, including the neighbouring tracts of Glenfinlas and Strath-Gartney."—*Scott*.

O'er dale and hill the summons flew,  
Nor rest nor pause young Angus knew; 455  
The tear that gathered in his eye  
He left the mountain-breeze to dry;  
Until, where Teith's young waters roll  
Betwixt him and a wooded knoll  
That graced the sable strath with green, 460  
The chapel of Saint Bride<sup>1</sup> was seen.  
Swoln was the stream, remote the bridge,  
But Angus paused not on the edge;  
Though the dark waves danced dizzily,  
Though reeled his sympathetic<sup>2</sup> eye, 465  
He dashed amid the torrent's roar:  
His right hand high the crosslet bore,  
His left the pole-axe grasped, to guide  
And stay his footing in the tide.  
He stumbled twice,— the foam splashed high, 470  
With hoarser swell the stream raced by;  
And had he fallen,— forever there,  
Farewell unraggan's orphan heir!  
But still, as if in parting life,  
Firmer he grasped the Cross of strife, 475  
Until the opposing bank he gained,  
And up the chapel pathway strained.

## XX

A blithesome rout<sup>3</sup> that morning-tide  
Had sought the chapel of Saint Bride. 480  
Her troth Tombea's Mary gave  
To Norman, heir of Armandave,

<sup>1</sup> **Saint Bride**—Saint Bridget, an Irish nun of the fifth century.

<sup>2</sup> **Sympathetic**—In sympathy with the dizzy motion of the torrent.

<sup>3</sup> **Rout**—Assembly.

And, issuing from the Gothic arch,<sup>1</sup>  
The bridal now resumed their march  
In rude but glad procession came  
Bonneted sire and coif-clad<sup>2</sup> dame; 485  
And plaided youth with jest and jeer,  
Which snooded maiden would not hear;  
And children, that, unwitting why,  
Lent the gay shout their shrilly cry;  
And minstrels, that in measures vied 490  
Before the young and bonny bride,  
Whose downcast eye and cheek disclose  
The tear and blush of morning rose.  
With virgin step and bashful hand  
She held the kerchief's<sup>3</sup> snowy band. 495  
The gallant bridegroom by her side  
Beheld his prize with victor's pride,  
And the glad mother in her ear  
Was closely whispering word of cheer.

## XXI

Who meets them at the churchyard gate? 500  
The messenger of fear and fate!  
Haste in his hurried accent lies,  
And grief is swimming in his eyes.  
All dripping from the recent flood,  
Panting and travel-soiled he stood, 505  
The fatal sign of fire and sword  
Held forth, and spoke the appointed word:  
"The muster-place is Lanrick mead;  
Speed forth the signal! Norman, speed!"  
And must he change so soon the hand 510  
Just linked to his by holy band,

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<sup>1</sup> **Gothic arch**—The sharp-pointed arch of the door.

<sup>2</sup> **Coif**—The head-covering worn by married women, as the **snood** was worn by maidens.

<sup>3</sup> **Kerchief**—The coif was made of white linen.

For the fell Cross of blood and brand?  
 And must the day so blithe that rose,  
 And promised rapture in the close,  
 Before its setting hour, divide 515  
 The bridegroom from the plighted bride?  
 O fatal doom! — it must! it must!  
 Clan-Alpine's cause, her Chieftain's trust,  
 Her summons dread, brook no delay;  
 Stretch to the race,—away! away! 520

## XXII

Yet slow he laid his plaid aside,  
 And lingering eyed his lovely bride,  
 Until he saw the starting tear  
 Speak woe he might not stop to cheer;  
 Then, trusting not a second look, 525  
 In haste he sped him up the brook,  
 Nor backward glanced till on the heath  
 Where Lubnaig's lake supplies the Teith.—  
 What in the racer's bosom stirred?  
 The sickening pang of hope deferred, 530  
 And memory with a torturing train  
 Of all his morning visions vain.  
 Mingled with love's impatience, came  
 The manly thirst for martial fame;  
 The stormy joy of mountaineers 535  
 Ere yet they rush upon the spears;  
 And zeal for Clan and Chieftain burning,  
 And hope, from well-fought field returning,  
 With war's red honours on his crest,  
 To clasp his Mary to his breast. 540  
 Stung by such thoughts, o'er bank and brae,  
 Like fire from flint he glanced away,  
 While high resolve and feeling strong  
 Burst into voluntary song.

## XXIII

## SONG

The heath this night must be my bed, 545  
The bracken<sup>1</sup> curtain for my head,  
My lullaby the warder's<sup>2</sup> tread,  
Far, far, from love and thee, Mary;  
To-morrow eve, more stilly laid,  
My couch may be my bloody plaid, 550  
My vesper song thy wail, sweet maid!  
It will not waken me, Mary!

I may not, dare not, fancy now  
The grief that clouds thy lovely brow,  
I dare not think upon thy vow, 555  
And all it promised me, Mary.  
No fond regret must Norman know;  
When bursts Clan-Alpine on the foe,  
His heart must be like bended bow,  
His foot like arrow free, Mary. 560

A time will come with feeling fraught,  
For, if I fall in battle fought,  
Thy hapless lover's dying thought  
Shall be a thought on thee, Mary.  
And if returned from conquered foes, 565  
How blithely will the evening close,  
How sweet the linnet sing repose,  
To my young bride and me, Mary!

## XXIV

Not faster o'er thy heathery braes,  
Balquidder, speeds the midnight blaze, 570

---

<sup>1</sup> Bracken—Fern.<sup>2</sup> Warder—Sentinel.

Rushing in conflagration strong  
 Thy deep ravines and dells along,  
 Wrapping thy cliffs in purple glow,  
 And reddening the dark lakes below;  
 Nor faster speeds it, nor so far, 575  
 As o'er thy heaths the voice of war.  
 The signal roused to martial coil <sup>1</sup>  
 The sullen margin of Loch Voil,  
 Waked still Loch Doine, and to the source  
 Alarmed, Balvaig, thy swampy course; 580  
 Thence southward turned its rapid road  
 Adown Strath-Gartney's valley broad,  
 Till rose in arms each man might claim  
 A portion in Clan-Alpine's name,  
 From the gray sire, whose trembling hand 585  
 Could hardly buckle on his brand,  
 To the raw boy, whose shaft and bow  
 Were yet scarce terror to the crow.  
 Each valley, each sequestered glen,  
 Mustered its little horde of men, 590  
 That met as torrents from the height  
 In Highland dales their streams unite,  
 Still gathering, as they pour along,  
 A voice more loud, a tide more strong,  
 Till at the rendezvous they stood 595  
 By hundreds prompt for blows and blood.  
 Each trained to arms since life began,  
 Owning no tie but to his clan,  
 No oath but by his chieftain's hand,  
 No law but Roderick Dhu's command. 600

## XXV

That summer morn had Roderick Dhu  
 Surveyed the skirts of Benvenue,  
 And sent his scouts o'er hill and heath,

<sup>1</sup> **Coil**—Noise.

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<sup>3</sup> G

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To view the frontiers of Menteith.  
All backward came with news of truce; 805  
Still lay each martial Græme and Bruce,  
In Rednock<sup>1</sup> courts no horsemen wait,  
No banner waved on Cardross gate,  
On Duchray's towers no beacon shone,  
Nor scared the herons from Loch Con;<sup>2</sup> 810  
All seemed at peace.— Now wot ye why  
The Chieftain with such anxious eye,  
Ere to the muster he repair,  
This western frontier scanned with care?—  
In Benvenue's most darksome cleft, 815  
A fair though cruel pledge was left;  
For Douglas, to his promise true,  
That morning from the isle withdrew,  
And in a deep sequestered dell  
Had sought a low and lonely cell. 820  
By many a bard in Celtic tongue  
Has Coir-nan-Uriskin been sung;  
A softer name the Saxons gave,  
And called the grot the Goblin Cave.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> **Rednock, Cardross, Duchray**—Castles on the border of the Highlands.

<sup>2</sup> **Loch Con**—A small lake to the south of Lake Katrine.

<sup>3</sup> **Goblin Cave**—"This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue, overhanging the south-eastern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch-trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil. A dale in so wild a situation, and amid a people whose genius bordered on the romantic, did not remain without appropriate deities. The name literally implies the Corri, or Den, of the Wild or Shaggy Men. 'The Urisks,' says Dr. Graham, 'were a sort of lubberly supernaturals, who, like the Brownies, could be gained over by kind attention to perform the drudgery of the farm, and it was believed that many families in the Highlands had one of the order attached to it. They were supposed to be dispersed over the Highlands, each in his own wild recess, but the solemn stated meetings of the order were regularly held in this Cave of Benvenue.'"—*Scott*.

## XXVI

It was a wild and strange retreat, 625  
 As e'er was trod by outlaw's feet.  
 The dell, upon the mountain's crest,  
 Yawned like a gash on warrior's breast;  
 Its trench had stayed full many a rock,  
 Hurl'd by primeval earthquake shock 630  
 From Benvenue's gray summit wild,  
 And here, in random ruin piled,  
 They frowned incumbent o'er the spot,  
 And formed the rugged sylvan grot.  
 The oak and birch with mingled shade 635  
 At noontide there a twilight made,  
 Unless when short and sudden shone  
 Some straggling beam on cliff or stone,  
 With such a glimpse as prophet's eye  
 Gains on thy depth, Futurity. 640  
 No murmur waked the solemn still,  
 Save tinkling of a fountain rill;  
 But when the wind chafed with the lake,  
 A sullen sound would upward break,  
 With dashing hollow voice, that spoke 645  
 The incessant war of wave and rock.  
 Suspended cliffs with hideous sway  
 Seemed nodding o'er the cavern gray.  
 From such a den the wolf had sprung,  
 In such the wild-cat leaves her young; 650  
 Yet Douglas and his daughter fair  
 Sought for a space their safety there.  
 Gray Superstition's whisper dread  
 Debarred the spot to vulgar tread;  
 For there, she said, did fays resort, 655  
 And satyrs<sup>1</sup> hold their sylvan court,  
 By moonlight tread their mystic maze,  
 And blast the rash beholder's gaze.

<sup>1</sup> **Satyrs**—Ancient Greek divinities who inhabited the woods, half goat and half man in form.

## XXVII

Now eve, with western shadows long,  
Floated on Katrine bright and strong, 660  
When Roderick with a chosen few  
Repassed the heights of Benvenue.  
Above the Goblin Cave they go,  
Through the wild pass of Beal-nam-bo;  
The prompt retainers speed before, 665  
To launch the shallop from the shore,  
For 'cross Loch Katrine lies his way  
To view the passes of Achray,  
And place his clansmen in array.  
Yet lags the Chief in musing mind, 670  
Unwonted sight, his men behind.  
A single page, to bear his sword,  
Alone attended on his lord;  
The rest their way through thickets break,  
And soon await him by the lake. 675  
It was a fair and gallant sight,  
To view them from the neighbouring height,  
By the low-levelled sunbeam's light!  
For strength and stature, from the clan  
Each warrior was a chosen man, 680  
As even afar might well be seen,  
By their proud step and martial mien.  
Their feathers dance, their tartans float,  
Their targets gleam, as by the boat  
A wild and warlike group they stand, 685  
That well became such mountain-strand.

## XXVIII

Their Chief with step reluctant still  
Was lingering on the craggy hill,  
Hard by where turned apart the road  
To Douglas's obscure abode. 690

It was but with that dawning morn  
 That Roderick Dhu had proudly sworn  
 To drown his love in war's wild roar,  
 Nor think of Ellen Douglas more;  
 But he who stems a stream with sand, 695  
 And fetters flame with flaxen band,  
 Has yet a harder task to prove,—  
 By firm resolve to conquer love!  
 Eve finds the Chief, like restless ghost,  
 Still hovering near his treasure lost; 700  
 For though his haughty heart deny  
 A parting meeting to his eye,  
 Still fondly strains his anxious ear  
 The accents of her voice to hear,  
 And inly did he curse the breeze 705  
 That waked to sound the rustling trees.  
 But hark! what mingles in the strain?  
 It is the harp of Allan-bane,  
 That wakes its measure slow and high,  
 Attuned to sacred minstrelsy. 710  
 What melting voice attends the strings?  
 'T is Ellen, or an angel, sings.

## XXIX

## HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

*Ave Maria!*<sup>1</sup> maiden mild!

Listen to a maiden's prayer!

Thou canst hear though from the wild, 715

Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,

Though banished, outcast, and reviled —

Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer;

Mother, hear a suppliant child! 720

*Ave Maria!*

<sup>1</sup> *Ave Maria*—Hail, Mary! The first words of a Latin prayer to the Virgin Mary. See Luke I, 28.

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*Ave Maria!* undefiled!

The flinty couch we now must share  
Shall seem with down of eider piled,  
If thy protection hover there.

The murky cavern's heavy air 725  
Shall breathe of balm if thou hast smiled;  
Then, Maiden! hear a maiden's prayer,  
Mother, list a suppliant child!

*Ave Maria!*

*Ave Maria!* stainless styled!

Foul demons of the earth and air, 730  
From this their wonted haunt exiled,  
Shall flee before thy presence fair.  
We bow us to our lot of care,  
Beneath thy guidance reconciled:  
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer, 735  
And for a father hear a child!

*Ave Maria!*

XXX

Died on the harp the closing hymn,—  
Unmoved in attitude and limb,  
As listening still, Clan-Alpine's lord  
Stood leaning on his heavy sword, 740  
Until the page with humble sign  
Twice pointed to the sun's decline.  
Then while his plaid he round him cast,  
"It is the last time,—'t is the last,"  
He muttered thrice,—"the last time e'er 745  
That angel-voice shall Roderick hear!"  
It was a goading thought,—his stride  
Hied hastier down the mountain-side;  
Sullen he flung him in the boat,  
An instant 'cross the lake it shot. 750  
They landed in that silvery bay,

And eastward held their hasty way,  
 Till, with the latest beams of light,  
 The band arrived on Lanrick height,  
 Where mustered in the vale below 755  
 Clan-Alpine's men in martial show.

## XXXI

A various scene the clansmen made:  
 Some sat, some stood, some slowly strayed;  
 But most, with mantles folded round, 760  
 Were couched to rest upon the ground,  
 Scarce to be known by curious eye  
 From the deep heather where they lie,  
 So well was matched the tartan screen  
 With heath-bell dark and brackens green;  
 Unless, where here and there, a blade 765  
 Or lance's point a glimmer made,  
 Like glow-worm twinkling through the shade.  
 But when, advancing through the gloom,  
 They saw the Chieftain's eagle plume, 770  
 Their shout of welcome, shrill and wide,  
 Shook the steep mountain's steady side.  
 Thrice it arose, and lake and fell  
 Three times returned the martial yell;  
 It died upon Bochastle's plain,  
 And Silence claimed her evening reign. 775

## CANTO FOURTH

## THE PROPHECY

## I

"THE rose is fairest when 't is budding new,  
 And hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;  
 The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew,  
 And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears.  
 O wilding rose, whom fancy thus endears, 5

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<sup>1</sup> For  
<sup>2</sup> Bra



I bid your blossoms in my bonnet wave,  
Emblem of hope and love through future years!"

Thus spoke young Norman, heir of Armandave,  
What time the sun arose on Vennachar's broad wave.

## II

Such fond conceit,<sup>1</sup> half said, half sung, 10  
Love prompted to the bridegroom's tongue.

All while he stripped the wild-rose spray,  
His axe and bow beside him lay,  
For on a pass 'twixt lake and wood 15  
A wakeful sentinel he stood.

Hark! — on the rock a footstep rung,  
And instant to his arms he sprung.

"Stand, or thou diest! — What, Malise? — soon  
Art thou returned from Braes of Doune?" 20

By thy keen step and glance I know,  
Thou bring'st us tidings of the foe." —

For while the Fiery Cross hied on,  
On distant scout had Malise gone. —

"Where sleeps the Chief?" the henchman said.  
"Apart, in yonder misty glade; 25

To his lone couch I'll be your guide." —  
Then called a slumberer by his side,  
And stirred him with his slackened bow, —

"Up, up, Glentarkin! rouse thee, ho!  
We seek the Chieftain; on the track 30  
Keep eagle watch till I come back."

## III

Together up the pass they sped:  
"What of the foeman?" Norman said. —  
"Varying reports from near and far;

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<sup>1</sup> **Fond conceit** — Idle thought.

<sup>2</sup> **Braes of Doune** — The hills on the north bank of the Teith.

This certain,— that a band of war 35  
 Has for two days been ready boune,<sup>1</sup>  
 At prompt command to march from Doune;  
 King James the while, with princely powers,  
 Holds revelry in Stirling towers.  
 Soon will this dark and gathering cloud 40  
 Speak on our glens in thunder loud.  
 Inured to bide such bitter bout,  
 The warrior's plaid may bear it out;  
 But, Norman, how wilt thou provide  
 A shelter for thy bonny bride?"— 45  
 "What! know ye not that Roderick's care  
 To the lone isle hath caused repair  
 Each maid and matron of the clan,  
 And every child and aged man 50  
 Unfit for arms; and given his charge,  
 Nor skiff nor shallop, boat nor barge,  
 Upon these lakes shall float at large,  
 But all beside the islet moor,  
 That such dear pledge may rest secure?"—

## IV

"'T is well advised,— the Chieftain's plan 55  
 Bespeaks the father of his clan.  
 But wherefore sleeps Sir Roderick Dhu  
 Apart from all his followers true?"  
 "It is because last evening-tide  
 Brian an augury hath tried, 60  
 Of that dread kind which must not be  
 Unless in dread extremity,  
 The Taghairm<sup>2</sup> called; by which, afar,

<sup>1</sup> **Boune**—Ready. The word is redundant here.

<sup>2</sup> **Taghairm**—"The Highlanders, like all rude people, had various superstitious modes of inquiring into futurity. One of the most noted was the *Taghairm*, mentioned in the text. A person was wrapped up in the skin of a newly-slain bullock, and deposited beside a waterfall, or at the bottom of a preci-

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 Scott.

<sup>1</sup> **Galla**

<sup>2</sup> **Kern**

<sup>3</sup> **Beal**

**Dennan**

Our sires foresaw the events of war.  
Duncraggan's milk-white bull they slew,"— 65

## MALISE

"Ah! well the gallant brute I knew!  
The choicest of the prey we had  
When swept our merry-men Gallangad.<sup>1</sup>  
His hide was snow, his horns were dark,  
His red eye glowed like fiery spark; 70  
So fierce, so tameless, and so fleet,  
Sore did he cumber our retreat,  
And kept our stoutest kerns<sup>2</sup> in awe,  
Even at the pass of Beal 'maha.<sup>3</sup>  
But steep and flinty was the road, 75  
And sharp the hurrying pikeman's goad,  
And when we came to Dinnan's Row  
A child might scathless stroke his brow."

## V

## NORMAN

"That bull was slain; his reeking hide  
They stretched the cataract beside, 80

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pice, or in some other strange, wild, and unusual situation, where the scenery around him suggested nothing but objects of horror. In this situation, he revolved in his mind the question proposed; and whatever was impressed upon him by his exalted imagination, passed for the inspiration of the disembodied spirits, who haunt these desolate recesses. In some of the Hebrides they attributed the same oracular power to a large black stone by the sea-shore, which they approached with certain solemnities, and considered the first fancy which came into their own minds, after they did so, to be the undoubted dictate of the tutelary deity of the stone, and, as such, to be, if possible, punctually complied with."—*Scott*.

<sup>1</sup> **Gallangad**—A district to the south of Loch Lomond.

<sup>2</sup> **Kerns**—Light-armed soldiers.

<sup>3</sup> **Beal 'maha**—A pass on the east side of Loch Lomond.  
**Dinnan's Row** lies a few miles to the north.

Whose waters their wild tumult toss  
 Adown the black and craggy boss<sup>1</sup>  
 Of that huge cliff whose ample verge  
 Tradition calls the Hero's Targe.  
 Couched on a shelf beneath its brink, 85  
 Close where the thundering torrents sink,  
 Rocking beneath their headlong sway,  
 And drizzled by the ceaseless spray,  
 Midst groan of rock and roar of stream,  
 The wizard waits prophetic dream. 90  
 Nor distant rests the Chief; — but hush!  
 See, gliding slow through mist and bush,  
 The hermit gains yon rock, and stands  
 To gaze upon our slumbering bands.  
 Seems he not, Malise, like a ghost, 95  
 That hovers o'er a slaughtered host?  
 Or raven on the blasted oak,  
 That, watching while the deer is broke,<sup>2</sup>  
 His morsel claims with sullen croak?"

## MALISE

"Peace! peace! to other than to me 100  
 Thy words were evil augury;  
 But still I hold Sir Roderick's blade  
 Clan-Alpine's omen and her aid,  
 Not aught that, gleaned from heaven or hell,  
 Yon fiend-begotten Monk can tell. 105  
 The Chieftain joins him, see — and now  
 Together they descend the brow."

## VI

And, as they came, with Alpine's Lord  
 The Hermit Monk held solemn word:—

<sup>1</sup> **Boss**—Knob, or projection.

<sup>2</sup> **Broke**—Quartered, a technical term for the method of cutting up the stag.

"Roderick! it is a fearful strife,  
 For man endowed with mortal life,  
 Whose shroud of sentient clay<sup>1</sup> can still  
 Feel feverish pang and fainting chill,  
 Whose eye can stare in stony trance,  
 Whose hair can rouse like warrior's lance,—  
 'T is hard for such to view, unfurled,  
 The curtain of the future world.  
 Yet, witness every quaking limb,  
 My sunken pulse, mine eyeballs dim,  
 My soul with harrowing anguish torn,  
 This for my Chieftain have I borne!—  
 The shapes that sought my fearful couch  
 A human tongue may ne'er avouch;  
 No mortal man — save he, who, bred  
 Between the living and the dead,  
 Is gifted beyond nature's law —  
 Had e'er survived to say he saw.  
 At length the fateful answer came  
 In characters of living flame!  
 Not spoke in word, nor blazed in scroll,<sup>2</sup>  
 But borne and branded on my soul:—  
 WHICH SPILLS THE FOREMOST FOEMAN'S LIFE,  
 THAT PARTY CONQUERS IN THE STRIFE.'"

## VII

"Thanks, Brian, for thy zeal and care!  
 Good is thine augury, and fair.  
 Clan-Alpine ne'er in battle stood  
 But first our broadswords tasted blood.  
 A surer victim still I know,  
 Self-offered to the auspicious blow:  
 A spy<sup>3</sup> has sought my land this morn,—

<sup>1</sup> **Shroud of sentient clay**—The body.

<sup>2</sup> **Blazed in scroll**—Emblazoned on parchment.

<sup>3</sup> **A spy**—Fitz-James.

No eye shall witness his return!  
 My followers guard each pass's mouth,  
 To east, to westward, and to south;  
 Red Murdoch, bribed to be his guide,  
 Has charge to lead his steps aside, 145  
 Till in deep path or dingle brown  
 He light on those shall bring him down.—  
 But see, who comes his news to show!  
 Malise! what tidings of the foe?"

## VIII

"At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive<sup>1</sup> 150  
 Two Barons proud their banners wave.  
 I saw the Moray's silver star,<sup>2</sup>  
 And marked the sable pale of Mar."  
 "By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!  
 I love to hear of worthy foes. 155  
 When move they on?" "To-morrow's noon  
 Will see them here for battle boune."  
 "Then shall it see a meeting stern!  
 But, for the place,— say, couldst thou learn  
 Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?<sup>3</sup> 160  
 Strengthened by them, we well might bide  
 The battle on Benledi's side.  
 Thou couldst not? — well! Clan-Alpine's men  
 Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;  
 Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight, 165  
 All in our maids' and matrons' sight,  
 Each for his hearth and household fire,  
 Father for child, and son for sire,  
 Lover for maid beloved! — But why —

<sup>1</sup> **Glaive**—Broadsword.

<sup>2</sup> **Silver star**—Part of the coat-of-arms of the Murrays consisted of three silver stars; the Earls of Mar bore on their arms a **sable pale**, or black perpendicular stripe.

<sup>3</sup> **Earn**—Living in the valley of the Earn, one of the rivers of Perthshire.



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Is it the breeze affects mine eye? 170  
Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!  
A messenger of doubt or fear?  
No! sooner may the Saxon lance  
Unfix Benledi from his stance,<sup>1</sup>  
Than doubt or terror can pierce through 175  
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!  
'T is stubborn as his trusty targe.  
Each to his post! — all know their charge.''  
The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,  
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance, 180  
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.—  
I turn me from the martial roar,  
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.

IX

Where is the Douglas? — he is gone;  
And Ellen sits on the gray stone 185  
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,  
While vainly Allan's words of cheer  
Are poured on her unheeding ear.  
"He will return — dear lady, trust! —  
With joy return; — he will — he must. 190  
Well was it time to seek afar  
Some refuge from impending war,  
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm  
Are cowed by the approaching storm.  
I saw their boats with many a light, 195  
Floating the livelong yesternight,  
Shifting like flashes darted forth  
By the red streamers<sup>2</sup> of the north;  
I marked at morn how close they ride,  
Thick moored by the lone islet's side, 200

<sup>1</sup> Stance--Station.

<sup>2</sup> Red streamers—Aurora Borealis.

Like wild ducks couching in the fen  
 When stoops the hawk upon the glen.  
 Since this rude race dare not abide  
 The peril on the mainland side,  
 Shall not thy noble father's care  
 Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"

205

## X

## ELLEN

"No, Allan, no! Pretext so kind  
 My wakeful terrors could not blind.  
 When in such tender tone, yet grave,  
 Douglas a parting blessing gave,  
 The tear that glistened in his eye  
 Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.  
 My soul, though feminine and weak,  
 Can image his; e'en as the lake,  
 Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,  
 Reflects the invulnerable rock.  
 He hears report of battle rife,  
 He deems himself the cause of strife.  
 I saw him redden when the theme  
 Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream  
 Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,  
 Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.  
 Think'st thou he trowed<sup>1</sup> thine omen aught?  
 O no! 't was apprehensive thought  
 For the kind youth,—for Roderick too —  
 Let me be just — that friend so true;  
 In danger both, and in our cause!  
 Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.  
 Why else that solemn warning given,  
 "If not on earth, we meet in heaven!"

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<sup>1</sup> Trowed—Believed.

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Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's<sup>1</sup> fane,  
 If eve return him not again,  
 Am I to hie and make me known?  
 Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,  
 Buys his friends' safety with his own;  
 He goes to do — what I had done,  
 Had Douglàs' daughter been his son!"

## XI

"Nay, lovely Ellen! — dearest, nay!  
 If aught should his return delay,  
 He only named yon holy fane  
 As fitting place to meet again.  
 Be sure he's safe; and for the Græme,—  
 Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!—  
 My visioned sight<sup>2</sup> may yet prove true,  
 Nor bode of ill to him or you.  
 When did my gifted<sup>3</sup> dream beguile?  
 Think of the stranger at the isle,  
 And think upon the harpings slow  
 That presaged this approaching woe!  
 Sooth<sup>4</sup> was my prophecy of fear;  
 Believe it when it augurs cheer.  
 Would we had left this dismal spot!  
 Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.  
 Of such a wondrous tale I know —  
 Dear lady change that look of woe,  
 My harp was wont thy grief to cheer."

## ELLEN

"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,  
 But cannot stop the bursting tear."

<sup>1</sup> **Cambus-kenneth**—An abbey on the Forth, near Stirling.

<sup>2</sup> **Visioned sight**—The aged minstrel was gifted with second sight.

<sup>3</sup> **Gifted**—Inspired.

<sup>4</sup> **Sooth**—True.

The Minstrel tried his simple art,  
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

260

## XII

## BALLAD

## ALICE BRAND

Merry it is in the good greenwood,  
When the mavis and merle <sup>1</sup> are singing,  
When the deer sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,  
And the hunter's horn is ringing.

"O Alice Brand, my native land  
Is lost for love of you;  
And we must hold by wood and wold,  
As outlaws wont to do.

265

"O Alice, 't was all for thy locks so bright,  
And 't was all for thine eyes so blue,  
That on the night of our luckless flight  
Thy brother bold I slew.

270

"Now must I teach to hew the beach  
The hand that held the glaive,  
For leaves to spread our lowly bed,  
And stakes to fence our cave.

275

"And for vest of pall,<sup>2</sup> thy fingers small,  
That wont on harp to stray,  
A cloak must shear from the slaughtered deer,  
To keep the cold away."

280

<sup>1</sup> Mavis and merle—Thrush and blackbird.

<sup>2</sup> Pall—Purple cloth.

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<sup>4</sup> V

260 "O Richard! if my brother died,  
 'T was but a fatal chance;  
 For darkling<sup>1</sup> was the battle tried,  
 And fortune sped the lance.

"If pall and vair no more I wear,  
 Nor thou the crimson sheen,<sup>2</sup>  
 As warm, we'll say, is the russet gray,  
 As gay the forest-green.

"And, Richard, if our lot be hard,  
 And lost thy native land,  
 Still Alice has her own Richard,  
 And he his Alice Brand."

## XIII

## BALLAD CONTINUED

'T is merry, 't is merry, in good greenwood;  
 So blithe Lady Alice is singing;  
 On the beech's pride, and oak's brown side,  
 Lord Richard's axe is ringing.

Up spoke the moody Elfin King,<sup>3</sup>  
 Who woned<sup>4</sup> within the hill,—  
 Like wind in the porch of a ruined church,  
 His voice was ghostly shrill.

<sup>1</sup> **Darkling**—In the dark.

<sup>2</sup> **Crimson sheen**—Bright crimson cloth.

<sup>3</sup> **Elfin King**—"The Daoine Shi", or Men of Peace, of the Highlanders, though not absolutely malevolent, are believed to be a peevish, repining race of beings, who, possessing themselves but a scanty portion of happiness, are supposed to envy mankind their more complete and substantial enjoyments. They are supposed to enjoy, in their subterraneous recesses, a sort of shadowy happiness—a tinsel grandeur; which, however, they would willingly exchange for the more solid joys of mortality. They are believed to inhabit certain round grassy eminences, where they celebrate their nocturnal festivities by the light of the moon."—*Dr. Grahame*.

<sup>4</sup> **Woned**—Dwelt.

“Why sounds yon stroke on beech and oak,  
 Our moonlight circle’s<sup>1</sup> screen?  
 Or who comes here to chase the deer,  
 Beloved of our Elfin Queen?  
 Or who may dare on wold to wear  
 The fairies’ fatal green?<sup>2</sup>

305

“Up, Urgan, up! to yon mortal hie,  
 For thou wert christened man;<sup>3</sup>  
 For cross<sup>4</sup> or sign thou wilt not fly,  
 For muttered word or ban.

310

“Lay on him the curse of the withered heart,  
 The curse of the sleepless eye;  
 Till he wish and pray that his life would part,  
 Nor yet find leave to die.”

## XIV

## BALLAD CONTINUED

’T is merry, ’t is merry, in good greenwood,<sup>310</sup>  
 Though the birds have stilled their singing;  
 The evening blaze doth Alice raise,  
 And Richard is fagots bringing.

Up Urgan starts, that hideous dwarf,  
 Before Lord Richard stands,

320

<sup>1</sup> **Circle**—Fairy Rings, as they are called, circles of grass of a brighter green than the grass that surrounds them. These are common in meadows.

<sup>2</sup> **Fatal green**—Green was the favourite colour of the Men of Peace. They were supposed to take offence should mortals presume to wear this colour.

<sup>3</sup> **Christened man**—“The Elves were supposed greatly to envy the privileges acquired by Christian initiation, and they gave to these mortals who had fallen into their power a certain precedence, founded upon this advantageous distinction.”—*Scott*.

<sup>4</sup> **Cross**—The sign of the cross.

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And, as he crossed and blessed himself,  
 "I fear not sign," quoth the grisly elf,  
 "That is made with bloody hands."

But out then spoke she, Alice Brand,  
 That woman void of fear,—  
 "And if there 's blood upon his hand,  
 'T is but the blood of deer."

"Now loud thy liest, thou bold of mood!  
 It cleaves unto his hand,  
 The stain of thine own kindly blood,<sup>1</sup>  
 The blood of Ethert Brand."

Then forward stepped she, Alice Brand,  
 And made the holy sign,—  
 "And if there 's blood on Richard's hand,  
 A spotless hand is mine."

"And I conjure thee, demon elf,  
 By Him whom demons fear,  
 To show us whence thou art thyself,  
 And what thine errand here?"

## XV

## BALLAD CONTINUED

"'T is merry, 't is merry, in Fairy-land,  
 When fairy birds are singing,  
 When the court doth ride by their monarch's side,  
 With bit and bridle ringing:

"And gayly shines the Fairy-land —  
 But all is glistening show,

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<sup>1</sup> **Kindly blood**—The blood of thine own kin.

Like the idle gleam that December's beam  
Can dart on ice and snow.

“And fading, like that varied gleam,  
Is our inconstant shape,  
Who now like knight and lady seem, 350  
And now like dwarf and ape.

“It was between the night and day,  
When the Fairy King has power,  
That I sunk down in a sinful fray,  
And 'twixt life and death was snatched away 355  
To the joyless Elfin bower.

“But wist I of a woman bold,  
Who thrice my brow durst sign,  
I might regain my mortal mould,  
As fair a form as thine.” 360

She crossed him once — she crossed him twice —  
That lady was so brave;  
The fouler grew his goblin hue,  
The darker grew the cave.

She crossed him thrice, that lady bold; 365  
He rose beneath her hand  
The fairest knight on Scottish mould,  
Her brother, Ethert Brand!

Merry it is in good greenwood,  
When the mavis and merle are singing, 370  
But merrier were they in Dunfermline <sup>1</sup> gray,  
When all the bells were ringing.

<sup>1</sup> **Dunfermline**—The Grey Friars' Abbey in Dunfermline, a town about seventeen miles north of Edinburgh.

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## XVI

Just as the minstrel sounds were stayed,  
 A stranger climbed the steepy glade;  
 His martial step, his stately mien, 375  
 His hunting-suit of Lincoln green,  
 His eagle glance, remembrance claims —  
 'T is Snowdown's Knight, 't is James Fitz-James.  
 Ellen beheld as in a dream,  
 Then, starting, scarce suppressed a scream: 380  
 "O stranger! in such hour of fear  
 What evil hap has brought thee here?"  
 "An evil hap how can it be  
 That bids me look again on thee?  
 By promise bound, my former guide 385  
 Met me betimes this morning-tide,  
 And marshalled over bank and bourne<sup>1</sup>  
 The happy path of my return."  
 "The happy path! — what! said he naught  
 Of war, of battle to be fought, 390  
 Of guarded pass?" "No, by my faith!  
 Nor saw I aught could augur scathe."  
 "O haste thee, Allan, to the kern:  
 Yonder his tartans I discern;  
 Learn thou his purpose, and conjure, 395  
 That he will guide the stranger sure! —  
 What prompted thee, unhappy man?  
 The meanest serf in Roderick's clan  
 Had not been bribed, by love or fear,  
 Unknown to him to guide thee here." 400

## XVII

"Sweet Ellen, dear my life must be,  
 Since it is worthy care from thee;

<sup>1</sup> **Bourne**—Limit.

<sup>2</sup> **Scathe**—Harm or danger.

Yet life I hold but idle breath  
 When love or honour's weighed with death.  
 Then let me profit by my chance, 405  
 And speak my purpose bold at once.  
 I come to bear thee from a wild  
 Where ne'er before such blossom smiled,  
 By this soft hand to lead thee far  
 From frantic scenes of feud and war. 410  
 Near Bochastle my horses wait;  
 They bear us soon to Stirling gate.  
 I'll place thee in a lovely bower,  
 I'll guard thee like a tender flower —"  
 "O hush, Sir Knight! 't were female art, 415  
 To say I do not read thy heart;  
 Too much, before, my selfish ear  
 Was idly soothed my praise to hear.  
 That fatal bait hath lured thee back,  
 In deathful hour, o'er dangerous track; 420  
 And how, O how, can I atone  
 The wreck my vanity brought on!—  
 One way remains — I'll tell him all —  
 Yes! struggling bosom, forth it shall!  
 Thou, whose light folly bears the blame, 425  
 Buy thine own pardon with thy shame!  
 But first — my father is a man  
 Outlawed and exiled, under ban;  
 The price of blood is on his head,  
 With me 't were infamy to wed. 430  
 Still wouldst thou speak? — then hear the truth!  
 Fitz-James, there is a noble youth —  
 If yet he is! — exposed for me  
 And mine to dread extremity —  
 Thou hast the secret of my heart; 435  
 Forgive, be generous, and depart!"

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## XVIII

405 Fitz-James knew every wily train <sup>1</sup>  
 A lady's fickle heart to gain,  
 But here he knew and felt them vain.  
 There shot no glance from Ellen's eye, 440  
 To give her steadfast speech the lie;  
 410 In maiden confidence she stood,  
 Though mantled in her cheek the blood,  
 And told her love with such a sigh  
 Of deep and hopeless agony, 445  
 As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom  
 And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.  
 Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,  
 But not with hope fled sympathy.  
 He proffered to attend her side, 450  
 As brother would a sister guide.  
 420 "O little know'st thou Roderick's heart!  
 Safer for both we go apart.  
 O haste thee, and from Allan learn  
 If thou mayst trust yon wily kern." 455  
 With hand upon his forehead laid,  
 425 The conflict of his mind to shade,  
 A parting step or two he made;  
 Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,  
 He paused, and turned, and came again. 460

## XIX

430 "Hear, lady, yet a parting word! —  
 It chanced in fight that my poor sword  
 Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.  
 This ring the grateful Monarch gave,  
 435 And bade, when I had boon to crave, 465  
 To bring it back, and boldly claim

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<sup>1</sup> **Train**—Lure.

The recompense that I would name.  
 Ellen, I am no courtly lord,  
 But one who lives by lance and sword,  
 Whose castle is his helm and shield, 470  
 His lordship the embattled field.  
 What from a prince can I demand,  
 Who neither reck of <sup>1</sup> state nor land?  
 Ellen, thy hand — the ring is thine;  
 Each guard and usher knows the sign. 475  
 Seek thou the King without delay;  
 This signet shall secure thy way:  
 And claim thy suit, whate'er it be,  
 As ransom of his pledge to me."  
 He placed the golden circlet on, 480  
 Paused — kissed her hand — and then was gone.  
 The aged Minstrel stood aghast,  
 So hastily Fitz-James shot past.  
 He joined his guide, and wending down  
 The ridges of the mountain brown, 485  
 Across the stream they took their way  
 That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

## XX

All in the Trosachs' glen was still,  
 Noontide was sleeping on the hill:  
 Sudden his guide whooped loud and high — 490  
 "Murdoch! was that a signal cry?" —  
 He stammered forth, "I shout to scare  
 Yon raven from his dainty fare."  
 He looked — he knew the raven's prey,  
 His own brave steed: "Ah! gallant gray! 495  
 For thee — for me, perchance — 't were well  
 We ne'er had seen the Trosachs' dell.—  
 Murdoch, move first — but silently;  
 Whistle or whoop, and thou shalt die!"

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<sup>1</sup> Reck of—Care for.

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Jealous and sullen on they fared,  
Each silent, each upon his guard.

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## XXI

Now wound a path its dizzy ledge  
Around a precipice's edge,  
When lo! a wasted female form,  
Blighted by wrath of sun and storm,  
In tattered weeds<sup>1</sup> and wild array,  
Stood on a cliff beside the way,  
And glancing round her restless eye,  
Upon the wood, the rock, the sky,  
Seemed naught to mark, yet all to spy.  
Her brow was wreathed with gaudy broom;<sup>2</sup>  
With gesture wild she waved a plume  
Of feathers, which the eagles fling  
To crag and cliff from dusky wing;  
Such spoils her desperate step had sought,  
Where scarce was footing for the goat.  
The tartan plaid she first descried,  
And shrieked till all the rocks replied;  
As loud she laughed when near they drew,  
For then the Lowland garb she knew;  
And then her hands she wildly wrung,  
And then she wept and then she sung —  
She sung! — the voice, in better time,  
Perchance to harp or lute might chime;  
And now, though strained and roughened, still  
Rung wildly sweet to dale and hill.

505

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## XXII

## SONG

They bid me sleep, they bid me pray,  
They say my brain is warped and wrung —

<sup>1</sup> **Weeds**—Garments.

<sup>2</sup> **Broom**—The flower is bright yellow.

I cannot sleep on Highland brae,  
 I cannot pray in Highland tongue. 530  
 But were I now where Allan<sup>1</sup> glides,  
 Or heard my native Devan's tides,  
 So sweetly would I rest and pray  
 That Heaven would close my wintry day!

'T was thus my hair they bade me braid, 535  
 They made me to the church repair;  
 It was my bridal morn they said,  
 And my true love would meet me there.  
 But woe betide the cruel guile  
 That drowned in blood the morning smile! 540  
 And woe betide the fairy dream!  
 I only waked to sob and scream.

## XXIII

"Who is this maid? what means her lay?  
 She hovers o'er the hollow way,  
 And flutters wide her mantle gray, 545  
 As the lone heron spreads his wing,  
 By twilight, o'er a haunted spring."  
 "'T is Blanche of Devan," Murdoch said,  
 "A crazed and captive Lowland maid,  
 Ta'en on the morn she was a bride, 550  
 When Roderick forayed Devan-side.  
 The gay bridegroom resistance made,  
 And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.  
 I marvel she is now at large,  
 But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's<sup>2</sup> charge.— 555  
 Hence, brain-sick fool!"— He raised his bow:—  
 "Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,

<sup>1</sup> **Allan—Devan**—Two beautiful streams that flow down from the Highlands and empty into the Forth not far from Stirling.

<sup>2</sup> **Maudlin**—Magdalene.

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<sup>1</sup> **Pitcl**  
 mer.

I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far  
 As ever peasant pitched a bar!"<sup>1</sup>  
 "Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac cried,<sup>560</sup>  
 And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.  
 "See the gray pennons I prepare,  
 To seek my true love through the air!  
 I will not lend that savage groom,  
 To break his fall, one downy plume!  
 No! — deep amid disjointed stones,  
 The wolves shall batten<sup>2</sup> on his bones,  
 And then shall his detested plaid,  
 By bush and brier in mid-air stayed,  
 Wave forth a banner fair and free,  
 Meet signal for their revelry."<sup>570</sup>

## XXIV

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"  
 "O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.  
 Mine eye has dried and wasted been,  
 But still it loves the Lincoln green;  
 And, though mine ear is all unstrung,  
 Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.  
 "For O my sweet William was forester true,  
 He stole poor Blanche's heart away!  
 His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,  
 And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!  
 "It was not that I meant to tell . . .  
 But thou art wise and guessest well."  
 Then, in a low and broken tone,  
 And hurried note, the song went on.  
 Still on the Clansman fearfully  
 She fixed her apprehensive eye,

<sup>1</sup> **Pitched a bar**—A game much like our throwing the hammer.

<sup>2</sup> **Batten**—Fatten.

Then turned it on the Knight, and then  
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

## XXV

"The toils are pitched,<sup>1</sup> and the stakes are set,— 590  
Ever sing merrily, merrily;  
The bows they bend, and the knives they whet,  
Hunters live so cheerily.

"It was a stag, a stag of ten,<sup>2</sup> 595  
Bearing its branches sturdily;  
He came stately down the glen,—  
Ever sing hardily, hardily.

"It was there he met with a wounded doe,  
She was bleeding deathfully;  
She warned him of the toils below, 600  
O, so faithfully, faithfully!

"He had an eye, and he could heed,—  
Ever sing warily, warily;  
He had a foot, and he could speed,— 605  
Hunters watch so narrowly."

## XXVI

Fitz-James's mind was passion-tossed,  
When Ellen's hints and fears were lost;  
But Murdoch's shout suspicion wrought,  
And Blanche's song conviction brought.  
Not like a stag that spies the snare, 610  
But lion of the hunt aware,

<sup>1</sup> Toils are pitched—"The nets are set."—*Rolfe*.

<sup>2</sup> Stag of ten—"Having ten branches on his antlers."—*Scott*.

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He waved at once his blade on high,  
 "Disclose thy treachery, or die!"  
 Forth at full speed the Clansman flew,  
 But in his race his bow he drew. 615  
 The shaft just grazed Fitz-James's crest,  
 And thrilled in Blanche's faded breast.—  
 Murdoch of Alpine! prove thy speed,  
 For ne'er had Alpine's son such need;  
 With heart of fire, and foot of wind, 620  
 The fierce avenger is behind!  
 Fate judges of the rapid strife —  
 The forfeit death — the prize is life;  
 Thy kindred ambush lies before,  
 Close couched upon the heathery moor; 625  
 Them couldst thou reach! — it may not be —  
 Thine ambushed kin thou ne'er shalt see,  
 The fiery Saxon gains on thee!—  
 Resistless speeds the deadly thrust,  
 As lightning strikes the pine to dust; 630  
 With foot and hand Fitz-James must strain  
 Ere he can win his blade again.  
 Bent o'er the fallen with falcon eye,  
 He grimly smiled to see him die,  
 Then slower wended back his way, 635  
 Where the poor maiden bleeding lay.

## XXVII

She sat beneath the birchen tree,  
 Her elbow resting on her knee;  
 She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,  
 And gazed on it, and feebly laughed; 640  
 Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,  
 Daggled<sup>1</sup> with blood, beside her lay.  
 The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—

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<sup>1</sup> Daggled—Wet.

"Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried.  
 "This hour of death has given me more 645  
 Of reason's power than years before;  
 For, as these ebbing veins decay,  
 My frenzied visions fade away.  
 A helpless injured wretch I die,  
 And something tells me in thine eye 650  
 That thou wert mine avenger born.  
 Seest thou this tress? — O, still I've worn  
 This little tress of yellow hair,  
 Through danger, frenzy, and despair!  
 It once was bright and clear as thine, 655  
 But blood and tears have dimmed its shine,  
 I will not tell thee when 't was shred,  
 Nor from what guiltless victim's head,—  
 My brain would turn! — but it shall wave 660  
 Like plumage on thy helmet brave,  
 Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,  
 And thou wilt bring it me again.  
 I waver still.— O God! more bright  
 Let reason beam her parting light!—  
 O, by thy knighthood's honoured sign, 665  
 And for thy life preserved by mine,  
 When thou shalt see a darksome man,  
 Who boasts him Chief of Alpine's Clan,  
 With tartans broad and shadowy plume,  
 And hand of blood, and brow of gloom, 670  
 Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,  
 And wreak<sup>1</sup> poor Blanche of Devan's wrong!—  
 They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .  
 Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell."

## XXVIII

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James; 675  
 Fast poured his eyes at pity's claims;

<sup>1</sup> Wreak—Avenge.

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And now, with mingled grief and ire,  
 He saw the murdered maid expire.  
 "God, in my need, be my relief,  
 As I wreak this on yonder Chief!" 680  
 A lock from Blanche's tresses fair  
 He blended with her bridegroom's hair;  
 The mingled braid in blood he dyed,  
 And placed it on his bonnet-side:  
 "By Him whose word is truth, I swear, 685  
 No other favour<sup>1</sup> will I wear,  
 Till this sad token I imbrue  
 In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!—  
 But hark! what means yon faint halloo?  
 The chase is up,— but they shall know, 690  
 The stag at bay 's a dangerous foe.'"  
 Barred from the known but guarded way,  
 Through copse and cliffs Fitz-James must stray,  
 And oft must change his desperate track,  
 By stream and precipice turned back. 695  
 Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,  
 From lack of food and loss of strength,  
 He couched him in a thicket hoar,  
 And thought his toils and perils o'er:<sup>2</sup> —  
 "Of all my rash adventures past 700  
 This frantic feat must prove the last!  
 Who e'er so mad but might have guessed  
 That all this Highland hornet's nest  
 Would muster up in swarms so soon  
 As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?— 705  
 Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—  
 Hark, to the whistle and the shout!—  
 If farther through the wilds I go,  
 I only fall upon the foe:

<sup>1</sup> **Favour**—It was customary for knights to wear in their helmets favours given them by ladies, such as a glove, lock of hair, etc.

<sup>2</sup> **Thought** . . . **o'er**—Reflected on.

I'll couch me here till evening gray,  
Then darkling try my dangerous way."

710

## XXIX

The shades of eve come slowly down,  
The woods are wrapt in deeper brown,  
The owl awakens from her dell,  
The fox is heard upon the fell;  
Enough remains of glimmering light  
To guide the wanderer's steps aright,  
Yet not enough from far to show  
His figure to the watchful foe.  
With cautious step and ear awake,  
He climbs the crag and threads the brake;  
And not the summer solstice<sup>1</sup> there  
Tempered the midnight mountain air,  
But every breeze that swept the wold  
Benumbed his drenched limbs with cold.  
In dread, in danger, and alone,  
Famished and chilled, through ways unknown,  
Tangled and steep, he journeyed on;  
Till, as a rock's huge point he turned,  
A watch-fire close before him burned.

715

720

725

730

## XXX

Beside its embers red and clear,  
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;  
And up he sprung with sword in hand,—  
"Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!"  
"A stranger." "What dost thou require?"  
"Rest and a guide, and food and fire.  
My life's beset, my path is lost,  
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost."

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<sup>1</sup> **Summer solstice**—The heat of midsummer.

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<sup>2</sup> **Ha**  
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“Art thou a friend to Roderick?” “No.”  
“Thou dar’st not call thyself a foe?” 740  
“I dare! to him and all the band  
He brings to aid his murderous hand.”  
“Bold words! — but, though the beast of game  
The privilege of chase may claim, 745  
Though space and law the stag we lend,  
Ere hound we slip<sup>1</sup> or bow we bend,  
Who ever recked, where, how, or when,  
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?  
Thus treacherous scouts,—yet sure they lie,  
Who say thou cam’st a secret spy!”— 750  
“They do, by heaven! — come Roderick Dhu,  
And of his clan the boldest two,  
And let me but till morning rest,  
I write the falsehood on their crest.”  
“If by the blaze I mark aright, 755  
Thou bear’st the belt and spur of Knight.”  
“Then by these tokens mayst thou know  
Each proud oppressor’s mortal foe.”  
“Enough, enough; sit down and share  
A soldier’s couch, a soldier’s fare.” 760

## XXXI

He gave him of his Highland cheer,  
The hardened flesh<sup>2</sup> of mountain deer.  
Dry fuel on the fire he laid,  
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.  
He tended him like welcome guest, 765  
Then thus his further speech addressed:—  
“Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu  
A clansman born, a kinsman true;

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<sup>1</sup> Slip—Loose.

<sup>2</sup> Hardened flesh—The blood was first squeezed out and the flesh afterwards dried in the open air.

Each word against his honour spoke  
 Demands of me avenging stroke; 770  
 Yet more,—upon thy fate, 't is said,  
 A mighty augury<sup>1</sup> is laid.  
 It rests with me to wind my horn,—  
 Thou art with numbers overborne;  
 It rests with me, here, brand to brand, 775  
 Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:  
 But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,  
 Will I depart from honour's laws;  
 To assail a wearied man were shame,  
 And stranger is a holy name; 780  
 Guidance and rest, and food and fire,  
 In vain he never must require.  
 Then rest thee here till dawn of day;  
 Myself will guide thee on the way,  
 O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward, 785  
 Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,  
 As far as Coilantogle's ford;<sup>2</sup>  
 From thence thy warrant is thy sword."  
 "I take thy courtesy, by heaven,  
 As freely as 't is nobly given!" 790  
 "Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry  
 Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."  
 With that he shook the gathered heath,  
 And spread his plaid upon the wreath;<sup>3</sup>  
 And the brave foemen, side by side, 795  
 Lay peaceful down like brothers' tried,  
 And slept until the dawning beam  
 Purpled the mountain and the stream.

<sup>1</sup> **Mighty augury**—See Canto IV., lines 132 and 133.

<sup>2</sup> **Coilantogle's ford**—A ford over the Teith just as it issues from Loch Vennachar.

<sup>3</sup> **Wreath**—The bed of heather.

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## CANTO FIFTH

## THE COMBAT

## I

FAIR as the earliest beam of eastern light,  
When first, by the bewildered pilgrim spied,  
It smiles upon the dreary brow of night,  
And silvers o'er the torrent's foaming tide,  
And lights the fearful path of mountain-side,—  
Fair as that beam, although the fairest far,  
Giving to horror grace, to danger pride,  
Shine martial Faith, and Courtesy's bright star,  
Through all the wreckful storms that cloud the brow of  
War.

## II

That early beam, so fair and sheen,  
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,  
When, rousing at its glimmer red,  
The warriors left their lowly bed,  
Looked out upon the dappled sky,  
Muttered their soldier matins<sup>1</sup> by,  
And then awaked their fire, to steal,  
As short and rude, their soldier meal.  
That o'er, the Gael around him threw  
His graceful plaid of varied hue,  
And, true to promise, led the way,  
By thicket green and mountain gray.  
A wildering path! — they winded now  
Along the precipice's brow,  
Commanding the rich scenes beneath,  
The windings of the Forth and Teith,

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<sup>1</sup> **Soldier matins**—Such brief morning prayers as would be suitable for a soldier.

And all the vales between that lie,  
 Till Stirling's turrets melt in sky;  
 Then, sunk in copse, their farthest glance  
 Gained not the length of horseman's lance.  
 'T was oft so steep, the foot was fain 30  
 Assistance from the hand to gain;  
 So tangled oft that, bursting through,  
 Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—  
 That diamond dew, so pure and clear,  
 It rivals all but Beauty's tear! 35

## III

At length they came where, stern and steep,  
 The hill sinks down upon the deep.  
 Here Vennachar in silver flows,  
 There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;  
 Ever the hollow path twined on, 40  
 Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;  
 A hundred men might hold the post  
 With hardihood against a host.  
 The rugged mountain's scanty cloak  
 Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak, 45  
 With shingles<sup>1</sup> bare, and cliffs between,  
 And patches bright of bracken green,  
 And heather black, that waved so high,  
 It held the copse in rivalry.  
 But where the lake slept deep and still, 50  
 Dank<sup>2</sup> osiers fringed the swamp and hill;  
 And oft both path and hill were torn,  
 Where wintry torrent down had borne,  
 And heaped upon the cumbered land  
 Its wreck of gravel, rocks and sand. 55  
 So toilsome was the road to trace,  
 The guide, abating of his pace,

<sup>1</sup> Shingles—Gravel.<sup>2</sup> Dank—Moist.

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Led slowly through the pass's jaws,  
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause  
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,  
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

## IV

"Brave Gael, my pass, in danger tried,  
Hangs in my belt and by my side;  
Yet, sooth to tell," the Saxon said,  
"I dreamt not now to claim its aid.  
When here, but three days since, I came,  
Bewildered in pursuit of game,  
All seemed as peaceful and as still  
As the mist slumbering on yon hill;  
Thy dangerous Chief was then afar,  
Nor soon expected back from war.  
Thus said, at least, my mountain-guide,  
Though deep perchance the villain lied."  
"Yet why a second venture try?"  
"A warrior thou, and ask me why!—  
Moves our free course by such fixed cause  
As gives the poor mechanic<sup>1</sup> laws?  
Enough, I sought to drive away  
The lazy hours of peaceful day;  
Slight cause will then suffice to guide  
A Knight's free footsteps far and wide,—  
A falcon flown, a greyhound strayed,  
The merry glance of mountain maid;  
Or, if a path be dangerous known,  
The danger's self is lure alone."

## V

"Thy secret keep, I urge thee not;—  
Yet, ere again ye sought this spot,

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<sup>1</sup> **Poor mechanic**—Note the contempt of the knight for the poor mechanic.

Say, heard ye naught of Lowland war,  
 Against Clan-Alpine, raised by Mar?"

"No, by my word; — of bands prepared 90  
 To guard King James's sports I heard;  
 Nor doubt I aught, but, when they hear  
 This muster of the mountaineer,  
 Their pennons will abroad be flung,  
 Which else in Doune had peaceful hung." 95

"Free be they flung! for we were loath  
 Their silken folds should feast the moth.  
 Free be they flung! — as free shall wave  
 Clan-Alpine's pine in banner brave.  
 But, stranger, peaceful since you came, 100  
 Bewildered in the mountain-game,  
 Whence the bold boast by which you show  
 Vich-Alpine's vowed and mortal foe?"

"Warrior, but yester-morn I knew 105  
 Naught of thy Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,  
 Save as an outlawed, desperate man,  
 The chief of a rebellious clan,  
 Who, in the Regent's court<sup>1</sup> and sight,  
 With ruffian dagger stabbed a knight;  
 Yet this alone might from his part 110  
 Sever each true and loyal heart."

## VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,  
 Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl,  
 A space he paused, then sternly said,  
 "And heardst thou why he drew his blade? 115  
 Heardst thou that shameful word and blow  
 Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?  
 What recked the Chieftain if he stood  
 On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?"

<sup>1</sup> *Regent's court* — During the minority of James, his cousin, the Duke of Albany, was regent.

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He rights such wrong where it is given,  
If it were in the court of heaven." 130

"Still was it outrage; — yet, 't is true,  
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;  
While Albany with feeble hand  
Held borrowed truncheon of command, 125  
The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,  
Was stranger<sup>1</sup> to respect and power.  
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—  
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,  
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain 130  
His herds and harvest reared in vain,—  
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn  
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

## VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,  
And answered with disdainful smile: 135  
"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,  
I marked thee send delighted eye  
Far to the south and east, where lay,  
Extended in succession gay,  
Deep waving fields and pastures green, 140  
With gentle slopes and groves between:—  
These fertile plains, that softened vale,  
Were once the birthright of the Gael;  
The stranger came with iron hand,  
And from our fathers reft the land. 145  
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell  
Crag over crag, and fell o'er fell.  
Ask we this savage hill we tread  
For fattened steer or household bread,  
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry, 150  
And well the mountain might reply,—

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<sup>1</sup> **Stranger**—As the young king had no authority or power he was not treated with respect.

'To you, as to your sires of yore,  
 Belong the target and claymore!  
 I give you shelter in my breast,  
 Your own good blades must win the rest.' 155  
 Pent in this fortress of the North,  
 Think'st thou we will not sally forth,  
 To spoil the spoiler as we may,  
 And from the robber rend the prey?  
 Ay, by my soul! — While on yon plain 160  
 The Saxon rears one shock of grain,  
 While of ten thousand herds there strays  
 But one along yon river's maze,—  
 The Gael, of plain and river heir,  
 Shall with strong hand redeem his share. 165  
 Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold  
 That plundering Lowland field and fold  
 Is aught but retribution true?  
 Seek other cause 'gainst Roderick Dhu."

## VIII

Answered Fitz-James: "And, if I sought, 170  
 Think'st thou no other could be brought?  
 What deem ye of my path waylaid?  
 My life given o'er to ambuscade?"  
 "As of a meed to rashness due:  
 Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,— 175  
 I seek my hound or falcon strayed,  
 I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,—  
 Free hadst thou been to come and go;  
 But secret path marks secret foe.  
 Nor yet for this, even as a spy, 180  
 Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,  
 Save to fulfil an augury."  
 "Well, let it pass; nor will I now  
 Fresh cause of enmity avow,  
 To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow. 185

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Enough, I am by promise tied  
 To match me with this man of pride:  
 Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen  
 In peace; but when I come again,  
 I come with banner, brand, and bow,  
 As leader seeks his mortal foe.  
 For love-lorn swain in lady's bower  
 Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,  
 As I, until before me stand  
 This rebel Chieftain and his band!"

## IX

"Have then thy wish!"—He whistled shrill,  
 And he was answered from the hill;  
 Wild as the scream of the curlew,  
 From crag to crag the signal flew.  
 Instant, through copse and heath, arose  
 Bonnets and spears and bended bows;  
 On right, on left, above, below,  
 Sprung up at once the lurking foe;  
 From shingles gray their lances start,  
 The bracken bush sends forth the dart,  
 The rushes and the willow-wand  
 Are bristling into axe and brand,  
 And every tuft of broom gives life  
 To plaided warrior armed for strife.  
 That whistle garrisoned the glen  
 At once with full five hundred men,  
 As if the yawning hill to heaven  
 A subterranean host had given.  
 Watching their leader's beck and will,  
 All silent there they stood and still.  
 Like the loose crags whose threatening mass  
 Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,  
 As if an infant's touch could urge  
 Their headlong passage down the verge,

With step and weapon forward flung, 220  
 Upon the mountain-side they hung.  
 The Mountaineer cast glance of pride  
 Along Benledi's living side,  
 Then fixed his eye and sable brow  
 Full on Fitz-James: "How say'st thou now? 225  
 These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;  
 And, Saxon,— I am Roderick Dhu!"

## X

Fitz-James was brave:— though to his heart  
 The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,  
 He manned himself with dauntless air, 230  
 Returned the Chief his haughty stare,  
 His back against a rock he bore,  
 And firmly placed his foot before:—  
 "Come one, come all! this rock shall fly  
 From its firm base as soon as I." 235  
 Sir Roderick marked,— and in his eyes  
 Respect was mingled with surprise,  
 And the stern joy which warriors feel  
 In foeman worthy of their steel.  
 Short pace he stood — then waved his hand: 240  
 Down sunk the disappearing band;  
 Each warrior vanished where he stood,  
 In broom or bracken, heath or wood;  
 Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,  
 In osiers pale and copses low; 245  
 It seemed as if their mother Earth  
 Had swallowed up her warlike birth.  
 The wind's last breath had tossed in air  
 Pennon and plaid and plumage fair,—  
 The next but swept a lone hill-side, 250  
 Where heath and fern were waving wide:  
 The sun's last glance was glinted back



220 From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,<sup>1</sup>—  
The next, all unreflected, shone  
On bracken green and cold gray stone. 255

## XI

225 Fitz-James looked round,— yet scarce believed  
The witness that his sight received;  
Such apparition well might seem  
Delusion of a dreadful dream.  
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed, 260  
And to his look the Chief replied:  
“Fear naught — nay, that I need not say —  
But — doubt not aught from mine array.  
Thou art my guest; — I pledged my word  
230 As far as Coilantogle ford: 265  
Nor would I call a clansman’s brand  
For aid against one valiant hand,  
Though on our strife lay every vale  
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.  
235 So move we on; — I only meant 270  
To show the reed on which you leant,  
Deeming this path you might pursue  
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.”  
They moved; — I said Fitz-James was brave  
240 As ever knight that belted glaive, 275  
Yet dare not say that now his blood  
Kept on its wont<sup>2</sup> and tempered flood,  
As, following Roderick’s stride, he drew  
That seeming lonesome pathway through,  
245 Which yet by fearful proof was rife 280  
With lances, that, to take his life,  
Waited but signal from a guide,  
So late dishonoured and defied.  
250 Ever, by stealth, his eye sought round

<sup>1</sup> **Jack**—A leather coat, sometimes made stronger with iron plates.

<sup>2</sup> **Wont**—Accustomed.

The vanished guardians of the ground, 285  
 And still from copse and heather deep  
 Fancy saw spear and broadsword peep,  
 And in the plover's shrilly strain  
 The signal whistle heard again.  
 Nor breathed he free till far behind 290  
 The pass was left; for then they wind  
 Along a wide and level green,  
 Where neither tree nor tuft was seen,  
 Nor rush nor bush of broom was near,  
 To hide a bonnet or a spear. 295

## XII

The Chief in silence strode before,  
 And reached that torrent's sounding shore,  
 Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,<sup>1</sup>  
 From Vennachar in silver breaks,  
 Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines 300  
 On Bochastle the mouldering lines,  
 Where Rome, the Empress of the world,  
 Of yore her eagle wings<sup>2</sup> unfurled.  
 And here his course the Chieftain stayed,  
 Threw down his target and his plaid, 305  
 And to the Lowland warrior said:  
 "Bold Saxon! to his promise just,  
 Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.  
 This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,

<sup>1</sup> **Three mighty lakes**—Vennachar, Achray and Katrine.  
 "The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining to the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor, called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence called the Dun of Bochastle, and indeed on the plain itself, are some intrenchments which have been thought Roman. There is adjacent to Callander a sweet villa, the residence of Captain Fairfoul, entitled the Roman Camp."—*Scott*.

<sup>2</sup> **Eagle wings**—The eagle was the Roman standard.

285 This head of a rebellious clan, 310  
 Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,  
 Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.  
 Now, man to man, and steel to steel,  
 A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.  
 290 See, here all vantageless I stand, 315  
 Armed like thyself with single brand;  
 For this is Coilantogle ford,  
 And thou must keep thee with thy sword."

## XIII

The Saxon paused: "I ne'er delayed,  
 When foeman bade me draw my blade; 320  
 Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;  
 Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,  
 And my deep debt for life preserved,  
 A better meed have well deserved:  
 300 Can naught but blood our feud atone? 325  
 Are there no means?"—"No, stranger, none!  
 And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—  
 The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;  
 For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred  
 305 Between the living and the dead: 330  
 'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,  
 His party conquers in the strife.'"  
 "Then, by my word," the Saxon said,  
 "The riddle is already read.  
 Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,— 335  
 There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.  
 Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;  
 Then yield to Fate, and not to me.  
 To James at Stirling let us go,  
 When, if thou wilt be still his foe, 340  
 Or if the King shall not agree  
 To grant thee grace and favour free,  
 I plight mine honour, oath, and word

That, to thy native strengths<sup>1</sup> restored,  
 With each advantage shalt thou stand  
 That aids thee now to guard thy land."

345

## XIV

Dark lightning flashed from Roderick's eye:

"Soars thy presumption, then, so high,  
 Because a wretched kern ye slew,  
 Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?  
 He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!  
 Thou add'st but fuel to my hate;—  
 My clansman's blood demands revenge.  
 Not yet prepared? — By heaven, I change  
 My thought, and hold thy valour light  
 As that of some vain carpet knight,<sup>2</sup>  
 Who ill deserved my courteous care,  
 And whose best boast is but to wear  
 A braid of his fair lady's hair."

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"I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!  
 It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;  
 For I have sworn this braid to stain  
 In the best blood that warms thy vein.  
 Now, truce, farewell! and, ruth,<sup>3</sup> begone!—  
 Yet think not that by thee alone,  
 Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;  
 Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,  
 Start at my whistle clansmen stern,  
 Of this small horn one feeble blast  
 Would fearful odds against thee cast.  
 But fear not — doubt not — which thou wilt —  
 We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."  
 Then each at once his falchion drew,

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<sup>1</sup> **Strengths**—Strongholds.

<sup>2</sup> **Carpet knight**—Contemptuously used of a knight who lingers in the ladies' boudoir instead of taking to the field.

<sup>3</sup> **Ruth**—Pity.

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Each on the ground his scabbard threw,  
Each looked to sun and stream and plain  
As what they ne'er might see again;  
Then foot and point and eye opposed,  
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

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## XV

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,  
That on the field his targe<sup>1</sup> he threw,  
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide  
Had death so often dashed aside;  
For, trained abroad<sup>2</sup> his arms to wield,  
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.  
He practised every pass and ward,  
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;  
While less expert, though stronger far,  
The Gael maintained unequal war.  
Three times in closing strife they stood,  
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;  
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,  
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.  
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,  
And showered his blows like wintry rain;  
And, as firm rock or castle-roof  
Against the winter shower is proof,  
The foe, invulnerable still,  
Foiled his wild rage by steady skill;  
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand  
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,

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<sup>1</sup> **Targe**—"A round target of light wood covered with strong leather and studded with brass or iron, was a necessary part of a Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside and used the broadsword against the encumbered soldier."—*Scott*.

<sup>2</sup> **Trained abroad**—In France.

And backward borne upon the lea,  
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

## XVI

“Now yield thee, or by Him who made  
The world, thy heart’s blood dyes my blade!”  
“Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy! 405  
Let recreant <sup>1</sup> yield, who fears to die.”  
Like adder darting from his coil,  
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,  
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,  
Full at Fitz-James’s throat he sprung; 410  
Received, but recked not of a wound,  
And locked his arms his foeman round.—  
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!  
No maiden’s hand is round thee thrown! 415  
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel  
Through bars of brass and triple steel!  
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,  
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.  
The Chieftain’s gripe his throat compressed,  
His knee was planted on his breast; 420  
His clotted locks he backward threw,  
Across his brow his hand he drew,  
From blood and mist to clear his sight,  
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!  
But hate and fury ill supplied 425  
The stream of life’s exhausted tide,  
And all too late the advantage came,  
To turn the odds of deadly game:  
For, while the dagger gleamed on high,  
Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye. 430  
Down came the blow! but in the heath  
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.  
The struggling foe may now unclasp

<sup>1</sup> **Recreant**—Coward.

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The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;  
Unwounded from the dreadful close,  
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

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## XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,  
Redeemed, unhop'd, from desperate strife;  
Next on his foe his look he cast,  
Whose every gasp appeared his last;  
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,—  
“Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;  
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,  
The praise<sup>1</sup> that faith and valour give.”  
With that he blew a bugle note,  
Undid the collar from his throat,  
Unbonneted, and by the wave  
Sat down his brow and hands to lave.  
Then faint afar are heard the feet  
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;  
The sounds increase, and now are seen  
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;  
Two who bear lance, and two who lead  
By loosened rein a saddled steed;  
Each onward held his headlong course,  
And by Fitz-James reined up his horse,—  
With wonder viewed the bloody spot,—  
“Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—  
You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,  
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;  
Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,  
We destined for a fairer freight,<sup>2</sup>  
And bring him on to Stirling straight;  
I will before at better speed,

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<sup>1</sup> **The praise**—The praise that will be given to Roderick, should he live, will be lost to him should he die.

<sup>2</sup> **Fairer freight**—Ellen Douglas.

To seek fresh horse and fitting weed. 465  
 The sun rides high; — I must be bounè  
 To see the archer-game at noon;  
 But lightly <sup>1</sup> Bayard clears the lea.—  
 De Vaux and Herries, follow me.

## XVIII

“Stand, Bayard, stand!” — the steed obeyed, 470  
 With arching neck and bended head,  
 And glancing eye and quivering ear,  
 As if he loved his lord to hear.  
 No foot Fitz-James in stirrup stayed,  
 No grasp upon the saddle laid, 475  
 But wreathed his left hand in the mane,  
 And lightly bounded from the plain,  
 Turned on the horse his armed heel,  
 And stirred his courage with the steel.  
 Bounded the fiery steed in air, 480  
 The rider sat erect and fair,  
 Then like a bolt from steel crossbow  
 Forth launched, along the plain they go.  
 They dashed that rapid torrent through,  
 And up Carhonie’s <sup>2</sup> hill they flew; 485  
 Still at the gallop pricked <sup>3</sup> the Knight,  
 His merry men followed as they might.  
 Along thy banks, swift Teith! they ride,  
 And in the race they mock thy tide;  
 Torry and Lendrick now are past, 490  
 And Deanstown lies behind them cast;  
 They rise, the bannered towers of Doune,  
 They sink in distant woodland soon;  
 Blair-Drummond sees the hoofs strike fire,

<sup>1</sup> **Lightly**—Quickly.

<sup>2</sup> **Carhonie**—The places mentioned in the stanza lie between Loch Vennachar and Stirling.

<sup>3</sup> **Pricked**—Galloped quickly.

<sup>1</sup> **Sain**  
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They sweep like breeze through Ochtertyre;  
 They mark just glance and disappear  
 The lofty brow of ancient Kier;  
 They bathe their coursers' sweltering sides,  
 Dark Forth! amid thy sluggish tides,  
 And on the opposing shore take ground,  
 With plash, with scramble, and with bound.  
 Right-hand they leave thy cliffs, Craig-Forth!  
 And soon the bulwark of the North,  
 Gray Stirling, with her towers and town,  
 Upon their fleet career looked down.

## XIX

As up the flinty path they strained,  
 Sudden his steed the leader reined;  
 A signal to his squire he flung,  
 Who instant to his stirrup sprung:—  
 "Seest thou, De Vaux, yon woodsman gray,  
 Who townward holds the rocky way,  
 Of stature tall and poor array?  
 Mark'st thou the firm, yet active stride,  
 With which he scales the mountain-side?  
 Know'st thou from whence he comes, or whom?"  
 "No, by my word; — a burly groom  
 He seems, who in the field or chase  
 A baron's train would nobly grace —"  
 "Out, out, De Vaux! can fear supply,  
 And jealousy, no sharper eye?  
 Afar, ere to the hill he drew,  
 That stately form and step I knew;  
 Like form in Scotland is not seen,  
 Treads not such step on Scottish green.  
 'T is James of Douglas, by Saint Serle!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **Saint Serle**—It was probably the necessities of the rhyme that caused the king to swear by one of the obscurest saints in the calendar.

The uncle of the banished Earl.  
 Away, away, to court, to show  
 The near approach of dreaded foe:  
 The King must stand upon his guard;  
 Douglas and he must meet prepared.''<sup>530</sup>  
 Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight  
 They won the Castle's postern gate.

## XX

The Douglas, who had bent his way  
 From Cambus-kenneth's abbey gray,  
 Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,  
 Held sad communion with himself:—  
 "Yes! all is true my fears could frame;  
 A prisoner lies the noble Græme,  
 And fiery Roderick soon will feel  
 The vengeance of the royal steel.  
 I, only I, can ward their fate,—  
 God grant the ransom come not late!  
 The Abbess hath her promise given,  
 My child shall be the bride of Heaven;<sup>1</sup>—  
 Be pardoned one repining tear!  
 For He who gave her knows how dear,  
 How excellent! — but that is by,  
 And now my business is — to die.—  
 Ye towers! within whose circuit dread  
 A Douglas by his sovereign bled;<sup>2</sup>  
 And thou, O sad and fatal mound!<sup>3</sup>  
 That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,  
 As on the noblest of the land  
 Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—

<sup>1</sup> **Bride of Heaven**—A nun.

<sup>2</sup> **Bled**—William, the eighth Earl of Douglas, was stabbed by King James II in Stirling Castle in 1452.

<sup>3</sup> **Fatal mound**—The place where state prisoners were executed was an eminence on the north-east of the castle.

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<sup>1</sup> **Fra**  
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<sup>2</sup> **Mo**  
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<sup>3</sup> **Stal**

The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb 555  
 Prepare — for Douglas seeks his doom!  
 But hark! what blithe and jolly peal  
 Makes the Franciscan steeple <sup>1</sup> reel?  
 And see! upon the crowded street,  
 In motley groups what masquers meet! 560  
 Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,  
 And merry morrice-dancers <sup>2</sup> come.  
 I guess, by all this quaint array,  
 The burghers hold their sports to-day.  
 James will be there; he loves such show, 565  
 Where the good yeoman bends his bow,  
 And the tough wrestler foils his foe,  
 As well as where, in proud career,  
 The high-born tilter shivers spear.  
 I'll follow to the Castle-park, 570  
 And play my prize; — King James shall mark  
 If age has tamed these sinews stark,<sup>3</sup>  
 Whose force so oft in happier days  
 His boyish wonder loved to praise."

## XXI

The Castle gates were open flung, 575  
 The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,  
 And echoed loud the flinty street  
 Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,  
 As slowly down the steep descent  
 Fair Scotland's King and nobles went, 580  
 While all along the crowded way  
 Was jubilee and loud huzza.

<sup>1</sup> **Franciscan steeple**—The church of the Greyfriars or Franciscans was built by James IV on a hill near Stirling Castle.

<sup>2</sup> **Morrice-dancers**—*Moriscoes*, a Spanish word, meaning Moorish. The dance is said to have been borrowed from the Moors of Spain.

<sup>3</sup> **Stark**—Stiff.

And ever James was bending low  
 To his white jennet's<sup>1</sup> saddle-bow,  
 Doffing his cap to a city dame, 585  
 Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame,  
 And well the simperer might be vain,—  
 He chose the fairest of the train.  
 Gravely he greets each city sire,  
 Commends each pageant's quaint attire, 590  
 Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,  
 And smiles and nods upon the crowd,  
 Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,—  
 "Long live the Commons' King,<sup>2</sup> King James!"  
 Behind the King thronged peer and knight, 595  
 And noble dame and damsel bright,  
 Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay  
 Of the steep street and crowded way.  
 But in the train you might discern  
 Dark lowering brow and visage stern; 600  
 There nobles mourned their pride restrained,  
 And the mean burghers' joys disdained;  
 And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,  
 Were each from home a banished man,  
 There thought upon their own gray tower, 605  
 Their waving woods, their feudal power,  
 And deemed themselves a shameful part  
 Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

## XXII

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out  
 Their checkered bands the joyous rout. 610  
 There morricers, with bell at heel

<sup>1</sup> **Jennet**—A small Spanish horse.

<sup>2</sup> **Commons' King**—So called from the delight he took in the amusements and pageants of the common people, and from the impartial way in which he administered the laws, treating rich and poor alike.

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<sup>5</sup> Larl  
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And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;  
 But chief, beside the butts, there stand  
 Bold Robin Hood <sup>1</sup> and all his band,—  
 Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,  
 Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,  
 Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone, .  
 Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;  
 Their bugles challenge all that will,  
 In archery to prove their skill.  
 The Douglas bent a bow of might,—  
 His first shaft centred in the white,<sup>2</sup>  
 And when in turn he shot again,  
 His second split the first in twain.  
 From the King's hand must Douglas take  
 A silver dart, the archers' stake<sup>3</sup>;  
 Fondly he watched with watery eye,  
 Some answering glance of sympathy,—  
 No kind emotion made reply!  
 Indifferent as to archer wight,<sup>4</sup>  
 The monarch gave the arrow bright.

## XXIII

Now, clear the ring! for hand to hand,  
 The many wrestlers take their stand.  
 Two o'er the rest superior rose,  
 And proud demanded mightier foes,—  
 Nor called in vain, for Douglas came.—  
 For life is Hugh of Larbert<sup>5</sup> lame;

<sup>1</sup> **Robin Hood**—The famous outlaw of Sherwood Forest. **Maid Marian** was his wife, **Little John** his lieutenant, and **Friar Tuck** the chaplain of the band. **Scathelock** and **Scarlet** and **Mutch** were archers.

<sup>2</sup> **In the white**—In the bull's eye, the very centre of the target.

<sup>3</sup> **Stake**—Prize.

<sup>4</sup> **Archer wight**—Archer fellow, an ordinary bowman.

<sup>5</sup> **Larbert**—A town ten miles south of Stirling. **Alloa** is about seven miles to the east.

Scarce better John of Alloa's fare,  
 Whom senseless home his comrades bare. 640  
 Prize of the wrestling match, the King  
 To Douglas gave a golden ring,  
 While coldly glanced his eye of blue,  
 As frozen drop of wintry dew.  
 Douglas would speak, but in his breast  
 His struggling soul his words suppressed; 645  
 Indignant then he turned him where  
 Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,  
 To hurl the massive bar in air.  
 When each his utmost strength had shown,  
 The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone 650  
 From its deep bed, then heaved it high,  
 And sent the fragment through the sky  
 A rood beyond the farthest mark;  
 And still in Stirling's royal park,  
 The gray-haired sires, who know the past, 655  
 To strangers point the Douglas cast,  
 And moralize on the decay  
 Of Scottish strength in modern day.

## XXIV

The vale with loud applauses rang,  
 The Ladies' Rock <sup>1</sup> sent back the clang. 660  
 The King, with look unmoved, bestowed  
 A purse well filled with pieces broad.<sup>2</sup>  
 Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,  
 And threw the gold among the crowd, 665  
 Who now with anxious wonder scan,  
 And sharper glance, the dark gray man;  
 Till whispers rose among the throng,

<sup>1</sup> **Ladies' Rock**—A small mound on which the ladies were accustomed to take their stand in order to watch the sports.

<sup>2</sup> **Pieces broad**—Twenty-shilling pieces, so called because they were broader than the guineas which came into use in 1663.

That heart so free, and hand so strong,  
Must to the Douglas blood belong.  
The old men marked and shook the head, 670  
To see his hair with silver spread,  
And winked aside, and told each son  
Of feats upon the English done,  
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand  
Was exiled from his native land. 675  
The women praised his stately form,  
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;  
The youth with awe and wonder saw  
His strength surpassing Nature's law.  
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd, 680  
Till murmurs rose to clamours loud.  
But not a glance from that proud ring  
Of peers who circled round the King  
With Douglas held communion kind, 685  
Or called the banished man to mind;  
No, not from those who at the chase  
Once held his side the honoured place,  
Begirt his board,<sup>1</sup> and in the field  
Found safety underneath his shield;  
For he whom royal eyes disown, 690  
When was his form to courtiers known!

## XXV

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,  
And bade let loose a gallant stag,  
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,  
Two favourite greyhounds should pull down, 695  
That venison free and Bordeaux wine  
Might serve the archery to dine.  
But Lufra,—whom from Douglas' side  
Nor bribe nor threat could e'er divide,

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<sup>1</sup> Begirt his board—Sat as guests at his table.



And vainly sought for near and far,  
A victim to atone the war, 735  
A willing victim, now attends,  
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends."—  
"Thus is my clemency repaid?  
705 Presumptuous Lord!" the Monarch said:  
"Of thy misproud ambitious clan, 740  
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,  
The only man, in whom a foe  
710 My woman-mercy would not know;  
But shall a Monarch's presence brook  
Injurious blow and haughty look?— 745  
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!  
Give the offender fitting ward.<sup>1</sup>—  
715 Break off the sports!"— for tumult rose,  
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows,—  
"Break off the sports!" he said and frowned, 750  
"And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

## XXVII

Then uproar wild and misarray  
Marred the fair form of festal day.  
The horsemen pricked among the crowd, 755  
Repelled by threats and insult loud;  
To earth are borne the old and weak,  
The timorous fly, the women shriek;  
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,  
The hardier urge tumultuous war.  
At once round Douglas darkly sweep 760  
The royal spears in circle deep,  
And slowly scale the pathway steep,  
While on the rear in thunder pour  
730 The rabble with disordered roar.  
With grief the noble Douglas saw 765

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<sup>1</sup> **Ward**—Confinement under guard.



The Commons rise against the law.  
 And to the leading soldier said:  
 "Sir John of Hyndford,<sup>1</sup> 't was my blade  
 That knighthood on thy shoulder laid;  
 For that good deed permit me then  
 A word with these misguided men.—

770

## XXVIII

"Hear, gentle friends, ere yet for me  
 Ye break the bands of fealty.  
 My life, my honour, and my cause,  
 I tender free to Scotland's laws.  
 Are these so weak as must require  
 The aid of your misguided ire?  
 Or if I suffer causeless wrong,  
 Is then my selfish rage so strong,  
 My sense of public weal so low,  
 That, for mean vengeance on a foe,  
 Those cords of love I should unbind  
 Which knit my country and my kind?  
 O no! Believe, in yonder tower  
 It will not soothe my captive hour,  
 To know those spears our foes should dread  
 For me in kindred gore are red:  
 To know, in fruitless brawl begun,  
 For me that mother wails her son,  
 For me that widow's mate expires,  
 For me that orphans weep their sires,  
 That patriots mourn insulted laws,  
 And curse the Douglas for the cause.  
 O let your patience ward such ill,  
 And keep your right to love me still!"

775

780

785

790

795

## XXIX

The crowd's wild fury sunk again  
 In tears, as tempests melt in rain.

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<sup>1</sup> **Hyndford**—A village in Lanarkshire, on the River Clyde.



With lifted hands and eyes, they prayed  
 For blessings on his generous head  
 Who for his country felt alone,  
 And prized her blood beyond his own.  
 Old men upon the verge of life  
 Blessed him who stayed the civil strife;  
 And mothers held their babes on high,  
 The self-devoted Chief to spy,  
 Triumphant over wrongs and ire,  
 To whom the prattlers owed a sire.  
 Even the rough soldier's heart was moved;  
 As if behind some bier beloved,  
 With trailing arms<sup>1</sup> and drooping head,  
 The Douglas up the hill he led,  
 And at the Castle's battled verge,  
 With sighs resigned his honoured charge.

800

805

810

XXX

The offended Monarch rode apart,  
 With bitter thought and swelling heart,  
 And would not now vouchsafe again  
 Through Stirling streets to lead his train.  
 "O Lennox, who would wish to rule  
 This changeling crowd, this common fool?  
 Hear'st thou," he said, "the loud acclaim  
 With which they shout the Douglas name?  
 With like acclaim the vulgar throat  
 Strained for King James their morning note;  
 With like acclaim they hail the day  
 When first I broke the Douglas sway;  
 And like acclaim would Douglas greet  
 If he could hurl me from my seat.  
 Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,  
 Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?

815

820

825

<sup>1</sup> **Trailing arms**—As if at a funeral.

Vain as the leaf upon the stream,  
 And fickle as a changeful dream;  
 Fantastic as a woman's mood,  
 And fierce as Frenzy's fevered blood.  
 Thou many-headed monster-thing,  
 O who would wish to be thy king?—

830

835

## XXXI

“But soft! what messenger of speed  
 Spurs hitherward his panting steed?  
 I guess his cognizance<sup>1</sup> afar —  
 What from our cousin, John of Mar?”  
 “He prays, my liege, your sports keep bound  
 Within the safe and guarded ground;  
 For some foul purpose yet unknown,—  
 Most sure for evil to the throne,—  
 The outlawed Chieftain, Roderick Dhu,  
 Has summoned his rebellious crew;  
 ’T is said, in James of Bothwell’s aid  
 These loose banditti stand arrayed.  
 The Earl of Mar this morn from Doune  
 To break their muster marched, and soon  
 Your Grace will hear of battle fought;  
 But earnestly the Earl besought,  
 Till for such danger he provide,  
 With scanty train you will not ride.”

840

845

850

## XXXII

“Thou warn’st me I have done amiss,—  
 I should have earlier looked to this;  
 I lost it in this bustling day.—  
 Retrace with speed thy former way;  
 Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,

855

<sup>1</sup> **Cognizance**—The badge he wore to distinguish the house to which he belonged.

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830 The best of mine shall be thy meed.  
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar, 860  
We do forbid the intended war;  
Roderick this morn in single fight  
Was made our prisoner by a knight,  
835 And Douglas hath himself and cause  
Submitted to our kingdom's laws. 865  
The tidings of their leaders lost  
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,  
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,  
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.  
840 Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly!" 870  
He turned his steed,—“My liege, I hie,  
Yet ere I cross this lily lawn  
I fear the broadswords will be drawn.”  
The turf the flying courser spurned,  
845 And to his towers the King returned. 875

## XXXIII

850 Ill with King James's mood that day  
Suited gay feast and minstrel lay;  
Soon were dismissed the courtly throng,  
And soon cut short the festal song.  
Nor less upon the saddened town 880  
The evening sunk in sorrow down.  
The burghers spoke of civil jar,  
Of rumoured feuds and mountain war,  
Of Moray, Mar, and Roderick Dhu,  
855 All up in arms; — the Douglas too, 885  
They mourned him pent within the hold,  
“Where stout Earl William<sup>1</sup> was of old.”—  
And there his word the speaker stayed,  
And finger on his lip he laid,  
890 Or pointed to his dagger blade.

<sup>1</sup> **Earl William**—See Canto V, line 550.

But jaded horsemen from the west  
 At evening to the Castle pressed,  
 And busy talkers said they bore  
 Tidings of fight on Katrine's shore;  
 At noon the deadly fray begun,  
 And lasted till the set of sun.  
 Thus giddy rumour shook the town,  
 Till closed the Night her pennons <sup>1</sup> brown.

896

## CANTO SIXTH

## THE GUARD-ROOM

## I

THE sun, awakening, through the smoky air  
 Of the dark city casts a sullen glance,  
 Rousing each caitiff <sup>2</sup> to his task of care,  
 Of sinful man the sad inheritance;  
 Summoning revellers from the lagging dance, <sup>5</sup>  
 Scaring the prowling robber to his den;  
 Gilding on battled tower the warder's lance,  
 And warning student pale to leave his pen,  
 And yield his drowsy eyes to the kind nurse of men.

What various scenes, and O, what scenes of woe, <sup>10</sup>  
 Are witnessed by that red and struggling beam!  
 The fevered patient, from his pallet low,  
 Through crowded hospital beholds it stream;  
 The ruined maiden trembles at its gleam,  
 The debtor wakes to thought of gyve <sup>3</sup> and jail, <sup>15</sup>  
 The love-lorn wretch starts from tormenting dream;  
 The wakeful mother, by the glimmering pale,  
 Trims her sick infant's couch, and soothes his feeble wail.

<sup>1</sup> Pennons—Wings.<sup>2</sup> Caitiff—Creature of misery. <sup>3</sup> Gyve—Fetters.

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## II

At dawn the towers of Stirling rang  
 With soldier-step and weapon-clang, 20  
 While drums with rolling note foretell  
 Relief to weary sentinel.  
 Through narrow loop and casement barred,  
 The sunbeams sought the Court of Guard,  
 And, struggling with the smoky air, 25  
 Deadened the torches' yellow glare.  
 In comfortless alliance shone  
 The lights through arch of blackened stone,  
 And showed wild shapes in garb of war,  
 Faces deformed with beard and scar, 30  
 All haggard from the midnight watch,  
 And fevered with the stern debauch,  
 For the oak table's massive board,  
 Flooded with wine, with fragments stored,  
 And beakers<sup>1</sup> drained, and cups o'erthrown, 35  
 Showed in what sport the night had flown.  
 Some, weary, snored on floor and bench;  
 Some laboured still their thirst to quench;  
 Some, chilled with watching, spread their hands  
 O'er the huge chimney's dying brands, 40  
 While round them, or beside them flung,  
 At every step their harness<sup>2</sup> rung.

## III

These drew not for their fields<sup>3</sup> the sword,  
 Like tenants of a feudal lord,  
 Nor owned the patriarchal claim<sup>4</sup> 45  
 Of Chieftain in their leader's name;

<sup>1</sup> **Beakers**—Drinking vessels. <sup>2</sup> **Harness**—Armour.

<sup>3</sup> **For their fields**—Paid their rentals by military service.

<sup>4</sup> **Patriarchal claim**—As the chief was considered the father of his clan they were bound to obey his commands.

Adventurers<sup>1</sup> they, from far who roved,  
 To live by battle which they loved.  
 There the Italian's clouded face,  
 The swarthy Spaniard's there you trace; 50  
 The mountain-loving Switzer there  
 More freely breathed in mountain-air;  
 The Fleming there despised the soil  
 That paid so ill the labourer's toil;  
 Their rolls showed French and German name; 55  
 And merry England's exiles came,  
 To share, with ill-concealed disdain,  
 Of Scotland's pay the scanty gain.  
 All brave in arms, well trained to wield  
 The heavy halberd,<sup>2</sup> brand, and shield; 60  
 In camps licentious, wild, and bold;  
 In pillage fierce and uncontrolled;  
 And now, by holytide and feast,  
 From rules of discipline released.

## IV

They held debate of bloody fray, 65  
 Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.  
 Fierce was their speech, and mid their words  
 Their hands oft grappled to their swords;  
 Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear  
 Of wounded comrades groaning near, 70  
 Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored  
 Bore token of the mountain sword,  
 Though, neighbouring to the Court of Guard,  
 Their prayers and feverish wails were heard,—  
 Sad burden<sup>3</sup> to the ruffian joke, 75  
 And savage oath by fury spoke!—

<sup>1</sup> **Adventurers**—Mercenary soldiers.

<sup>2</sup> **Halberd**—A long-handled battle-axe which might be used as a spear.

<sup>3</sup> **Burden**—Chorus.

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<sup>1</sup> **Tren**  
<sup>3</sup> **Poul**  
<sup>4</sup> **Seve**  
 avarice,  
<sup>5</sup> **Sack**  
<sup>6</sup> **Ups**  
 Dutch.



At length up started John of Brent,  
 A yeoman from the banks of Trent<sup>1</sup>;  
 A stranger to respect or fear,  
 In peace a chaser of the deer, 80  
 In host a hardy mutineer,  
 But still the boldest of the crew  
 When deed of danger was to do.  
 He grieved that day their games cut short,  
 And marred the dicer's brawling sport, 85  
 And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!  
 And while a merry catch I troll,  
 Let each the buxom<sup>2</sup> chorus bear.  
 Like brethren of the brand and spear."

## V

## SOLDIER'S SONG

Our vicar still preaches that Peter and Poule<sup>3</sup> 90  
 Laid a swinging long curse on the bonny brown bowl,  
 That there's wrath and despair in the jolly black-jack,  
 And the seven deadly sins<sup>4</sup> in a flagon of sack<sup>5</sup>;  
 Yet whoop, Barnaby! off with thy liquor,  
 Drink upsees<sup>6</sup> out, and a fig for the vicar! 95

Our vicar he calls it damnation to sip  
 The ripe ruddy dew of a woman's dear lip,  
 Says that Beelzebub lurks in her kerchief so sly,  
 And Apollyon shoots darts from her merry black eye;  
 Yet whoop, Jack! kiss Gillian the quicker, 100  
 Till she bloom like a rose, and a fig for the vicar!

<sup>1</sup> **Trent**—A river in England. <sup>2</sup> **Buxom**—Lively.

<sup>3</sup> **Poule**—Paul.

<sup>4</sup> **Seven deadly sins**—Pride, idleness, gluttony, lust, avarice, envy and wrath.

<sup>5</sup> **Sack**—A Spanish wine.

<sup>6</sup> **Upsees**—A Bacchanalian interjection borrowed from the Dutch.

Our vicar thus preaches,— and why should he not?  
 For the dues of his cure <sup>1</sup> are the placket and pot;<sup>2</sup>  
 And 't is right of his office poor laymen to lurch <sup>3</sup>  
 Who infringe the domains of our good Mother Church,<sup>105</sup>  
 Yet whoop, bully-boys! off with your liquor,  
 Sweet Marjorie's the word, and a fig for the vicar!

## VI

The warder's challenge heard without,  
 Stayed in mid-roar the merry shout.  
 A soldier to the portal went,— 110  
 "Here is old Bertram, sirs, of Ghent;  
 And — beat for jubilee the drum!—  
 A maid and minstrel with him come."  
 Bertram, a Fleming, gray and scarred,  
 Was entering now the Court of Guard, 115  
 A harper with him, and, in plaid  
 All muffled close, a mountain maid,  
 Who backward shrunk to 'scape the view  
 Of the loose scene and boisterous crew.  
 "What news?" they roared:—"I only know, 120  
 From noon till eve we fought with foe,  
 As wild and as untamable  
 As the rude mountains where they dwell;  
 On both sides store of blood is lost,  
 Nor much success can either boast."— 125  
 "But whence thy captives, friend? such spoil  
 As theirs must needs reward thy toil.  
 Old dost thou wax, and wars grow sharp;  
 Thou now hast glee-maiden and harp!  
 Get thee an ape, and trudge the land, 130  
 The leader of a juggler band."

<sup>1</sup> **Dues of his cure**—The revenue drawn from his charge.

<sup>2</sup> **Placket and pot**—Women and wine.

<sup>3</sup> **Lurch**—Rob.

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<sup>1</sup> **Pur**

<sup>2</sup> **Tar**

## VII

"No, comrade; — no such fortune mine.  
 After the fight these sought our line,  
 That aged harper and the girl,  
 And, having audience of the Earl, 135  
 Mar bade I should purvey them steed,<sup>1</sup>  
 And bring them hitherward with speed.  
 Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,  
 For none shall do them shame or harm." —  
 "Hear ye his boast?" cried John of Brent, 140  
 Ever to strife and jangling bent;  
 "Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,  
 And yet the jealous niggard grudge  
 To pay the forester his fee?  
 I'll have my share howe'er it be, 145  
 Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."  
 Bertram his forward step withstood;  
 And, burning in his vengeful mood,  
 Old Allan, though unfit for strife,  
 Laid hand upon his dagger-knife; 150  
 But Ellen boldly stepped between,  
 And dropped at once the tartan screen:<sup>2</sup> —  
 So, from his morning cloud, appears  
 The sun of May through summer tears.  
 The savage soldiery, amazed, 155  
 As on descended angel gazed;  
 Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,  
 Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

## VIII

Boldly she spoke: "Soldiers, attend!  
 My father was the soldier's friend, 160

<sup>1</sup> **Purvey them steed**—Provide them with horses.

<sup>2</sup> **Tartan screen**—The tartan she wore as a veil.

Cheered him in camps, in marches led,  
 And with him in the battle bled.  
 Not from the valiant or the strong  
 Should exile's daughter suffer wrong."  
 Answered De Brent, most forward still 165  
 In every feat or good or ill:  
 "I shame me of the part I played;  
 And thou an outlaw's child, poor maid!  
 An outlaw I by forest laws,  
 And merry Needwood <sup>1</sup> knows the cause. 170  
 Poor Rose,—if Rose be living now,"—  
 He wiped his iron eye and brow,—  
 "Must bear such age, I think, as thou.—  
 Hear ye, my mates! I go to call  
 The Captain of our watch to hall: 175  
 There lies my halberd on the floor;  
 And he that steps my halberd o'er,  
 To do the maid injurious part,  
 My shaft shall quiver in his heart!  
 Beware loose speech, or jesting rough: 180  
 Ye all know John de Brent. Enough."

## IX

Their Captain came, a gallant young,—  
 Of Tullibardine's house <sup>2</sup> he sprung,—  
 Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;  
 Gay was his mien, his humour light, 185  
 And, though by courtesy controlled,  
 Forward his speech, his bearing bold.  
 The high-born maiden ill could brook  
 The scanning of his curious look  
 And dauntless eye: — and yet, in sooth, 190  
 Young Lewis was a generous youth;

<sup>1</sup> **Needwood**—The royal forest in Staffordshire.

<sup>2</sup> **Tullibardine's house**—The Murrays of Tullibardine in Perthshire.

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<sup>1</sup> **Errat**  
 to espou  
<sup>2</sup> **Bow**

But Ellen's lovely face and mien,  
Ill suited to the garb and scene,  
Might lightly bear construction strange,  
And give loose fancy scope to range. 196  
"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!  
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,  
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,  
Like errant damosel <sup>1</sup> of yore?  
Does thy high quest a knight require, 200  
Or may the venture suit a squire?"  
Her dark eye flashed; — she paused and sighed:—  
"O what have I to do with pride!—  
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,  
A suppliant for a father's life, 205  
I crave an audience of the King.  
Behold, to back my suit, a ring,  
The royal pledge of grateful claims,  
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

## X

The signet-ring young Lewis took 210  
With deep respect and altered look,  
And said: "This ring our duties own;  
And pardon, if to worth unknown,  
In semblance mean obscurely veiled,  
Lady, in aught my folly failed. 215  
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,  
The King shall know what suitor waits.  
Please you meanwhile in fitting bower <sup>2</sup>  
Repose you till his waking hour;  
Female attendance shall obey 220  
Your hest, for service or array.  
Permit I marshal you the way."

<sup>1</sup> **Errant damosel**—Wandering maiden in search of a knight to espouse her quarrel or avenge her wrongs.

<sup>2</sup> **Bower**—Chamber.

But, ere she followed, with the grace  
 And open bounty of her race,  
 She bade her slender purse be shared 225  
 Among the soldiers of the guard.  
 The rest with thanks their guerdon took,  
 But Brent, with shy and awkward look,  
 On the reluctant maiden's hold  
 Forced bluntly back the proffered gold:— 230  
 "Forgive a haughty English heart,  
 And O, forget its ruder part!  
 The vacant purse shall be my share,  
 Which in my barret-cap<sup>1</sup> I'll bear,  
 Perchance, in jeopardy of war, 235  
 Where gayer crests may keep afar."  
 With thanks — 't was all she could — the maid  
 His rugged courtesy repaid.

## XI

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,  
 Allan made suit to John of Brent:— 240  
 "My lady safe, O let your grace  
 Give me to see my master's face!  
 His minstrel I,— to share his doom  
 Bound from the cradle to the tomb.  
 Tenth in descent, since first my sires 245  
 Waked for his noble house their lyres,  
 Nor one of all the race was known  
 But prized its weal above their own.  
 With the Chief's birth begins our care;  
 Our harp must soothe the infant heir, 250  
 Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace  
 His earliest feat of field or chase;  
 In peace, in war, our rank we keep,  
 We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,

<sup>1</sup> Barret-cap—A flat cloth cap.

<sup>1</sup> Wot-  
<sup>2</sup> Whe  
 the victi  
<sup>3</sup> Engi



Nor leave him till we pour our verse —  
 A doleful tribute! — o'er his hearse.  
 Then let me share his captive lot;  
 It is my right,— deny it not!"  
 "Little we reck," said John of Brent,  
 "We Southern men of long descent;  
 Nor wot<sup>1</sup> we how a name — a word —  
 Makes clansmen vassals to a lord:  
 Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—  
 God bless the house of Beaudesert!  
 And, but I loved to drive the deer  
 More than to guide the labouring steer,  
 I had not dwelt an outcast here.  
 Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;  
 Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see."

255

260

265

## XII

Then, from a rusted iron hook,  
 A bunch of ponderous keys he took,  
 Lighted a torch, and Allan led  
 Through grated arch and passage dread.  
 Portals they passed, where, deep within,  
 Spoke prisoners' moan and fetters' din;  
 Through rugged vaults, where, loosely stored,  
 Lay wheel,<sup>2</sup> and axe, and headsman's sword,  
 And many a hideous engine<sup>3</sup> grim,  
 For wrenching joint and crushing limb,  
 By artists formed who deemed it shame  
 And sin to give their work a name.  
 They halted at a low-browed porch,  
 And Brent to Allan gave the torch,  
 While bolt and chain he backward rolled,

270

275

280

<sup>1</sup> **Wot**—Understand.

<sup>2</sup> **Wheel**—An instrument of torture on which the limbs of the victim were broken.

<sup>3</sup> **Engine**—Machine.

And made the bar unhasp its hold. 285  
 They entered:—'t was a prison-room  
 Of stern security and gloom,  
 Yet not a dungeon; for the day  
 Through lofty gratings found its way,  
 And rude and antique garniture <sup>1</sup> 290  
 Decked the sad walls and oaken floor,  
 Such as the rugged days of old  
 Deemed fit for captive noble's hold.  
 "Here," said De Brent, "thou mayst remain  
 Till the Leech <sup>2</sup> visit him again. 295  
 Strict is his charge, the warders tell,  
 To tend the noble prisoner well."  
 Retiring then the bolt he drew,  
 And the lock's murmurs growled anew.  
 Roused at the sound, from lowly bed 300  
 A captive feebly raised his head;  
 The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew —  
 Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!  
 For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,  
 They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought. 305

## XIII

As the tall ship, whose lofty prore <sup>3</sup>  
 Shall never stem the billows more,  
 Deserted by her gallant band,  
 Amid the breakers lies astrand, —  
 So on his couch lay Roderick Dhu! 310  
 And oft his fevered limbs he threw  
 In toss abrupt, as when her sides  
 Lie rocking in the advancing tides,  
 That shake her frame with ceaseless beat,  
 Yet cannot heave her from her seat;— 315

<sup>1</sup> Garniture—Furniture.<sup>2</sup> Leech—Doctor.<sup>3</sup> Prore—Prow.<sup>1</sup> De  
of the

O, how unlike her course at sea!  
Or his free step on hill and lea!—  
Soon as the Minstrel he could scan,—  
“What of thy lady? — of my clan? —  
My mother? — Douglas? — tell me all! 320  
Have they been ruined in my fall?  
Ah, yes! or wherefore art thou here?  
Yet speak,— speak boldly,— do not fear.”—  
For Allan, who his mood well knew,  
Was choked with grief and terror too.— 325  
“Who fought? — who fled? — Old man, be brief;  
Some might,— for they had lost their Chief.  
Who basely live? — who bravely died?”  
“O calm thee, Chief!” the Minstrel cried,  
“Ellen is safe!” “For that thank Heaven!” 330  
“And hopes are for the Douglas given;—  
The Lady Margaret, too, is well;  
And, for thy clan,— on field or fell,  
Has never harp of minstrel told  
Of combat fought so true and bold. 335  
Thy stately Pine is yet unbent,  
Though many a goodly bough is rent.”

## XIV

The Chieftain reared his form on high,  
And fever's fire was in his eye;  
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks 340  
Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.  
“Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,  
With measure bold on festal day,  
In yon lone isle,— again where ne'er  
Shall harper play or warrior hear!— 345  
That stirring air that peals on high,  
O'er Dermid's race<sup>1</sup> our victory.—

---

<sup>1</sup> Dermid's race—The Campbells, the hereditary enemies of the Macgregors.

Strike it!—and then,—for well thou canst,—  
 Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,  
 Fling me the picture of the fight, 350  
 When met my clan the Saxon might.  
 I'll listen till my fancy hears  
 The clang of swords, the crash of spears!  
 These grates, these walls, shall vanish then  
 For the fair field of fighting men, 355  
 And my free spirit burst away,  
 As if it soared from battle fray."  
 The trembling Bard with awe obeyed,—  
 Slow on the harp his hand he laid;  
 But soon remembrance of the sight 360  
 He witnessed from the mountain's height,  
 With what old Bertram told at night,  
 Awakened the full power of song,  
 And bore him in career along;—  
 As shallop launched on river's tide, 365  
 That slow and fearful leaves the side,  
 But, when it feels the middle stream,  
 Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.

## XV

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE<sup>1</sup>

"The Minstrel came once more to view  
 The eastern ridge of Benvenue, 370  
 For ere he parted he would say  
 Farewell to lovely Loch Achray —  
 Where shall he find, in foreign land,  
 So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!—  
 There is no breeze upon the fern, 375  
 No ripple on the lake,  
 Upon her eyry nods the erne,<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Beal' an Duine*—"The pass of the man."

<sup>2</sup> *Erne*—Eagle.

The deer has sought the brake;  
 The small birds will not sing aloud,  
 The springing trout lies still, 380  
 So darkly glooms yon thunder-cloud,  
 That swathes, as with a purple shroud,  
 Benledi's distant hill.

Is it the thunder's solemn sound  
 That mutters deep and dread, 385  
 Or echoes from the groaning ground  
 The warrior's measured tread?

Is it the lightning's quivering glance  
 That on the thicket streams,  
 Or do they flash on spear and lance 390  
 The sun's retiring beams?—

I see the dagger-crest <sup>1</sup> of Mar,  
 I see the Moray's silver star,  
 Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,  
 That up the lake comes winding far! 395  
 To hero boune for battle-strife,  
 Or bard of martial lay,  
 'T were worth ten years of peaceful life,  
 One glance at their array!

## XVI

"Their light-armed archers far and near 400  
 Surveyed the tangled ground,  
 Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,  
 A twilight forest frowned,  
 Their barded horsemen <sup>2</sup> in the rear  
 The stern battalia <sup>3</sup> crowned. 405  
 No cymbal clashed, no clarion rang,  
 Still were the pipe and drum;

<sup>1</sup> **Dagger-crest**—See Canto IV, line 152.

<sup>2</sup> **Barded horsemen**—Wearing defensive armour.

<sup>3</sup> **Battalia**—An army arrayed for battle.

Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,  
 The sullen march was dumb.  
 There breathed no wind their crests to shake, <sup>410</sup>  
 Or wave their flags abroad;  
 Scarce the frail aspen seemed to quake,  
 That shadowed o'er their road.  
 Their vaward<sup>1</sup> scouts no tidings bring,  
 Can rouse no lurking foe, <sup>415</sup>  
 Nor spy a trace of living thing,  
 Save when they stirred the roe;  
 The host moves like a deep-sea wave,  
 Where rise no rocks its pride to brave, <sup>420</sup>  
 High-swelling, dark, and slow.  
 The lake is passed, and now they gain  
 A narrow and a broken plain,  
 Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;  
 And here the horse and spearmen pause,  
 While, to explore the dangerous glen, <sup>425</sup>  
 Dive through the pass the archer-men.

## XVII

"At once there rose so wild a yell  
 Within that dark and narrow dell,  
 As all the fiends from heaven that fell  
 Had pealed the banner-cry <sup>2</sup> of hell! <sup>430</sup>  
 Forth from the pass in tumult driven,  
 Like chaff before the wind of heaven,  
 The archery appear:  
 For life! for life! their flight they ply <sup>3</sup>—  
 And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry, <sup>435</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **Vaward**—Vanguard.

<sup>2</sup> **Banner-cry**—The call to rally round the standard.

<sup>3</sup> **Flight they ply**—The meaning is obscure here. Rolfe suggests: "They keep up a constant fire," but this is contradictory. Some editions read **plight**. The meaning might then be: "They did their best to get out of their difficult position."



And plaids and bonnets waving high,  
And broadswords flashing to the sky,  
Are maddening in the rear.  
Onward they drive in dreadful race,  
Pursuers and pursued;  
Before that tide of flight and chase,  
How shall it keep its rooted place,  
The spearmen's twilight wood?—  
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!  
Bear back both friend and foe!'—  
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,  
That serried grove of lances brown  
At once lay levelled low;  
And closely shouldering side to side,  
The bristling ranks the onset bide.—  
'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,  
As their Tinchel<sup>1</sup> cows the game!  
They come as fleet as forest deer,  
We'll drive them back as tame.'

## XVIII

"Bearing before them in their course  
The relics of the archer force,  
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,  
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.  
Above the tide, each broadsword bright  
Was brandishing like beam of light,  
Each targe was dark below;  
And with the ocean's mighty swing,  
When heaving to the tempest's wing,  
They hurled them on the foe.  
I heard the lance's shivering crash,

---

<sup>1</sup> **Tinchel**—"A circle of sportsmen who, by surrounding a great space and gradually narrowing, brought immense quantities of deer together which usually made desperate efforts to break through the Tinchel."—*Scott*.

As when the whirlwind rends the ash;  
 I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,  
 As if a hundred anvils rang!  
 But Moray wheeled his rearward rank  
 Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,— 470  
 'My banner-man, advance!  
 I see,' he cried, 'their column shake.  
 Now gallants! for your ladies' sake,  
 Upon them with the lance!'—  
 The horsemen dashed among the rout, 475  
 As deer break through the broom;  
 Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,  
 They soon make lightsome<sup>1</sup> room.  
 Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne —  
 Where, where was Roderick then! 480  
 One blast upon his bugle-horn  
 Were worth a thousand men.  
 And reflux<sup>2</sup> through the pass of fear  
 The battle's tide was poured;  
 Vanished the Saxon's struggling spear, 485  
 Vanished the mountain-sword.  
 As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,  
 Receives her roaring linn,<sup>3</sup>  
 As the dark caverns of the deep  
 Suck the wild whirlpool in, 490  
 So did the deep and darksome pass  
 Devour the battle's mingled mass;  
 None linger now upon the plain,  
 Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

## XIX

"Now westward rolls the battle's din, 495  
 That deep and doubling pass within.—  
 Minstrel, away! the work of fate

<sup>1</sup> **Lightsome**—Without difficulty.

<sup>2</sup> **Reflux**—Flowing back

<sup>3</sup> **Linn**—Cataract

Is bearing on; its issue wait,  
Where the rude Trosachs' dread defile  
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle. 500  
Gray Benvenue I soon repassed,  
Loch Katrine lay beneath me cast.

The sun is set; — the clouds are met,  
The lowering scowl of heaven  
An inky hue of livid blue 505

To the deep lake has given;  
Strange gusts of wind from mountain glen  
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk again.

I heeded not the eddying surge,  
Mine eye but saw the Trosachs' gorge, 510  
Mine ear but heard that sullen sound,

Which like an earthquake shook the ground,  
And spoke the stern and desperate strife  
That parts not but with parting life,  
Seeming, to minstrel ear, to toll 515

The dirge of many a passing soul.

Nearer it comes — the dim-wood glen

The martial flood disgorged again,

But not in mingled tide;

The plaided warriors of the North 520

High on the mountain thunder forth

And overhang its side,

While by the lake below appears

The darkening cloud of Saxon spears.

At weary bay each shattered band, 525

Eying their foemen, sternly stand;

Their banners stream like tattered sail,

That flings its fragments to the gale,

And broken arms and disarray

Marked the fell havoc of the day. 530

## XX

“Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,  
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,

Till Moray pointed with his lance,  
 And cried: 'Behold yon isle!—  
 See! none are left to guard its strand;  
 But women weak, that wring the hand:  
 'T is there of yore the robber band  
 Their booty wont to pile;—  
 My purse, with bonnet-pieces<sup>1</sup> store,  
 To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,  
 And loose a shallop from the shore.  
 Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,  
 Lords of his mate, and brood, and den.  
 Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,  
 On earth his casque and corselet rung,  
 He plunged him in the wave:—  
 All saw the deed,— the purpose knew,  
 And to their clamours Benvenue  
 A mingled echo gave;  
 The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,  
 The helpless females scream for fear,  
 And yells for rage the mountaineer.  
 'T was then, as by the outcry riven,  
 Poured down at once the lowering heaven:  
 A whirlwind swept Loch Katrine's breast,  
 Her billows reared their snowy crest.  
 Well for the swimmer swelled they high,  
 To mar the Highland marksman's eye;  
 For round him showered, mid rain and hail,  
 The vengeful arrows of the Gael.  
 In vain.— He nears the isle — and lo!  
 His hand is on a shallop's bow.  
 Just then a flash of lightning came,  
 It tinged the waves and strand with flame;  
 I marked Duncraggan's widowed dame,<sup>2</sup>  
 Behind an oak I saw her stand,

<sup>1</sup> **Bonnet-pieces**—A gold coin of James V. On the coin the king is represented as wearing a bonnet.

<sup>2</sup> **Widowed dame**—See Canto III, lines 428 *et seq.*

A naked dirk gleamed in her hand:—  
It darkened,— but amid the moan  
Of waves I heard a dying groan;—  
Another flash! — the spearman floats  
A weltering corse beside the boats,  
And the stern matron o'er him stood,  
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

570

## XXI

“ ‘Revenge! revenge!’ the Saxons cried,  
The Gaels’ exulting shout replied.  
Despite the elemental rage,  
Again they hurried to engage;  
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,  
Bloody with spurring came a knight,  
Sprung from his horse, and from a crag  
Waved ’twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.  
Clarion and trumpet by his side  
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,  
While in the Monarch’s name, afar  
A herald’s voice forbade the war,  
For Bothwell’s lord and Roderick bold  
Were both, he said, in captive hold.’ ”—  
But here the lay made sudden stand,  
The harp escaped the Minstrel’s hand!  
Oft had he stolen a glance to spy  
How Roderick brooked his minstrelsy:  
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,  
With lifted hand kept feeble time;  
That motion ceased,— yet feeling strong  
Varied his look as changed the song;  
At length, no more his deafened ear  
The minstrel melody can hear;  
His face grows sharp,— his hands are clenched,  
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;  
Set are his teeth, his fading eye

575

580

585

590

595

600

Is sternly fixed on vacancy;  
 Thus, motionless and moanless, drew  
 His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu!—  
 Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,  
 While grim and still his spirit passed;  
 But when he saw that life was fled,  
 He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

605

## XXII

## LAMENT

“And art thou cold and lowly laid,  
 Thy foeman's dread, thy people's aid,  
 Breadalbane's boast, Clan-Alpine's shade!  
 For thee shall none a requiem say?—  
 For thee, who loved the minstrel's lay,  
 For thee, of Bothwell's house the stay,  
 The shelter of her exiled line,  
 E'en in this prison-house of thine,  
 I'll wail for Alpine's honoured Pine!

610

615

“What groans shall yonder valleys fill!  
 What shrieks of grief shall rend yon hill!  
 What tears of burning rage shall thrill,  
 When mourns thy tribe thy battles done,  
 Thy fall before the race was won,  
 Thy sword ungirt ere set of sun!  
 There breathes not clansman of thy line,  
 But would have given his life for thine.  
 O, woe for Alpine's honoured Pine!

620

625

“Sad was thy lot on mortal stage!<sup>1</sup> —  
 The captive thrush may brook the cage,  
 The prisoned eagle dies for rage.  
 Brave spirit, do not scorn my strain!

<sup>1</sup> **Mortal stage**—During life.



And, when its notes awake again, 630  
Even she, so long beloved in vain,  
Shall with my harp her voice combine,  
And mix her woe and tears with mine,  
To wail Clan-Alpine's honoured Pine."

## XXIII

Ellen the while, with bursting heart, 635  
Remained in lordly bower apart,  
Where played, with many-coloured gleams,  
Through storied pane <sup>1</sup> the rising beams.  
In vain on gilded roof they fall,  
And lightened up a tapestried wall, 640  
And for her use a menial train  
A rich collation spread in vain.  
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,  
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;  
Or if she looked, 't was but to say, 645  
With better omen dawned the day  
In that lone isle, where waved on high  
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;  
Where oft her noble father shared  
The simple meal her care prepared, 650  
While Lufra, crouching by her side,  
Her station claimed with jealous pride,  
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,  
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Grame,  
Whose answer, oft at random made, 655  
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.  
Those who such simple joys have known  
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.  
But sudden, see, she lifts her head,  
The window seeks with cautious tread. 660  
What distant music has the power

---

<sup>1</sup> **Storied pane**—Stained glass windows on which were  
figured scenes from stories or history.

To win her in this woful hour?  
 'T was from a turret that o'erhung  
 Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.

## XXIV

## LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN

"My hawk is tired of perch and hood, 665  
 My idle greyhound loathes his food,  
 My horse is weary of his stall,  
 And I am sick of captive thrall.  
 I wish I were as I have been,  
 Hunting the hart in forest green, 670  
 With bended bow and bloodhound free,  
 For that's the life is meet for me.

"I hate to learn the ebb of time  
 From yon dull steeple's drowsy chime,  
 Or mark it as the sunbeams crawl, 675  
 Inch after inch, along the wall.  
 The lark was wont my matins ring,  
 The sable rook my vespers<sup>1</sup> sing;  
 These towers, although a king's they be,  
 Have not a hall of joy for me. 680

"No more at dawning morn I rise,  
 And sun myself in Ellen's eyes,  
 Drive the fleet deer the forest through,  
 And homeward wend with evening dew;  
 A blithesome welcome blithely meet, 685  
 And lay my trophies at her feet,  
 While fled the eve on wing of glee,—  
 That life is lost to love and me!"

---

<sup>1</sup> **Vespers**—The evening service of the church.

## XXV

The heart-sick lay was hardly said,  
The listener had not turned her head, 690  
It trickled still, the starting tear,  
When light a footstep struck her ear,  
And Snowdoun's graceful Knight was near.  
She turned the hastier, lest again  
The prisoner should renew his strain. 695  
"O welcome, brave Fitz-James!" she said;  
"How may an almost orphan maid  
Pay the deep debt —" "O say not so!  
To me no gratitude you owe.  
Not mine, alas! the boon to give, 700  
And bid thy noble father live;  
I can but be thy guide, sweet maid,  
With Scotland's King thy suit to aid.  
No tyrant he, though ire and pride  
May lay his better mood aside. 705  
Come, Ellen, come! 't is more than time,  
He holds his court at morning prime."<sup>1</sup>  
With beating heart, and bosom wrung,  
As to a brother's arm she clung.  
Gently he dried the falling tear, 710  
And gently whispered hope and cheer;  
Her faltering steps half led, half stayed,  
Through gallery fair and high arcade,  
Till at his touch its wings of pride  
A portal arch<sup>2</sup> unfolded wide. 715

## XXVI

Within 't was brilliant all and light,  
A thronging scene of figures bright;  
It glowed on Ellen's dazzled sight,

---

<sup>1</sup> **Morning prime**—Early in the morning.

<sup>2</sup> **Portal arch**—An arched doorway.

As when the setting sun has given  
 Ten thousand hues to summer even, 720  
 And from their tissue fancy frames  
 Aerial knights and fairy dames.  
 Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;  
 A few faint steps she forward made,  
 Then slow her drooping head she raised, 725  
 And fearful round the presence<sup>1</sup> gazed;  
 For him she sought who owned this state,  
 The dreaded Prince whose will was fate!—  
 She gazed on many a princely port  
 Might well have ruled a royal court; 730  
 On many a splendid garb she gazed,—  
 Then turned bewildered and amazed,  
 For all stood bare; and in the room  
 Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.  
 To him each lady's look was lent, 735  
 On him each courtier's eye was bent;  
 Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,  
 He stood, in simple Lincoln green,  
 The centre of the glittering ring,—  
 And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King! 740

## XXVII

As wreath of snow on mountain-breast  
 Slides from the rock that gave it rest,  
 Poor Ellen glided from her stay,  
 And at the Monarch's feet she lay;  
 No word her choking voice commands, 745  
 She showed the ring,— she clasped her hands.  
 O, not a moment could he brook,  
 The generous Prince, that suppliant look!  
 Gently he raised her,— and, the while,  
 Checked with a glance the circle's smile; 750  
 Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,

<sup>1</sup> Presence—Presence-chamber.

<sup>1</sup> Infl  
<sup>2</sup> Pros  
 has said

And bade her terrors be dismissed :—  
 “Yes, fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James  
 The fealty of Scotland claims.  
 To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring; 755  
 He will redeem his signet ring.  
 Ask naught for Douglas; — yester even,  
 His Prince and he have much forgiven;  
 Wrong hath he had from slanderous tongue,  
 I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong. 760  
 We would not, to the vulgar crowd,  
 Yield what they craved with clamour loud;  
 Calmly we heard and judged his cause,  
 Our council aided and our laws.  
 I stanch’d thy father’s death-feud stern 765  
 With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;  
 And Bothwell’s Lord henceforth we own  
 The friend and bulwark of our throne.—  
 But, lovely infidel,<sup>1</sup> how now?  
 What clouds thy misbelieving brow? 770  
 Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;  
 Thou must confirm this doubting maid.”

## XXVIII

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,  
 And on his neck his daughter hung.  
 The Monarch drank, that happy hour, 775  
 The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—  
 When it can say with godlike voice,  
 Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!  
 Yet would not James the general eye  
 On nature’s raptures long should pry; 780  
 He stepped between — “Nay, Douglas, nay,  
 Steal not my proselyte<sup>2</sup> away!

<sup>1</sup> **Infidel**—Unbelieving one.

<sup>2</sup> **Proselyte**—Convert. Ellen now believes what the king has said.

The riddle 't is my right to read,  
 That brought this happy chance to speed.  
 Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray 785  
 In life's more low but happier way,  
 'T is under name which veils my power,  
 Nor falsely veils,— for Stirling's tower  
 Of yore the name of Snowdoun claims,  
 And Normans call me James Fitz-James.<sup>1</sup> 790  
 Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,  
 Thus learn to right the injured cause."  
 Then, in a tone apart and low,—  
 "Ah, little traitress! none must know 795  
 What idle dream, what lighter thought,  
 What vanity full dearly bought,  
 Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew  
 My spell-bound steps to Benvenue  
 In dangerous hour, and all but gave  
 Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!" 800  
 Aloud he spoke: "Thou still dost hold  
 That little talisman of gold,  
 Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James's ring,—  
 What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

## XXIX

Full well the conscious maiden guessed 805  
 He probed the weakness of her breast;  
 But with that consciousness there came  
 A lightening of her fears for Græme,  
 And more she deemed the Monarch's ire  
 Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire 810  
 Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;  
 And, to her generous feeling true,  
 She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.  
 "Forbear thy suit; — the King of kings

<sup>1</sup> **Fitz-James**—Son of James.

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Alone can stay life's parting wings. 815  
I know his heart, I know his hand,  
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand;—  
My fairest earldom would I give  
To bid Clan-Alpine's Chieftain live!—  
Hast thou no other boon to crave? 820  
No other captive friend to save?"  
Blushing, she turned her from the King,  
And to the Douglas gave the ring,  
As if she wished her sire to speak  
The suit that stained her glowing cheek. 825  
"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,  
And stubborn justice holds her course.  
Malcolm, come forth!"—and, at the word,  
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.  
"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues, 830  
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,  
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,  
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,  
And sought amid thy faithful clan  
A refuge for an outlawed man, 835  
Dishonouring thus thy loyal name.—  
Fetters and warder for the Græme!"  
His chain of gold the King unstrung,  
The links o'er Malcolm's neck he flung,  
Then gently drew the glittering band, 840  
And laid the clasp on Ellen's hand.

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HARP of the North, farewell! The hills grow dark,  
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;  
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,  
The deer, half seen, are to the covert wending. 845  
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending,  
And the wild breeze, thy wilder minstrelsy;

Thy numbers<sup>1</sup> sweet with nature's vespers blending,  
With distant echo from the fold and lea,  
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing  
bee. 850

Yet, once again, farewell, thou Minstrel Harp!  
Yet, once again, forgive my feeble sway,  
And little reck I of the censure sharp  
May idly cavil at an idle lay.  
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way, 855  
Through secret woes the world has never known,  
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,  
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone.—  
That I o'erlive such woes, Enchantress! is thine own.

Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire, 860  
Some Spirit of the Air has waked thy string!  
'T is now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,  
'T is now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.  
Receding now, the dying numbers ring  
Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell; 865  
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring  
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell —  
And now, 't is silent all! — Enchantress, fare thee well!

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers—Music.

TO VI

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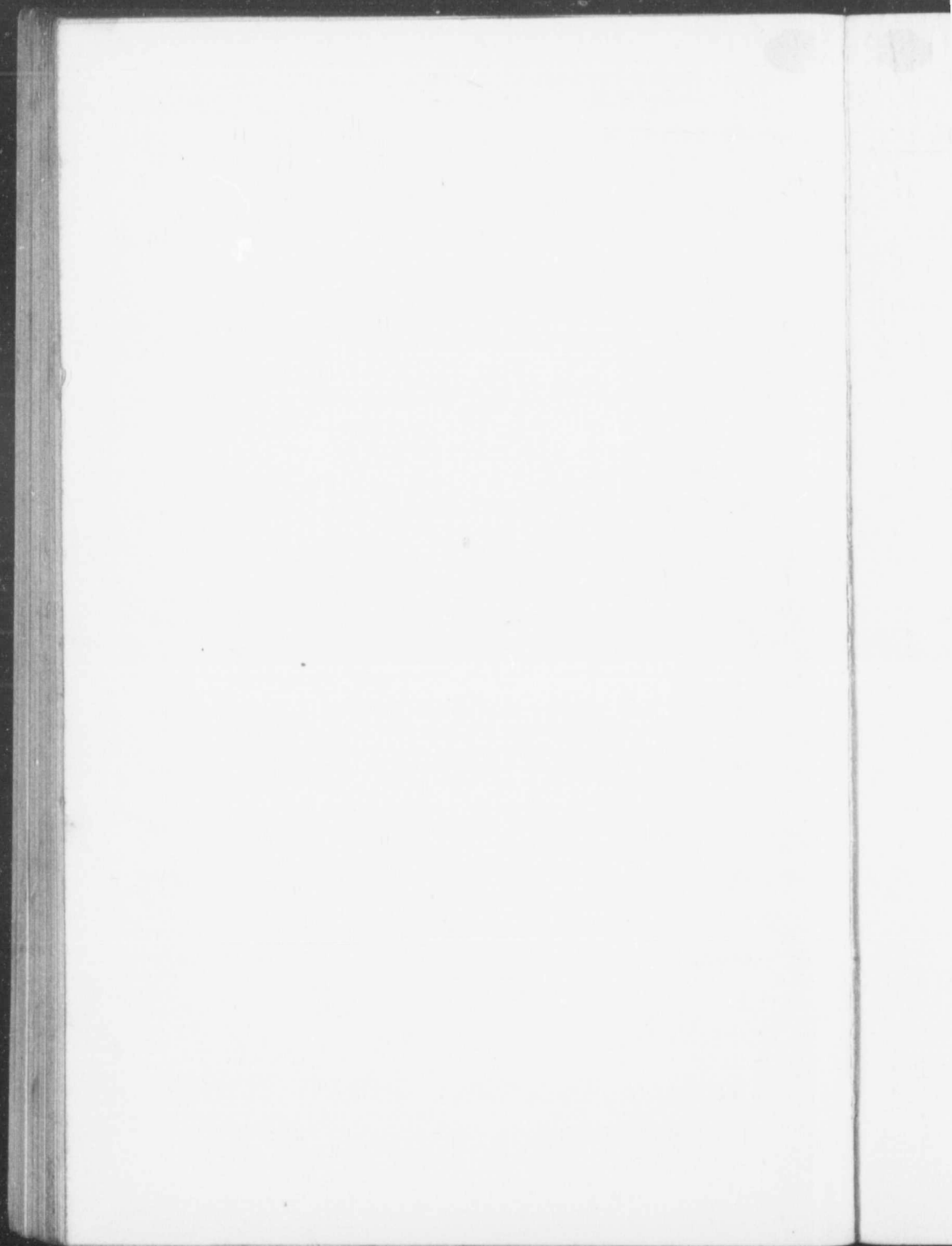
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