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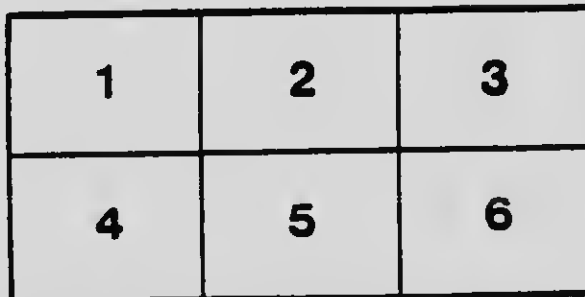
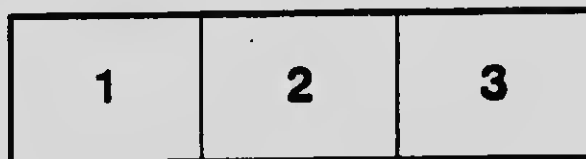
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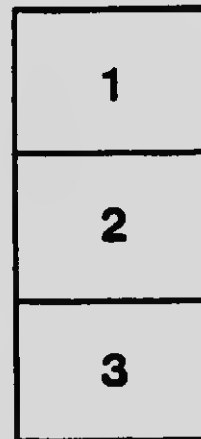
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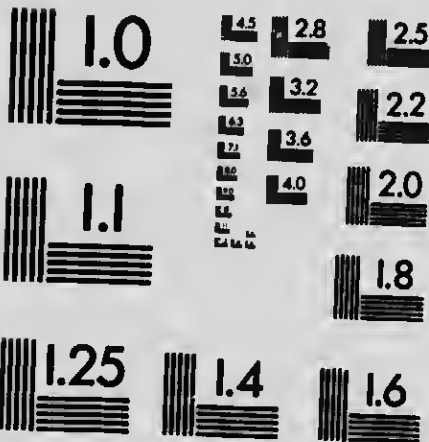
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THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

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SIR WALTER SCOTT



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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 House. The results of his love for ballads and folk lore 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 Abbots-

ford very weak in body, and on the 21st of September, 1832, he passed away surrounded by the members of his family who had been watching by his bedside.

The Lay of the Last Minstrel was published in January, 1805. Scott, himself, gives the following account of the origin of the poem:

"The lovely young Countess of Dalkeith, afterwards Harriet, Duchess of Buccleuch, had come to the land of her husband with the desire of making herself acquainted with its traditions and customs, as well as its manners and history. Of course, where all made it a pride and pleasure to gratify her wishes, she soon heard enough of Border lore; among others, an aged gentleman of property, near Langholm, communicated to her ladyship the story of Gilpin Horner, a tradition in which the narrator, and many more of that country, were firm believers. The young Countess, much delighted with the legend, and the ravity and full confidence with which it was told, enjoined on me as a task to compose a ballad on the subject. Of course, to hear was to obey; and thus the goblin story, objected to by several critics as an excrescence upon the poem, was, in fact, the occasion of its being written."

As the ballad progressed Scott changed his plans, and the ballad gradually grew until it became the *Lay* in six cantos. The minstrel was introduced, says Scott, "as an appropriate interlocutor, by whom the *Lay* might be sung, or spoken, and the introduction of whom betwixt the cantos might remind the reader at intervals of the time, place and circumstances of the recitation."

The following preface appeared in the original edition of the poem:

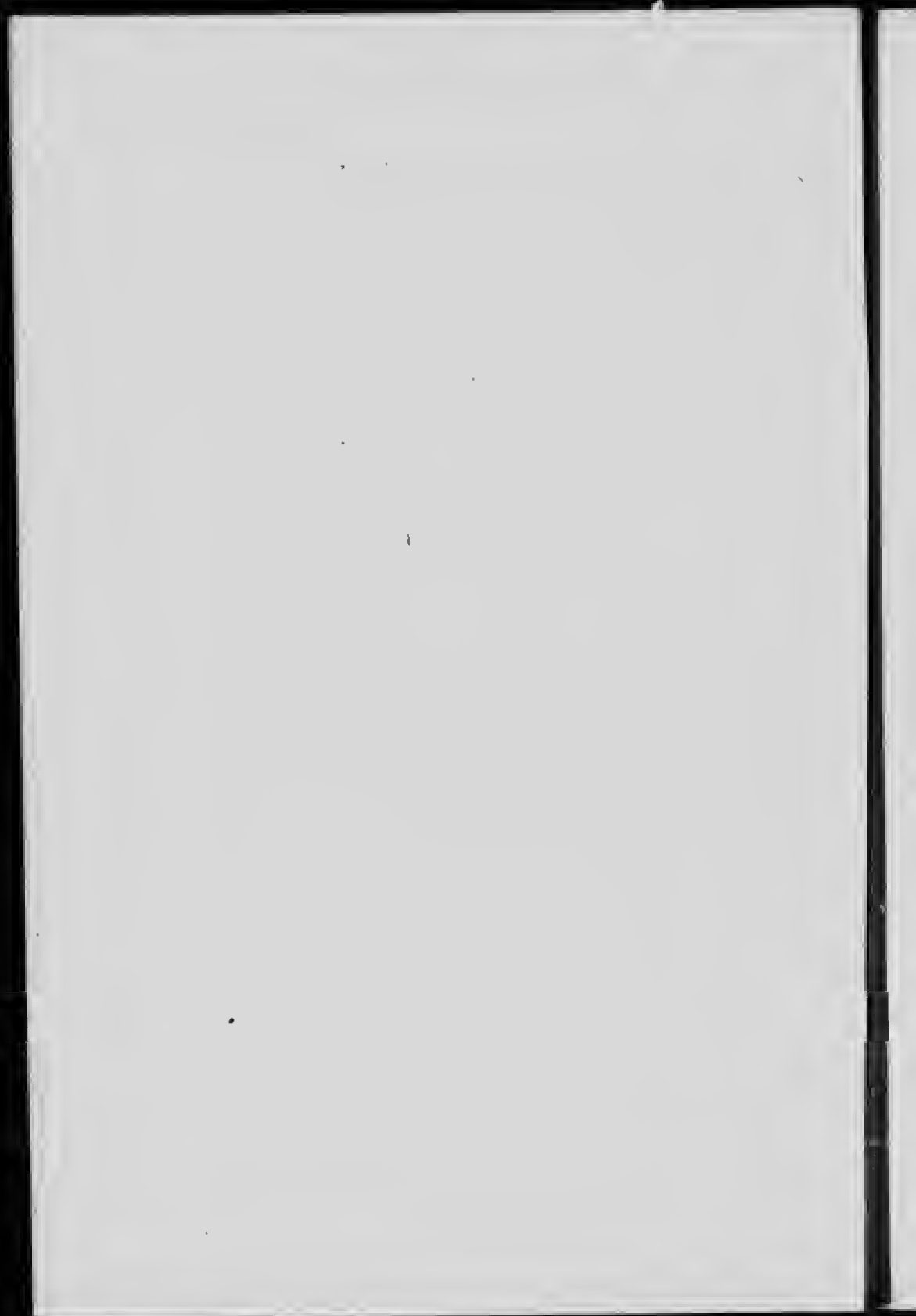
"The poem now offered to the public is intended to illustrate the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland.

The inhabitants, living in a state partly pastoral and partly warlike, and combining habits of constant depredation with the influence of a rude spirit of chivalry, were often engaged in scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament. As the description of scenery and manners was more the object of the Author than a combined and regular narrative, the plan of the Ancient Metrical Romance was adopted, which allows greater latitude in this respect than would be consistent with the dignity of a regular poem. The same model offered other facilities, as it permits an occasional alteration of measure which in some degree authorizes the change of rhythm in the text. The machinery also, adopted from popular belief, would have seemed puerile in a poem which did not partake of the rudeness of the old Ballad or Metrical Romance.

"For these reasons the poem was put in the mouth of an ancient Minstrel, the last of the race, who, as he is supposed to have survived the Revolution, might have caught somewhat of the refinement of modern poetry without losing the simplicity of his original model. The date of the Tale itself is about the middle of the sixteenth century, when most of the personages actually flourished. The time occupied by the action is three nights and three days."

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THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

INTRODUCTION

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy, 5
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead; 10
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.
No more, on prancing palfrey borne,
He caroll'd light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd, 15
High placed in hall,¹ a welcome guest,
He pour'd, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger² fill'd the Stuarts' throne; 20
The bigots of the iron time³
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door;

¹ **Hall**—The living room of the castle, as distinguished from the private apartments.

² **Stranger**—William III.

³ **The iron time**—The Commonwealth, during which the more fanatical of the Puritans strongly objected to amusements in almost any form.

And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.

25

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower¹
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye —
No humbler resting-place was nigh. 30
With hesitating step, at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door 35
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess² mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well: 40
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

30

35

40

When kindness had his wants supplied, 45
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride:
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis,³ dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him, God! 50
A braver ne'er to battle rode;

45

50

¹ **Tower**—Newark castle is beautifully situated on the banks of the Yarrow, about three miles from Selkirk. The castle was built originally by James II of Scotland.

² **Duchess**—Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, widow of the Duke of Monmouth who was beheaded in 1685 for treason in rebelling against King James.

³ **Earl Francis**—Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess. **Earl Walter** was her grandfather.

And how full many a tale he knew,
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,¹
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd;
The Aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease,
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain —
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,²
When he kept court in Holyrood³;

¹ **The sooth to speak**—To tell the truth.

² **King Charles**—Charles I of England who was crowned King of Scotland at Edinburgh in 1633. He visited the city again in 1641.

³ **Holyrood**—The royal palace at Edinburgh. The word means Holy Cross.

And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and age's frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

88

90

96

100

CANTO FIRST

I

THE feast was over in Branksome tower,¹
And the Ladye had gone to her seeret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell —
Jesu Maria, shield us well!²
No living wight,³ save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II

The tables were drawn,⁴ it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,⁵
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,⁶

¹ **Branksome tower**—The castle is on the Teviot about three miles above Keswick. It came into the possession of the Scotts of Buccleuch during the reign of James I.

² **Shield us well**—This line is taken from Coleridge's *Christabel*.

³ **Wight**—Person.

⁴ **Drawn**—The movable tables were pushed back to the wall.

⁵ **Knight, Page, Squire**—Before attaining knighthood a boy served usually both as page in the household and as squire in personal attendance on the lord of the castle.

⁶ **Rushy floor**—Floors during the sixteenth century were covered with rushes instead of carpets.

And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

13

III

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen¹ tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buecleuch.

20

IV

Ten of them were sheath'd in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They earved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet
barr'd.

25

30

V

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,²
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet³ of steel, I trow,

35

¹ **Yeomen**—Soldiers of lesser rank than the squires.

² **Wight**—Active, swift.

³ **Barbed with frontlet**—Protected with head armour.

And with Jedwood-axe¹ at saddle-bow;
 A hundred more fed free in stall:—
 Such was the custom of Branksome-Hall.

40

VI

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?²
 Why watch these warriors, arm'd, by night?—
 They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying:
 They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;
 To see Saint George's red cross³ streaming,
 To see the midnight beacon gleaming:
 They watch, against Southern force and guile,
 Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's⁴ powers,
 Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
 From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

45

50

VII

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall.—

Many a valiant knight is here;
 But He, the Chieftain of them all,
 His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
 Beside his broken spear.
 Bards long shall tell
 How Lord Walter⁵ fell!
 When startled burghers fled, afar,

55

¹ **Jedwood-axe**—A long-handled axe much used by the Scottish knighthood.

² **Dight**—Dressed, prepared.

³ **Saint George's red cross**—The banner of England.

⁴ **Scroop, Howard, Percy**—English knights who at different times held the position of Warden of the Marches or Border. Earl Percy resided at Warkworth, Howard at Naworth, and Scroop at Carlisle.

⁵ **Lord Walter**—In 1526 James V, then a minor, was governed by the Douglasses, and wished to escape their control. He therefore wrote secretly to Buccleuch, asking him to

The furies of the Border war;
 When the streets of high Dunedin¹
 Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
 And heard the slogan's deadly yell —
 Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

60

VIII

Can piety the discord heal,
 Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
 Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
 Can love of blessed charity?
 No! vainly to each holy shrine,
 In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;
 Implored, in vain, the grace divine
 For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:
 While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
 While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
 The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
 The havoc of the feudal war,
 Shall never, never be forgot!

65

70

75

IX

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
 The warlike foresters had bent;
 And many a flower, and many a tear,
 Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:
 But o'er her warrior's bloody bier

80

meet him at Melrose on his home-coming and take him out of the Douglasses' hands. Buccleuch obeyed, but his company was completely routed by the Douglasses with the aid of the Carrs and others, though in the pursuit the chief of the Carrs was slain by Elliot, one of Buccleuch's servants. Twenty-six years later, Sir Walter Scott of Buccleuch was slain by the Carrs in the streets of Edinburgh. *See Canto I.*
 xxx.

¹ **Dunedin**—Edwin's town—Edinburgh.

The Lady dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
 Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
 Had lock'd the source of softer woe; 85
 And burning pride, and high disdain,
 Forbade the rising tear to flow.
 Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
 Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee —
 "And if I live to be a man, 97
 My father's death revenged shall be!"
 Then fast the mother's tears did seek
 To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X

All loose her negligent attire,
 All loose her golden hair, 95
 Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
 And wept in wild despair,
 But not alone the bitter tear
 Had filial grief supplied;
 For hopeless love, and anxious fear, 100
 Had lent their mingled tide:
 Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
 Dared she to look for sympathy.
 Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
 With Carr in arms had stood, 105
 When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
 All purple, with their blood;
 And well she knew, her mother dread,
 Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
 Would see her on her dying bed. 110

XI

Of noble race the Lady came,
 Her father was a clerk of fame,¹

¹ Clerk of fame—A celebrated scholar.

Of Bethune's line¹ of Picardie:
 He learn'd the art that none may name,²
 In Padua,³ far beyond the sea. 118
 Men said, he changed his mortal frame
 By feat of magic mystery;
 For when, in studious mood, he paced
 St. Andrew's cloister'd hall,⁴
 His form no darkening shadow traced 120
 Upon the sunny wall!

XII

And of his skill, as bards avow,
 He taught that Ladye fair,
 Till to her bidding she could bow
 The viewless forms of air. 126
 And now she sits in secret bower,
 In old Lord David's⁵ western tower,
 And listens to a heavy sound,
 That moans the mossy turrets round.
 Is it the roar of Teviot's tide, 130
 That chafes against the scaur's⁶ red side?
 Is it the wind, that swings the oaks?
 Is it the echo from the rocks?
 What may it be, the heavy sound,
 That moans old Eranksome's turrets round? 135

¹ **Bethune's line**—Lady Janet, the widow of Sir Walter Scott, belonged to the family of the Beatouns or Bethunes, who were of French origin, taking their name from a small town in Artois.

² **None may name**—The art of magic.

³ **Padua**—The University of Padua, in Italy, was a famous seat of learning at this period.

⁴ **Cloister'd hall**—The monastery of St. Andrew's in Fifeshire.

⁵ **Lord David**—Sir David Scott, the grandson of the first possessor, who very much enlarged the castle.

⁶ **Scaur**—"A precipitous bank of earth."—*Scott*.

XIII

At the sullen, moaning sound,
 The ban-dogs¹ bay and howl;
 And, from the turrets round,
 Loud whoops the startled owl.
 In the hall, both squire and knight 140
 Swore that a storm was near,
 And looked forth to view the night;
 But the night was still and clear!

XIV

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
 Ch. cng with the mountain's side, 145
 From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
 From the sullen echo of the rock,
 From the voice of the coming storm,
 The Ladye knew it well!
 It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke, 150
 And he call'd on the Spirit of the Fell.²

XV

RIVER SPIRIT

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"—

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

—"Brother, nay —

On my hills the moonbeams play.

From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,³

¹ Ban-dogs—Dogs fastened to a chain, mastiffs.

² Fell—Hill.

³ Craik-cross, Skelfhill-pen—Two high hills on opposite sides of the Teviot.

By every rill, in every glen,
 Merry elves their morris¹ pacing,
 To ærial minstrelsy,
 Emerald rings² on brown heath tracing,
 Trip it deft and merrily.
 Up, and mark their nimble feet!
 Up, and list their music sweet!"—

155

160

XVI

RIVER SPIRIT

"Tears of an imprison'd maiden
 Mix with my polluted³ stream;
 Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
 Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
 Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
 When shall cease these feudal jars?
 What shall be the maiden's fate?
 Who shall be the maiden's mate?"—

165

XVII

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

"Arthur's slow wain⁴ his course doth roll,
 In utter darkness round the pole;
 The Northern Bear lowers dark and grim;
 Orion's studded belt⁵ is dim;

170

¹ **Morris**—A rustic dance adopted from the Moors of Spain.

² **Emerald rings**—Rings of a brighter green than the surrounding grass, supposed to be made by the feet of the fairies as they danced hand in hand in a circle.

³ **Polluted**—By the blood shed in the feudal war.

⁴ **Arthur's slow wain**—Charles's Wain or Wagon in the constellation of Ursa Major. The more familiar name is the Dipper.

⁵ **Orion's studded belt**—The three bright stars that form the belt of Orion in the constellation of that name.

Twinkling faint, and distant far,
 Shimmers through mist each planet¹ star; 175
 Ill may I read their high decree!
 But no kind influence² deign they shower
 On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
 Till pride be quell'd, and love be free.'—

XVIII

The unearthly voices ceast, 180
 And the heavy sound was still;
 It died on the river's breast,
 It died on the side of the hill.
 But round Lord David's tower
 The sound still floated near; 185
 For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
 And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
 She raised her stately head,
 And her heart throbb'd high with pride:—
 "Your mountains shall bend, 190
 And your streams ascend,
 Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
 Where many a bold retainer lay,
 And, with jocund din, among them all, 195
 Her son pursued his infant play
 A fancied moss-trooper,³ the boy
 The truncheon⁴ of a spear bestrode,
 And round the hall, right merrily,
 In mimic foray rode. 200

¹ Planet—Wandering.

² Influence—Used in an astrological sense.

³ Moss-trooper—Marauders on the Border.

⁴ Truncheon—Handle or shaft.

Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
 Share in his frolic gambols bore,
 Albeit their hearts of rugged mould,
 Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
 For the gray warriors prophesied,
 How the brave boy, in future war,
 Should tame the Unicorn's¹ pride,
 Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

205

XX

The Ladye forgot her purpose high,
 One moment and¹ no more;
 One moment, gazed with a mother's eye,
 As she paused at the arched door:
 Then from amid the armed train,
 She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

210

XXI

A stark² moss-trooping Scott was he,
 As e'er couch'd Border lance by knee;
 Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
 Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross;
 By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
 Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
 In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
 But he would ride them, one by one;
 Alike to him was time or tide,
 December's snow, or July's pride;
 Alike to him was tide or time,
 Moonless midnight, or matin prime³:

215

220

225

¹ **Unicorn**—The arms of the Carrs bore three unicorns' heads, while those of the Scotts of Buccleuch included a six-pointed star between two crescents.

² **Stark**—Strong and sturdy.

³ **Matin prime**—Early morning.

Steady of heart and stout of hand,
 As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
 Five times outlawed had he been,
 By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.¹ 230

XXII

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
 Mount thee on the wightest steed;
 Spare not to spare, nor stint to ride,
 Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
 And in Melrose's holy pile² 235
 Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
 Greet the Father well from me;
 Say that the fated hour³ is come,
 And to-night he shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb: 240
 For this will be St. Michael's⁴ night,
 And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
 And the Cross, of bloody red,⁵
 Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII

"What he gives thee, see thou keep; 245
 Stay not thou for food or sleep:
 Be it scroll, or be it book,
 Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
 If thou readest, thou art lorn⁶!
 Better had'st thou ne'er been born."— 250

¹ **King, Queen**—At this time Edward III ruled in England and Mary Stuart in Scotland.

² **Holy pile**—The monastery of Melrose. **Aisle** is a wing of the church.

³ **Fated hour**—Canto II—xv.

⁴ **St. Michael's night**—Michaelmas, September 29.

⁵ **Cross of bloody red**—Canto II—xl.

⁶ **Lorn**—Lost.

XXIV

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
 Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
 Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan¹ say,
 "Again will I be here:
 And safer by none may thy errand be done, 255
 Than, noble dame, by me;
 Letter nor line know I never a one,
 Were 't my neck-verse² at Hairibee."³

XXV

Soon in his saddle sate he fast, 260
 And soon the deep descent he past,
 Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,⁴
 And soon the Teviot side he won.
 Eastward the wooded path he rode,
 Green hazels o'er his basnet⁴ nod;
 He pass'd the Peel⁵ of Goldiland, 265
 And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
 Dimly he view'd the Moat-hill's⁶ mound,
 Where Druid shades⁷ still flitted round;

¹ **Gan**—Did.

² **Neck-verse**—Hairibee was the place where Border marauders were executed at Carlisle. If the accused could read he was given "benefit of clergy" and his case was taken from the hands of the civil powers, a fine being the usual punishment. The test was usually the reading of the 51st *Psalm*, which was called the "neck-verse," because if the prisoner could read it he saved his neck.

³ **Barbican**—The defence of the outer gate of a feudal castle.

⁴ **Basnet**—A helmet of light steel shaped like a basin.

⁵ **Peel**—A border tower.

⁶ **Moat-hill**—"A round artificial mound near Hawick, which was probably anciently used as a place for assembling a national council of the adjacent tribes."—*Scott*.

⁷ **Druid shades**—The ghosts of the Druids.

In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

270

XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark;—
“Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark.”—
“For Branksome, ho!” the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.

275

He turn'd him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gain'd the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.¹

280

XXVII

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags² the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill³ hew'd his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlaw'd limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy:
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,

285

290

¹ **Roman way**—“An ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire.”—*Scott*.

² **Minto-crags**—A mass of rocks about two miles from Hazeldean.

³ **Barnhill**—An outlaw who made Minto-crags his place of refuge.

The terrors of the robber's horn;
 Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
 The warbling Doric reed¹ shall hear,
 When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
 Ambition is no cure for love!

295

XXVIII

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
 To ancient Riddel's fair domain,²
 Where Aill,³ from mountains freed,
 Down from the lakes did raving come;
 Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
 Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
 In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
 Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

300

305

XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
 And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
 Above the foaming tide, I ween,⁴
 Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
 For he was barded⁵ from counter to tail,
 And the rider was arm'd complete in mail;
 Never heavier man and horse
 Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.

310

¹ **Doric reed**—The reference is to Sir Gilbert Elliot, father of the first Lord Minto, who wrote a pastoral poem entitled *Amynta*, in which he confesses that ambition cannot cure love. The shepherds made their pipes from reeds, and Theocritus, the founder of pastoral poetry, used a modification of the Doric dialect of the Greek tongue in his poems.

² **Fair domain**—The Riddels had been in possession of this manor for more than a thousand years.

³ **Aill**—A small tributary of the Teviot.

⁴ **Ween**—Think, imagine.

⁵ **Barded**—Armed with defensive armour.

The warrior's very plume, I say, 315
 Was daggled by the dashing spray;
 Yet, through good heart and Our Ladye's¹ grace,
 At length he gain'd the landing-place.

XXX

Now Bowden Moor the march-man² won, 320
 And sternly shook his plumed head,
 As glanced his eye o'er Halidon³;
 For on his soul the slaughter red
 Of that unhallow'd morn arose
 When first the Scott and Carr were foes; 325
 When royal James beheld the fray,
 Prize to the victor⁴ of the day;
 When Home and Douglas, in the van,
 Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
 Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear 330
 Reek'd on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
 And soon the hated heath was past;
 And far beneath, in lustre wan,
 Old Melros'⁵ rose, and fair Tweed ran: 335
 Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
 Seem'd dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.

¹ **Our Ladye**—The Virgin Mary.

² **March-man**—Man of the Marches or Borders.

³ **Halidon**—It was on Halidon Hill that the fight referred to in note to line 58 took place.

⁴ **Prize to the victor**—The two factions were fighting for the possession of the king's person.

⁵ **Old Melros'**—"The ancient and beautiful monastery of Melrose was founded by King David 1. Its ruins afford the finest specimen of Gothic architecture and Gothic sculpture which Scotland can boast."—*Scott*.

When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew¹ rung,
 Now midnight lauds² were in Melrose sung.
 The sound, upon the fitful gale,
 In solemn wise did rise and fail, 340
 Like that wild harp,³ whose magic tone
 Is waken'd by the winds alone.
 But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
 He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
 And sought the convent's lonely wall. 345

HERE paused the harp; and with its swell
 The Master's fire and courage fell:
 Dejectedly, and low, he bow'd,
 And, gazing timid on the crowd,
 He seem'd to seek, in every eye, 350
 If they approved his minstrelsy;
 And, diffident of present praise,
 Somewhat he spoke of former days,
 And how old age, and wand'ring long,
 Had done his hand and harp some wrong. 355
 The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
 And every gentle lady there,
 Each after each, in due degree,
 Gave praises to his melody;
 His hand was true, his voice was clear, 360
 And much they long'd the rest to hear.
 Encouraged thus, the Aged Man,
 After meet rest, again began.

¹ **Curfew**—"The name is still given to the eight o'clock bell rung every evening in Scotch towns."—*Scott*.

² **Lauds**—The midnight service of the Catholic Church.

³ **Wild harp**—The Æolian harp, so called from Æolus, the god of the winds.

CANTO SECOND

I

IF thou would'st view fair Melrose aright,
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild, but to flout, the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night, 5
And each shafted oriel¹ glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruin'd central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seem framed of ebon and ivory; 10
When silver edges the imagery,²
And the scrolls³ that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave.
Then go — but go alone the while — 15
Then view St. David's⁴ ruin'd pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear,
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little reck'd he of the scene so fair: 20

¹ **Shafted oriel**—"A projecting window, in shape usually half a six-sided figure resting on a bracket. The lights of the window were divided by *shafts* or mullions."

² **Imagery**—Images that adorned the walls.

³ **Scrolls**—Texts of Scripture placed under the images.

⁴ **St. David**—David I, the founder of Melrose Abbey.

With dagger's hilt, on the wicket¹ strong,
 He struck full loud, and struck full long.
 The porter hurried to the gate —
 "Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"
 "From Branksome I!" the Warrior cried;
 And straight the wicket open'd wide;
 For Branksome's Chiefs had in battle stood,
 To fence² the rights of fair Melrose;
 And lands and livings, many a rood,
 Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
 The porter bent his humble head;
 With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
 And noiseless step, the path he trod;
 The arched cloisters, far and wide,
 Rang to the Warrior's clanking stride;
 Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
 He enter'd the cell of the ancient priest,
 And lifted his barred aventayle,³
 To hail the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.

IV

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me;
 Says, that the fated hour is come,
 And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
 To win the treasure of the tomb." —
 From sackcloth couch the Monk arose,
 With toil his stiffen'd limbs he rear'd;
 A hundred years had flung their snows
 On his thin locks and floating beard.

¹ **Wicket**—A small gate within a larger one.

² **Fence**—Defend.

³ **Aventayle**—The visor or movable front of the helmet.

V

And strangely on the Knight look'd he,
 And his blue eyes gleam'd wild and wide; 50
 "And, dar'st thou, Warrior! seek to see
 What heaven and hell alike would hide?
 My breast, in belt of iron pent,¹
 With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn;
 For threescore years, in penance spent, 55
 My knees those flinty stones have worn;
 Yet all too little to atone
 For knowing what should ne'er be known.
 Would'st thou thy every future year
 In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,² 60
 Yet wait thy latter end with fear —
 Then, daring Warrior, follow me!"—

VI

"Penance, Father, will I none;
 Prayer know I hardly one;
 For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry, 65
 Save to patter³ an Ave Mary,⁴
 When I ride on a Border foray:
 Other prayer can⁵ I none;
 So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."—

VII

Again on the Knight look'd the Churchman old, 70
 And again he sighed heavily;

¹ **Pent**—Enclosed or confined.

² **Drie**—Suffer.

³ **Patter**—Mumble.

⁴ **Ave Mary**—Hail Mary; the salutation of the angel to the Virgin Mary. *Luke* I, 28. It formed the first words of a devotional prayer.

⁵ **Can**—Know.

For he had himself been a warrior bold,
 And fought in Spain and Italy.
 And he thought on the days that were long since by,
 When his limbs were strong, and his courage was high:—
 Now, slow and faint, he led the way, 76
 Where, cloister'd ¹ round, the garden lay;
 The pillar'd arches were over their head,
 And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII

Spreading herbs, and flowerets bright, 80
 Glisten'd with the dew of night;
 Nor herb, nor floweret, glisten'd there,
 But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
 The Monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
 Then into the night he looked forth; 85
 And red and bright the streamers ² light
 Were dancing in the glowing north.
 So had he seen, in fair Castile,
 'The youth in glittering squadrons start;
 Sudden the flying jennet ³ wheel, 90
 And hurl the unexpected dart.
 He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
 That spirits were riding the northern light.

IX

By a steel-clench'd postern door,⁴ 95
 They enter'd now the chancel tall;

¹ *Cloister'd*—The cloisters or walks surrounding the garden of a monastery were frequently used as places of burial.

² *Streamers*—The Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights.

³ *Jennet*—A small Spanish horse.

⁴ *Postern door*—A back door, but applied to any small door.

The darken'd roof rose high aloof
 On pillars lofty and light and small:
 The key-stone, that lock'd each ribbed¹ aisle,
 Was a fleur-de-lys,² or a quatre-feuille;
 The corbells³ were carved grotesque and grim; 100
 And the pillars, with cluster'd shafts so trim,
 With base and with capital⁴ flourish'd⁵ around,
 Seem'd bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X

Full many a scutcheon and banner⁶ riven 105
 Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven
 Around the screened altar's pale⁷;
 And there the dying⁸ lamps did burn,
 Before thy low and lonely urn,
 O gallant Chief of Otterburne⁹!
 And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale¹⁰! 110

¹ **Ribbed**—The supports of an arched roof are called *ribs*.

² **Fleur-de-lys**—An architectural ornament in the shape of a lily. A *quatre-feuille* contains four leaves in the form of a rounded cross.

³ **Corbells**—"The projections from which the arches spring, usually cut in a fantastic face or mask."—*Scott*.

⁴ **Capital**—The top of the pillar.

⁵ **Flourish'd**—Ornamented with carvings of flowers.

⁶ **Scutcheon and banner**—It was the custom to hang the shields and banners of dead knights on the walls of the churches.

⁷ **Pale**—The railing separating the altar from the chancel.

⁸ **Dying**—Dimly burning.

⁹ **Otterburne**—The desperate battle of Otterburne between the Scots under James, Earl of Douglas, and the English under Earl Percy, was fought on the 15th of August, 1388. The Scots were victorious but Douglas was slain. He was buried in Melrose Abbey.

¹⁰ **Liddesdale**—William Douglas of Liddesdale, who, during the reign of David II, treacherously murdered his friend Sir Alexander Ramsay. He was soon after killed by his godson, William, Earl of Douglas.

O fading honours of the dead!
O high ambition, lowly laid!

XI

The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined; 115
Thou would'st have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the ozier wand,
In many a freakish knot, had twined;
Then framed a spell, when the work was done,
And changed the willow-wreaths to stone. 120
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Shew'd many a prophet, and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his Cross of Red
Triumphant Michael¹ brandished, 125
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moon-beam kiss'd the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII

They sate them down on a marble stone,
A Scottish monarch² slept below; 130
Thus spoke the Monk, in solemn tone:—
"I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim³ countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God⁴:

¹ **Michael**—The window contained in stained glass a representation of the Archangel Michael triumphing over the apostate angel, Satan. In his hand Michael held his cross-shaped sword which in the window was coloured red.

² **Scottish monarch**—Alexander II.

³ **Paynim**—Heathen.

⁴ **Cross of God**—With the army of the Crusaders, who fought under the emblem of the Cross.

Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear, 135
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII

“In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott¹;
A wizard of such dreaded fame
That when, in Salamanca’s cave,² 140
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame³!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, Warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon hills⁴ in three, 145
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:
But to speak them were a deadly sin;
And for having but thought them my heart within,
A treble penance must be done.

XIV

“When Michael lay on his dying bed, 150
His conscience was awakened:

¹ **Michael Scott**—Sir Michael Scott, a man of much learning and with a reputation for magical power, lived during the thirteenth century. The poet, however, has transferred him to a later era.

² **Salamanca’s cave**—Magic was taught at this time at Salamanca in Spain. The cave in which the school was held was walled up later by Queen Isabella, the wife of Ferdinand.

³ **Notre Dame**—The celebrated Cathedral of Our Lady (the Virgin Mary) in Paris.

⁴ **Eildon hills**—On one occasion Michael Scott was forced to find continuous employment for a spirit. He commanded him to perform various labours, which the spirit performed easily. Among these was to build a dam across the Tweed and to split the single cone of Eildon hill into three; this was done in two nights. Finally the spirit was kept constantly at work making ropes out of sea-sand. The Eildon hills lie to the south of Melrose.

He bethought him of his sinful deed,
 And he gave me a sign to come with speed:
 I was in Spain when the morning rose,
 But I stood by his bed ere evening close. 155
 The words may not again be said,
 That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;
 They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
 And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,¹ 160
 That never mortal might therein look;
 And never to tell where it was hid,
 Save at his Chief of Branksome's need:
 And when that need was past and o'er,
 Again the volume to restore. 165
 I buried him on St. Michael's night,
 When the bell toll'd one, and the moon was bright,
 And I dug his chamber among the dead,
 When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
 That his patron's² cross might over him wave, 170
 And scare the fiends from the Wizard's grave.

XVI

"It was a night of woe and dread,
 When Michael in the tomb I laid!
 Strange sounds along the chancel pass'd,
 The banners waved without a blast"— 175
 — Still spoke the Monk, when the bell toll'd one!—
 I tell you, that a braver man
 Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
 Against a foe ne'er spurr'd a steed;

¹ **Mighty Book**—The book containing his magic spells.

² **Patron**—Protecting saint.

Yet somewhat was he chill'd with dread, 180
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII

"Lo, Warrior! now, the Cross of Red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead;
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night: 185
That lamp¹ shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."—
Slow moved the Monk to the broad flag-stone,
Which the bloody Cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook; 190
An iron bar the Warrior took;
And the Monk made a sign with his wither'd hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII

With beating heart to the task he went;
His sinewy frame o'er the grave-stone bent; 195
With bar of iron heaved amain,
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows, like rain.
It was by dint of passing strength,
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there to see 200
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Stream'd upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright:
It shone like heaven's own blessed light, 205
And, issuing from the tomb,

¹ **Lamp**—"Authors who treat of natural magic talk much of eternal lamps pretended to have been found burning in ancient sepulchres,"—*Scott*.

Show'd the Monk's cowl and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-brow'd Warrior's mail,
And kiss'd his waving plume.

XIX

Before their eyes the Wizard lay, 210
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver roll'd,
He seem'd some seventy winters old;
A palmer's amice¹ wrapp'd him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric² bound, 215
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might;
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee:
High and majestic was his look, 220
At which the fellest³ fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

XX

Often had William of Deloraine 225
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe;
Yet now remorse and awe he own'd;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw. 230
Bewilder'd and unnerved he stood,

¹ **Amice**—A long flowing cloak. Palmers were so called because they wore a palm-branch in memory of having been in the Holy Land.

² **Baldric**—A leathern belt worn across the shoulder and under the arm.

³ **Fellest**—Most cruel.

And the priest pray'd fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see,
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

235

XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer had pray'd,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:—
“Now speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, Warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those, thou may'st not look upon,
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!”—
Then Deloraine, in terror, took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasp'd, and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frown'd;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the Warrior's sight.

240

245

XXII

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb,
The night return'd in double gloom;
For the moon had gone down, and the stars were few,
And, as the Knight and Priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they pass'd,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man;
As if the fiends kept holiday,
Because these spells were brought to day.

251

255

260

I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
"And when we are on death-bed laid, 265
O may our dear Ladye, and sweet St. John,
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!"—
The Monk return'd him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped;
When the convent met at the noontide bell — 270
The Monk of St. Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasp'd fast, as if still he pray'd.

XXIV

The Knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find: 275
He was glad when he pass'd the tombstones gray,
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the mystic Book, to his bosom prest,
Felt like a load upon his breast;
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined, 280
Shook, like the aspen leaves in wind.
Full fain¹ was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot gray;
He joy'd to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary, as well as he might. 285

XXV

The sun had brighten'd Cheviot gray,
The sun had brighten'd the Carter's side²;

¹ Fain—Glad.

² Carter's side—One of the Cheviot hills.

And soon beneath the rising day
 Smiled Branksome Towers and Teviot's tide.
 The wild birds told their warbling tale, 290
 And waken'd every flower that blows;
 And peeped forth the violet pale,
 And spread her breast the mountain rose.
 And lovelier than the rose so red,
 Yet paler than the violet pale, 295
 She early left her sleepless bed,
 The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
 And don her kirtle so hastilie;
 And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
 Why tremble her slender fingers to tie; 301
 Why does she stop, and look often around,
 As she glides down the seeret stair;
 And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
 As he rouses him up from his lair; 303
 And, though she passes the postern alone,
 Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII

The ladye steps in doubt and dread,
 Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
 The ladye caresses the rough blood-hound, 310
 Lest his voice should waken the castle round;
 The watchman's bugle is not blown,
 For he was her foster-father's son;
 And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of
 light,
 To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight. 315

XXVIII

The knight and ladye fair are met,
 And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
 A fairer pair were never seen
 To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
 He was stately, and young, and tall; 320
 Dreaded in battle, and loved in hall:
 And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
 Lent to her cheek a livelier red;
 When the half sigh her swelling breast
 Against the silken riband prest; 325
 When her blue eyes their secret told,
 Though shaded by her locks of gold —
 Where would you find the peerless fair,
 With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX

And now, fair dames, methinks I see 330
 You listen to my minstrelsy;
 Your waving locks ye backward throw,
 And sidelong bend your necks of snow;—
 Ye ween to hear a melting tale,
 Of two true lovers in a dale; 335
 And how the Knight, with tender fire,
 To paint his faithful passion strove;
 Swore, he might at her feet expire,
 But never, never cease to love;
 And how she blush'd, and how she sigh'd, 340
 And, half consenting, half denied,
 And said that she would die a maid;—
 Yet, might the bloody feud be stay'd,
 Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
 Margaret of Branksome's choice should be. 345

XXX

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
 My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
 Its lightness would my age reprove:
 My hairs are gray, my limbs are old,
 My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
 I may not, must not, sing of love.

350

XXXI

Beneath an oak, moss'd o'er by eld,
 The Baron's Dwarf ¹ his courser held,
 And held his crested helm and spear:
 That Dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
 If the tales were true that of him ran
 Through all the Border, far and near.
 'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
 Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
 He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!" ²
 And, like tennis-ball by racquet toss'd,
 A leap of thirty feet and three
 Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
 Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
 And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee.
 Lord Cranstoun was some whit dismay'd;
 'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
 To rid him of his company;
 But where he rode one mile, the Dwarf ran four,
 And the Dwarf was first at the castle door.

355

360

365

370

¹ **Baron's Dwarf**—The idea of the dwarf is taken from the story of a mysterious being named Gilpin Horner, who suddenly appeared and lived for some time with a farmer on the Border. The main features of the story are reproduced in the narrative. The story of this dwarf was firmly believed among the dwellers on the Border.

² **Lost**—It was the dwarf who was lost. He had run away from his master Michael Scott.

XXXII

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
 This elvish Dwarf with the Baron stay'd;
 Little he ate, and less he spoke,
 Nor mingled with the menial flock¹:
 And oft apart his arms he toss'd,
 And often mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,²
 But well Lord Cranstoun served he:
 And he of his service was full fain;
 For once he had been ta'en or slain,
 An it had not been for his ministry.³
 All between Home and Hermitage,⁴
 Talk'd of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

275

280

XXXIII

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
 And took with him this elvish Page,
 To Mary's Chapel⁵ of the Lowes:
 For there, beside our Lady's lake,
 An offering he had sworn to make,
 And he would pay his vows.
 But the Ladye of Branksome gather'd a band⁶
 Of the best that would ride at her command:
 The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
 Wat of Harden⁷ came thither amain,

285

290

¹ **Menial flock**—The lower household servants.

² **Litherlie**—Mischievous.

³ **Ministry**—Assistance or service.

⁴ **Home and Hermitage**—All along the Border country. These two places were at opposite corners of the district.

⁵ **Mary's Chapel**—A chapel on the east side of the Loch of the Lowes, which empties into St. Mary's Lake, an expansion of the Yarrow.

⁶ **A band**—This expedition took place on the 25th of June, 1557.

⁷ **Wat of Harden**—Sir Walter Scott of Harden, an ancestor of the poet. See note to Canto IV, Line 120.

And thither came John of Thirlestane,¹

And thither came William of Deloraine;

395

They were three hundred spears and three.

Through Douglas-burn,² up Yarrow stream,

Their horses prance, their lances gleam.

They came to St. Mary's lake ere day;

But the chapel was void, and the Baron away.

400

They burn'd the chapel for very rage,

And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-Page.

XXXIV

And now, in Branksome's good green wood,

As under the aged oak he stood,

The Baron's courser pricks his ears,

405

As if a distant noise he hears.

The Dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,

And signs to the lovers to part and fly;

No time was then to vow or sigh.

Fair Margaret, through the hazel grove,

410

Flew like the startled cushat-dove³:

The Dwarf the stirrup held and rein;

Vaulted the Knight on his steed amain,

And, pondering deep that morning's scene,

Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

415

WHILE thus he pour'd the lengthen'd tale,

The Minstrel's voice began to fail:

Full slyly smiled the observant page,

And gave the wither'd hand of age

A goblet, crown'd with mighty wine,

420

¹ John of Thirlestane—Sir John Scott of Thirlestane.
See note to Canto IV, Line 106.

² Douglas-burn—A small stream flowing into the Yarrow.

³ Cushat-dove—Wood pigeon.

The blood of Velez'¹ scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop fill'd his eye,
Pray'd God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheer'd a son of song. 428
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaff'd;
And he, embolden'd by the draught,
Look'd gaily back to them, and laugh'd. 430
The cordial nectar² of the bowl
Swell'd his old veins, and cheer'd his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

¹ **Blood of Velez**—Wine from Velez Malaga, a town in Spain.

² **Nectar**—According to the Greeks, the drink of the gods.

CANTO THIRD

I

AND said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor wither'd heart was dead,
And that I might not sing of love?—
How could I to the dearest theme,
That ever warm'd a minstrel's dream,
So foul, so false a recreant prove!
How could I name Love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

8

10

II

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

15

III

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green. 20
But the page shouted wild and shrill —
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill

A stately knight came pricking on.
 That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
 Was dark with sweat, and splashed with clay;
 His armour red with many a stain:
 He seem'd in such a weary plight,
 As if he had ridden the livelong night;
 For it was William of Deloraine.

25

30

IV

But no whit weary did he seem,
 When, dancing in the sunny beam,
 He mark'd the crane¹ on the Baron's crest.
 For his ready spear was in his rest.²
 Few were the words, and stern and high,
 That mark'd the foemen's feudal hate;
 For question fierce, and proud reply,
 Gave signal soon of dire debate.
 Their very coursers seem'd to know
 That each was other's mortal foe,
 And snorted fire, when wheel'd around,
 To give each foe his vantage-ground.

35

40

V

In rapid round the Baron bent;
 He sigh'd a sigh, and pray'd a prayer;
 The prayer was to his patron saint,
 The sigh was to his ladye fair.
 Stout Deloraine nor sigh'd, nor pray'd,
 Nor saint, nor ladye, call'd to aid;

45

¹ *Crane*—"The crest of the Cranstouns, in allusion to their name, is a crane dormant, holding a stone in his foot with an emphatic Border motto, 'Thou shalt want ere I want.'"—*Scott*.

² *In his rest*—The projection on the side of the armour used to rest the butt of the spear when placed in position.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

41

But he stoop'd his head, and couch'd his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career. 50
The meeting of these champions proud
Seem'd like the bursting thunder-cloud.

VI

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
The stately Baron backwards bent;
Bent backwards to his horse's tail, 55
And his plumes went scattering on the gale;
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail; 60
Through shield, and jack,¹ and acton, past,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.—
Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke, 65
Hurl'd on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward pass'd his course;
Nor knew — so giddy roll'd his brain —
His foe lay stretch'd upon the plain.

VII

But when he rein'd his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay, 75
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.

¹ Jack—A sleeveless leathern coat worn over the armour.
The Acton was a quilted tunic worn under the body armour.

"This shalt thou do without delay:
No longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift¹ will be at my dying day."

80

VIII

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
The Goblin-Page behind abode;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corslet off he took,
The Dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marvell'd a knight of pride,
Like a book-bosom'd priest should ride:
He thought not to search or stanch the wound
Until the secret he had found.

85

90

IX

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp:
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristen'd hand,²
Till he smear'd the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read.
It had much of glamour³ might,

95

100

¹ **Short shrift**—A very short time will be allowed for confession and absolution before death.

² **Unchristen'd hand**—Christening was supposed to afford protection against the influence of evil spirits.

³ **Glamour**—"The magic power of imposing on the eyesight of the spectators so that the appearance of an object shall be totally different from the reality."—*Scott*.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

43

Could make a ladye seem a knight;
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall;
A nut-shell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling¹ seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth —
All was delusion, nought was truth.

105

110

X

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretch'd him on the plain,
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismay'd,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he mutter'd, and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!" —
No more the Elfin Page durst try
Into the wondrous Book to pry;
The clasps, though smear'd with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.
He hid it underneath his cloak. —
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot I thrive;
It was not given by man alive.

115

120

125

XI

Unwillingly himself he address'd,
To do his master's high behest:
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse;
He led him into Branksome-Hall,
Before the beards of the warders all;
And each did after swear and say,
¹ Sheeling — A shepherd's hut.

130

There only pass'd a wain of hay.
 He took him to Lord David's tower, 135
 Even to the Lady's secret bower;
 And, but that stronger spells were spread,
 And the door might not be opened,
 He had laid him on her very bed.
 Whate'er he did of gramarye,¹ 140
 Was always done maliciously;
 He flung the warrior on the ground,
 And the blood well'd freshly from the wound.

XII

As he repas'd the outer court,
 He spied the fair young child at sport: 145
 He thought to train² him to the wood;
 For, at a word, be it understood,
 He was always for ill, and never for good.
 Seem'd to the boy, some comrade gay
 Led him forth to the woods to play; 150
 On the drawbridge the warders stout
 Saw a terrier and lurcher³ passing out.

XIII

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
 Until they came to a woodland brook;
 The running stream⁴ dissolved the spell, 155
 And his own elvish shape he took.
 Could he have had his pleasure vilde,⁵
 He had crippled the joints of the noble child;
 Or, with his fingers long and lean,

¹ **Gramarye**—Magic.

² **Train**—Entice.

³ **Lurcher**—A hunting dog.

⁴ **Running stream**—No spell, however strong, can maintain its power across running water.

⁵ **Vilde**—Vile.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

45

Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowl'd on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding cross'd,
And laugh'd, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"—

100

165

XIV

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frighten'd as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower,
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He fear'd to see that grisly face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journey'd on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountain round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

170

175

180

XV

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouth'd bark
Comes nigher still, and nigher:
Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
His tawny muzzle track'd the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wilder'd¹ child saw he,
¹ Wilder'd—Lost in the wilds.

185

He flew at him right furiouslie.
 I ween you would have seen with joy 190
 The bearing of the gallant boy,
 When, worthy of his noble sire,
 His wet cheek glow'd 'twixt fear and ire
 He faced the blood-hound manfully,
 And held his little bat on high; 195
 So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
 At cautious distance hoarsely bay'd,
 But still in act to spring;
 When dash'd an archer through the glade,
 And when he saw the hound was stay'd, 200
 He drew his tough bow-string;
 But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
 Ho! shoot not, Edward — 'Tis a boy!"

XVI

The speaker issued from the wood,
 And check'd his fellow's surly mood, 205
 And quell'd the ban-dog's ire:
 He was an English yeoman good,
 And born in Lancashire.
 Well could he hit a fallow deer
 Five hundred feet him fro; 210
 With hand more true, and eye more clear,
 No archer bended bow.
 His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
 Set off his sun-burnt face:
 Old England's sign, St. George's cross,¹ 215
 His barret-cap² did grace;
 His bugle-horn hung by his side,
 All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;

¹ *St. George's cross*—St. George is the patron saint of England.

² *Barret-cap*—A small flat cap.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

47

And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

230

XVII

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reach'd scanty to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbish'd sheaf bore he;
His buckler scarce in breadth a span,
No larger fence¹ had he;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee:
His slacken'd bow was in his hand,
And the leash, that was his blood-hound's band.²³⁰

225

XVIII

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the Red-Cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by St. George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face, and courage free,
Show he is come of high degree."—

235

XIX

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron,² thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,

240

¹ **Fence**—Shield or protection.

² **Southron**—Southerner; an Englishman.

And William of Deloraine, good at need, 244
 And every Scott, from Esk to Tweed;
 And, if thou dost not let me go,
 Despite thy arrows, and thy bow,
 I'll have thee hang'd to feed the crow!"—

XX

"Gramercy,¹ for thy good will, fair boy! 250
 My mind was never set so high;
 But if thou art chief of such a clan,
 And art the son of such a man,
 And ever comest to thy command,
 Our wardens² had need to keep good order; 255
 My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
 Thou'lt make them work upon the Border.
 Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
 For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
 I think our work is well begun, 260
 When we have taken thy father's son."

XXI

Although the child was led away,
 In Branksome still he seem'd to stay,
 For so the Dwarf his part did play;
 And, in the shape of that young boy, 265
 He wrought the castle much annoy.
 The comrades of the young Buccleuch
 He pinch'd, and beat, and overthrew;
 Nay, some of them he wellnigh slew.
 He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire, 270
 And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,

¹ Gramercy—Many thanks.

² Wardens—Guardians of the Border.

He lighted the match of his bandelier,¹
 And wofully scorch'd the hackbuteer.²
 It may be hardly thought or said,
 The mischief that the urchin made,
 Till many of the castle guess'd,
 That the young Baron was possess'd³!

275

XXII

Well I ween the charm he held
 The noble Ladye had soon dispell'd;
 But she was deeply busied then
 To tend the wounded Deloraine.
 Much she wonder'd to find him lie,
 On the stone threshold stretch'd along;
 She thought some spirit of the sky
 Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong;
 Because, despite her precept dread,
 Perchance he in the Book had read;
 But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
 And it was earthly steel and wood.

280

288

XXIII

She drew the splinter from the wound,
 And with a charm she stanch'd the blood;
 She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
 No longer by his couch she stood;
 But she has ta'en the broken lance,
 And wash'd it from the clotted gore,
 And salved the splinter 'o'er and o'er.

290

295

¹ **Bandelier**—A belt worn across the breast used for carrying ammunition.

² **Hackbuteer**—Musketeer; a soldier armed with a hackbut, a kind of gun.

³ **Possess'd**—Under the control of an evil spirit.

⁴ **Salved the splinter**—This was known as the *sympathetic cure*, and consisted in applying the healing balm to the weapon with which the wound was made.

William of Deloraine, in trance,
 Whene'er she turn'd it round and round,
 Twisted as if she gall'd his wound.
 Then to her maidens she did say,
 That he should be whole man and sound,
 Within the course of a night and day.
 Full long she toil'd; for she did rue
 Mishap to friend so stout and true.

300

XXIV

So pass'd the day — the evening fell,
 'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
 The air was mild, the wind was calm,
 The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
 E'en the rude watchman on the tower,
 Enjoy'd and bless'd the lovely hour.
 Far more fair Margaret loved and bless'd
 The hour of silence and of rest.
 On the high turret sitting lone,
 She waked at times the lute's soft tone;
 Touch'd a wild note, and all between
 Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
 Her golden hair stream'd free from band,
 Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
 Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
 For lovers love the westerr star.

308

310

318

320

XXV

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,¹
 That rises slowly to her ken,²
 And, spreading broad its wavering light,
 Shakes its loose tresses on the night?

¹ **Penchryst Pen**—A hill to the south of Branksome Castle.

² **Ken**—Sight.

Is yon red glare the western star?—
 O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
 Scarce could she draw her tighten'd breath,
 For well she knew the fire of death!

328

XXVI

The Warder view'd it blazing strong,
 And blew his war-note loud and long,
 Till, at the high and haughty sound,
 Rock, wood, and river, rang around.
 The blast alarm'd the festal hall,
 And startled forth the warriors all;
 Far downward in the castle-yard,
 Full many a torch and cresset¹ glared;
 And helms and plumes, confusedly toss'd,
 Were in the blaze half-seen, half-lost;
 And spears in wild disorder shook,
 Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

330

335

340

XXVII

The Seneschal,² whose silver hair
 Was redden'd by the torches' glare,
 Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
 And issued forth his mandates loud:—
 "On Penchryst glows a bale of fire,
 And three are kindling on Priestthar³ hswire;³
 Ride out, ride out,
 The foe to scout!
 Mount, mount for Branksome, every man!
 Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
 That ever are true and stout.—

345

350

¹ Cresset—A lamp shaped like a cup.

² Seneschal—The steward of the castle.

³ Priesttharhswire—A hill to the south-east of Branksome.

Ye need not send to Liddesdale;
 For, when they see the blazing bale,
 Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
 Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life!
 And warn the Warder of the strife.—
 Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
 Our kin, and clan, and friends, to raise.”

266

XXVIII

Fair Margaret, from the turret head,
 Heard, far below, the coursers' tread,
 While loud the harness¹ rang,
 As to their seats, with clamour dread,
 The ready horsemen sprang:
 And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
 And leaders' voices, mingled notes,
 And out! and out!
 In hasty rout,
 The horsemen gallop'd forth;
 Dispersing to the south to scout,
 And east, and west, and north,
 To view their coming enemies,
 And warn their vassals and allies.

266

266

270

XXIX

The ready page, with hurried hand,
 Awaked the need-fire's² slumbering brand,
 And ruddy blush'd the heaven:
 For a sheet of flame, from the turret high,
 Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
 All flaring and uneven;
 And soon a score of fires, I ween,
 From height, and hill, and cliff, were seen;

270

280

¹ Harness—Armour.² Need-fire—Beacon.

Each with warlike tidings fraught;
 Each from each the signal caught;
 Each after each they glanced to sight,
 As stars arise upon the night.
 They gleam'd on many a dusky tarn,¹
 Haunted by the lonely earn;²
 On many a cairn's ³ gray pyramid,
 Where urns ⁴ of mighty chiefs lie hid;
 Till high Dunedin the blazes saw,
 From Soltra ⁵ and Dumpender Law;
 And Lothian heard the Regent's ⁶ order,
 That all should bowne ⁷ them for the Border.

XXX

The lvelong night in Branksome rang
 The ceaseless sound of steel;
 The castle-bell, with backward clang,⁸
 Sent forth the iarum peal;
 Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
 Where massy stone and iron bar
 Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
 To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
 Was frequent heard the changing guard,
 And watch-word from the sleepless ward;

¹ **Tarn**—Mountain lake. ² **Earn**—Scottish eagle.

³ **Cairn**—Piles of loose stones that crown the summits of most of the southern Scottish hills.

⁴ **Urn**s—Tombs.

⁵ **Soltra**—Soltra and **Dumpender Law** are hills in the north-western part of Berwickshire.

⁶ **The regent**—Mary of Guise, who was then ruling in the stead of her daughter Mary, who was in France.

⁷ **Bowne**—Make ready.

⁸ **Backward clang**—In times of danger it was customary to ring a chime of bells backward, that is to begin with the bell of the deepest note; but this can hardly apply to a single bell.

While, wearied by the endless din,
Blood-hound and ban-dog yell'd within.

XXXI

The noble Dame, amid the broil, 405
Shared the gray Seneschal's high toil
And spoke of danger with a smile;
Cheer'd the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought, 410
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said, that there were thousands ten;
And others ween'd that it was nought
But Leven Clans, or Tynedale men. 415
Who came to gather in black-mail;¹
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly² back agen.
So pass'd the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day. 420

CEASED the high sound — the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend — no daughter dear, 425
His wandering toil to share and cheer;
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had — but he was dead!"—

¹ **Black-mail**—Money extorted on a promise of refraining from doing damage.

² **Lightly**—Easily.

Upon the harp he stoop'd his head,
And busied himself the strings withal,
To hide the tear that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH

I

SWEET Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willow'd shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill, 5
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since Time was born,
Since first they roll'd upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor started at the bugle-horn. 10

II

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime
Its earliest course was doom'd to know; 15
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stain'd with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebb'd with me,
It still reflects to Memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy,
Fell by the side of great Dundee.¹ 20
Why, when the volleying musket play'd
Against the bloody Highland blade,

¹ **Dundee**—John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, who was killed at the battle of Killiecrankie in 1689. He died at the moment that the Highlanders had gained the victory by means of a headlong charge down the mountain-side.

Why was not I beside him laid!—
Enough — he died the death of fame;
Enough — he died with conquering Græme.

25

III

Now over Border, dale and fell,
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh, and mountain cell,
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frighten'd flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropp'd the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers, the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke gan spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Show'd southern ravage was begun.

30

25

IV

Now loud the heedful gate-ward¹ cried —
“Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,²
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers³ knock
At his lone gate, and prove the lock;
It was but last St. Barnabright⁴
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,
In vain he never twang'd the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower,

40

45

¹ Gate-ward—Gate-keeper.

² Liddel—A river flowing into the river Esk.

³ Snatchers—Cattle stealers.

⁴ St. Barnabright—St. Barnabas Day, June 11th.

That drove him from his Liddel tower;
And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden-raid.¹"

50

V

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Enter'd the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,²
Could bound like any Billhope³ stag.
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf was all their train;
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-brow'd,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laugh'd to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely form'd, and lean withal;
A batter'd morion⁴ on his brow;
A leather jack, as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A Border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells⁵ in length,
Seem'd newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

55

60

65

70

VI

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe:—

¹ **Warden-raid**—An inroad commanded by the Wardens in person.

² **Hag**—The broken ground in a bog.

³ **Billhope**—A part of Liddesdale famous for its game.

⁴ **Morion**—A helmet without a visor.

⁵ **Scottish ell**—About thirty-seven inches in length.

"Belted Will Howard¹ is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre,² with many a spear, 75
And all the German hackbut-men,
Who have long lain at Askerten:³
They cross'd the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burn'd my little lonely tower:
The fiend receive their souls therefor! 80
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barn-yard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Served to guide me on my flight;
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw, and Fergus Græme, 85
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turn'd at Priestthaugh Scrogg,⁴
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright —
I had him long at high despite: 90
He drove my cows last Fastern's night.⁵"

VII

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirm'd the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand 95

¹ **Howard**—Lord William Howard, son of the Duke of Norfolk. He actually was Warden some years after the events here recorded. He was noted for the severity with which he repressed Border excesses.

² **Lord Dacre**—The family name is derived from the exploit of an ancestor at the siege of Acre under Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

³ **Askerten**—An old castle in Cumberland.

⁴ **Priestthaugh Scrogg**—A tree-covered hill some miles from Branksome. Scrogg means "a shady place."

⁵ **Fastern's night**—The evening of Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, the first day of the great fast of Lent.

Three thousand armèd Englishmen —
 Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
 From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
 Came in, their Chief's defence to aid.
 There was saddling and mounting in haste, 100
 There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
 He that was last at the trysting-place
 Was but lightly held of his gaye ladye.

VIII

From fair St. Mary's ¹ silver wave,
 From dreary Gamescleugh's dusky height, 105
 His ready lances Thirlestane ² brave
 Array'd beneath a banner bright.
 The tressured ³ fleur-de-luce he claims
 To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
 Encamp'd by Fala's ⁴ mossy wave, 110
 The proud distinction grateful gave,
 For faith 'mid feudal jars;
 What time, save Thirlestane alone,
 Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
 Would march to southern wars; 115

¹ *St. Mary's*—See note to Canto II., 386.

² *Thirlestane*—"Sir John Scott of Thirlestane flourished in the reign of James V, and possessed the estates of Thirlestane, Gamescleugh, &c., lying upon the river of Ettrick, and extending to St. Mary's Loch, at the head of Yarrow. It appears, that when James had assembled his nobility, and their feudal followers, at Fala with the purpose of invading England, and was, as is well known, disappointed by the obstinate refusal of his peers, this baron alone declared himself ready to follow the King wherever he should lead. In memory of his fidelity, James granted to his family a charter of arms, entitling them to bear a border of fleur-de-luce, similar to the tressure in the royal arms, with a bundle of spears for the crest; motto, *Ready, aye ready*."—*Scott*.

³ *Tressured*—Surrounded by a laced border.

⁴ *Fala*—A marshy district near Edinburgh.

And hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines reveal'd —
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX

An aged Knight,¹ to danger steel'd, 120
With many a moss-trooper, came on;
And, azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood tower, 125
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's² mountain flood,
His wood-embosom'd mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plunder'd England low; 130
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's³ charms, 135
In youth, might tame his rage for arms;
And still, in age, he spurn'd at rest,
And still his brows the helmet press'd,
Albeit the blanchèd locks below

¹ **Aged Knight**—Sir Walter Scott of Harden. "The family of Harden are descended from a younger son of the Laird of Buccleuch, who flourished before the estate of Murdieston was acquired by the marriage of one of these chieftains with the heiress in 1296."—*Scott*. The arms of Harden were the stars and crescent painted blue on a golden surface. The *bend* is a space between two parallel lines drawn diagonally across the shield.

² **Borthwick**—A stream flowing into the Teviot.

³ **Flower of Yarrow**—Mary Scott, the wife of Walter of Harden, was celebrated under this name in Border minstrelsy.

Were white as Dinlay's¹ spotless snow;
 Five stately warriors drew the sword
 Before their father's band;
 A braver knight than Harden's lord
 Ne'er belted on a brand.²

140

X

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
 Came trooping down the Todshawhill;
 By the sword they won their land,
 And by the sword they hold it still.
 Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
 How thy sires won fair Eskdale.—
 Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair,
 The Beattisons were his vassals there.
 The Earl was gentle, and mild of mood,
 The vassals were warlike, and fierce, and rude;
 High of heart, and haughty of word,
 Little they reck'd of a tame liege lord.
 The Earl into fair Eskdale came,
 Homage and seignory³ to claim:
 Of Gilbert the Galliard⁴ a heriot⁵ he sought,
 Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
 —"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
 Oft has he help'd me at pinch of need;
 Lord and Earl though thou be, I trow,
 I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."—
 Word on word gave fuel to fire,
 Till so highly blazed the Beattison's ire,
 But that the Earl the flight had ta'en,

145

150

155

165

¹ Dinlay—A mountain in Liddesdale.

² Brand—Sword.

³ Seignory—Lordship.

⁴ Galliard—Gay, gallant.

⁵ Heriot—On the death of a tenant, the lord of the manor might claim from the heir as a *heriot* the best thing he had. Usually a horse was taken.

The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir;
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI

The Earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avengèd would he be.
In haste to Branksome's Lord he spoke, 175
Saying — "Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast¹ of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew² thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man;³ 180
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurr'd amain, 185
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merrymen in the midst of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;
And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train, 190
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:—
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scotts play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due, 195
Thy bonny white steed, or thou shalt rue.

¹ *Cast*—A pair or as many as were let go from the hand at once.

² *Beshrew*—May a curse fall.

³ *Landed man*—A man owning property in land.

If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind.'—

XII

Loudly the Beattison laugh'd in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn. 200
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot,
To yield his steed to a haughty Scott.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."—
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse, 205
That the dun deer started at fair Craikercross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the grey mountain-mist there did lances
appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din,
That the echoes answer'd from Pentoun-linn, 210
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied, and lances broke!
For each scornful word the Galliard had said,
A Beattison on the field was laid. 215
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through;
Where the Beattisons' blood mix'd with the rill,
The Galliard's-haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scatter'd the Beattison clan, 220
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name; 225
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,

From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen.
Troop'd man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.¹
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.

230

The Ladye mark'd the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose:
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes.

235

"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar

The raven's nest upon the cliff;

240

The red cross,² on a southern breast,
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shalt teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

XIV

Well may you think, the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shriek'd, and shed full many a tear,
And moan'd and plain'd in manner wild.

245

The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,³
That wont to be so free and bold.

250

Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blush'd blood-red for very shame:—

¹ **Bellenden**—A place in the centre of the possessions of the Scotts.

² **Red cross**—The Cross of St. George, the emblem of the English.

³ **Changed**—Exchanged the child for that of a fairy or evil sprite.

"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
 Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—
 Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
 To Rangleburn's 'lonely side.—
 Sure some fell fiend has curs'd our line,
 That coward should e'er be son of mine!"—

266

266

XV

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
 To guide the counterfeited lad.
 Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
 Of that ill-omen'd elfish freight,
 He bolted, sprung, and rear'd amain,
 Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
 It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle¹ toil
 To drive him but a Scottish mile;²
 But as a shallow brook they cross'd,
 The elf, amid the running stream,
 His figure changed, like form in dream,
 And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
 Full fast the urchin ran and laugh'd,
 But faster still a cloth-yard shaft⁴
 Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
 And pierced his shoulder through and through.
 Although the imp might not be slain,
 And though the wound soon heal'd again,
 Yet, as he ran, he yell'd for pain;
 And Watt of Tinlinn, much aghast,
 Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

266

270

275

280

¹ Rangleburn—A river flowing into the Ettrick.

² Mickle—Much.

³ Scottish mile—About one-eighth longer than an English mile.

⁴ Cloth-yard shaft—An arrow the length of a yard used for measuring cloth.

XVI

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
 That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
 And martial murmurs from below,
 Proclaim'd the approaching southern foe. 283
 Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
 Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
 The coursers' neighing he could ken,
 A measured tread of marching men;
 While broke at times the solemn hum, 290
 The Almayn's¹ sullen kettle-drum;
 And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
 Above the copse appear;
 And glistening through the hawthorn green,
 Shine helm, and shield, and spear. 295

XVII

Light forayers, first, to view the ground,
 Spurr'd their fleet coursers loosely round;
 Behind, in close array, and fast,
 The Kendal archers,² all in green, 300
 Obedient to the bugle blast,
 Advancing from the wood were seen.
 To back and guard the archer band,
 Lord Dacre's bill-men³ were at hand:
 A hardy race, on Irthing⁴ bred, 305
 With kirtles white, and crosses red,
 Array'd beneath the banner tall,
 That stream'd o'er Acre's conquer'd wall;
 And minstrels, as they march'd in order,
 Played, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

¹ **Almayn**—German.

² **Kendal archers**—Bowmen from Kendal in Westmoreland.

³ **Bill-men**—Soldiers armed with long-handled axes.

⁴ **Irthing**—A small river on the English side of the Border.

XVIII

Behind the English bill and bow,¹ 310
 The mercenaries, firm and slow,
 Moved on to fight, in dark array.
 By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
 Who brought the band from distant Rhine, 315
 And sold their blood for foreign pay.
 The camp their home, their law the sword,
 They knew no country, own'd no lord:
 They were not arm'd like England's sons,
 But bore the levin-darting² guns;
 Buff³ coats, all frounced and 'broider'd o'er, 320
 And morsing-horns⁴ and scarfs they wore;
 Each better knee⁵ was bared, to aid
 The warriors in the escalade;⁶
 All, as they marched, in rugged tongue,
 Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung: 325

XIX

But louder still the clamour grew,
 And louder still the minstrels blew,
 When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
 Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
 His men-at-arms, with glaive⁷ and spear, 330
 Brought up the battle's glittering rear,
 There many a youthful knight, full keen

¹ **Bill and Bow**—Bill-men and bowmen.

² **Levin-darting**—Flashing fire or lightning.

³ **Buff**—A kind of leather made from the hide of the buffalo. **Frounced** is adorned with plaits.

⁴ **Morsing-horns**—Powder-flasks.

⁵ **Better knee**—Right knee.

⁶ **Escalade**—Mounting the walls of a besieged place by means of ladders.

⁷ **Glaive**—Broadsword.

To gain his spurs,¹ in arms was seen;
 With favour in his crest, or glove,
 Memorial of his ladye-love.
 So rode they forth in fair array,
 Till full their lengthen'd lines display;
 Then call'd a halt, and made a stand,
 And cried, "St. George, for merry England!"

XX

Now every English eye, intent
 On Branksome's armèd towers was bent;
 So near they were, that they might know
 The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
 On battlement and bartizan²
 Gleam'd axe, and spear, and partisan;³
 Falcon and culver,⁴ on each tower,
 Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
 And flashing armour frequent broke
 From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
 Where upon tower and turret head,
 The seething pitch and molten lead
 Reek'd, like a witch's caldron red.
 While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
 The wicket opes, and from the wall
 Rides forth the hoary Seneschal.

XXI

Armèd he rode, all save the head,
 His white beard o'er his breast-plate spread;

¹ **Gain his spurs**—Originally to win knighthood, but used generally in regard to the winning of honour or renown in war.

² **Bartizan**—A small overhanging tower.

³ **Partisan**—A long pole with a sharp iron head.

⁴ **Falcon and culver**—Small cannon.

Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
 He ruled his eager courser's gait;
 Forced him, with chasten'd fire, to prance, 360
 And, high curvetting, slow advance:
 In sign of truce, his better hand
 Display'd a peel'd willow wand;
 His squire, attending in the rear,
 Bore high a gauntlet¹ on a spear. 365
 When they espied him riding out,
 Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
 Sped to the front of their array,
 To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII

"Ye English warden lords, of you 370
 Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
 Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
 In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
 With Kendal bow and Gilsland² brand,
 And all yon mercenary band, 375
 Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
 My Ladye reads³ your swith return;
 And, if but one poor straw you burn,
 Or do our towers so much molest,
 As scare one swallow from her nest, 380
 St. Mary! but we'll light a brand
 Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."

¹ **Gauntlet**—"A glove upon a lance was the emblem of faith among the ancient Borderers, who were wont, when anyone broke his word, to expose this emblem and proclaim him a faithless villain at the next meeting. This ceremony was much dreaded."—*Scott*.

² **Gilsland**—A district in Cumberland not far from the Border.

³ **Reads**—Advises. **Swith** means quick.

XXIII

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
 But calmer Howard took the word:
 "May 't please thy Dame, Sir Seneschal,
 To seek the castle's outward wall,
 Our pursuivant-at-arms¹ shall show
 Both why we came, and when we go.'"
 The message sped, the noble Dame
 To the wall's outward circle came;
 Each chief around lean'd on his spear,
 To see the pursuivant appear.
 All in Lord Howard's livery dress'd,
 The lion argent² deck'd his breast;
 He led a boy of blooming hue —
 O sight to meet a mother's view!
 It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
 Obeisance meet the herald made,
 And thus his master's will he said:—

XXIV

"It irks, high Dame, my noble Lords
 'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
 But yet they may not tamely see,
 All through the Western Wardenry,
 Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
 And burn and spoil the Border-side;
 And ill beseems your rank and birth
 To make your towers a flemens-firth.³
 We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
 That he may suffer march-treason pain.⁴

¹ **Pursuivant**—An officer of an army next in dignity to the herald.

² **Lion argent**—A lion woven in silver on his coat.

³ **Flemens-firth**—A refuge for outlaws.

⁴ **March-treason pain**—The punishment for breaking the law of the Border.

It was but last St. Cuthbert's even¹ 410
 He prick'd to Stapleton on Leven,²
 Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
 And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
 Then, since a lone and widow'd Dame
 These restless riders may not tame, 415
 Either receive within thy towers
 Two hundred of my master's powers,
 Or straight they sound their warrison,³
 And storm and spoil thy garrison:
 And this fair boy, to London led, 420
 Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV

He ceased — and loud the boy did cry,
 And stretch'd his little arms on high;
 Implored for aid each well-known face,
 And strove to seek the Dame's embrace. 425
 A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
 Gush'd to her eye the unbidden tear;
 She gazed upon the leaders round,
 And dark and sad each warrior frown'd;
 Then, deep within her sobbing breast 430
 She lock'd the struggling sigh to rest;
 Unalter'd and collected stood,
 And thus replied, in dauntless mood:—

XXVI

"Say to your Lords of high emprise,⁴
 Who war on women and on boys, 435

¹ *St. Cuthbert's even*—The night before St. Cuthbert's day. March 20th. Cuthbert was one of the fathers of the early English Church.

² *Leven*—A small stream flowing into Solway Firth.

³ *Warrison*—Note of assault. ⁴ *Emprise*—Enterprise.

That either William of Deloraine
 Will cleanse him, by oath,¹ of march-treason stain,
 Or else he will the combat take
 'Gainst Musgrave, for his honour's sake.
 No knight in Cumberland so good, 440
 But William may count with him kin and blood.
 Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
 When English blood swell'd Ancram's ford;²
 And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
 And bare him ably in the flight, 445
 Himself had seen him dubb'd a knight.
 For the young heir of Branksome's line,
 God be his aid, and God be mine;
 Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
 Here, while I live, no foe finds room. 450
 Then, if thy Lords their purpose urge,
 Take our defiance loud and high;
 Our slogan is their lyke-wake dirge,³
 Our moat, the grave where they shall lie." 455

XXVII

Proud she look'd round, applause to claim 455
 Then lighten'd Thirlestane's eye of flame;
 His bugle Watt of Harden blew;
 Pensils⁴ and pennons wide were flung,
 To heaven the Border slogan rung,
 "St. Mary for the young Buccleuch!" 460
 The English war-cry answer'd wide,
 And forward bent each southern spear;

¹ **Oath.**—If the case were in doubt the accused could clear himself by swearing to his own innocence.

² **Ancram's ford**—An engagement in 1545 between the English and the Scots in which the former were defeated. The Scots were led by Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus.

³ **Lyke-wake dirge**—The mournful song raised during the watching of a dead body before its burial.

⁴ **Pensils**—Small pennons.

Each Kendal archer made a stride,
 And drew the bowstring to his ear;
 Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
 But, ere a grey goose-shaft had flown,
 A horseman gallop'd from the rear.

465

XXVIII

"Ah! noble Lords!" he breathless said,
 "What treason has your march betray'd?
 What make you here, from aid so far,
 Before you walls, around you war?
 Your foemen triumph in the thought
 That in the toils the lion's caught.
 Already on dark Ruberslaw¹
 The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw;²
 The lances, waving in his train,
 Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
 And on the Liddel's northern strand,
 To bar retreat to Cumberland,
 Lord Maxwell ranks his merry-men good,
 Beneath the eagle and the rood;³
 And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
 Have to proud Angus come;
 And all the Merse and Lauderdale
 Have risen with haughty Home.
 An exile from Northumberland,
 In Liddesdale I've wander'd long;
 But still my heart was with merry England,
 And cannot brook my country's wrong;
 And hard I've spurr'd all night, to show
 The mustering of the coming foe."

470

475

480

485

490

¹ *Ruberslaw*—A mountain not far from Branksome.

² *Weapon-schaw*—The military array of a county.

³ *The eagle and the rood*—The eagle and the cross were the arms of Lord Maxwell.

XXIX

“And let them come!” fierce Dacre cried,
“For soon yon crest, my father’s pride,
That swept the shores of Judah’s sea,¹
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome’s highest towers display’d,
Shall mock the rescue’s lingering aid! —
Level each harquebuss² on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, bill-men, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!” —

XXX

“Yet hear,” quoth Howard, “calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the blanche lion³ e’er fall back?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom’s power,
Ten thousand Scots ’gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made,
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight, and, if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he’s cross’d,
’Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat, and death, and shame.”

¹ *Judah’s sea*—The sea of Galilee.

² *Harquebuss*—An old-fashioned style of gun.

³ *Blanche lion*—The white lion was the cognizance of the Howards.

XXXI

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
 His brother Warden's sage rebuke;
 And yet his forward step he staid,
 And slow and sullenly obey'd.
 But ne'er again the Border-side
 Did these two lords in friendship ride;
 And this slight discontent, men say,
 Cost blood upon another day.

530

535

XXXII

The pursuivant-at-arms again
 Before the castle took his stand;
 His trumpet call'd, with parleying strain,
 The leaders of the Scottish band;
 And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
 Stout Deloraine to single fight;
 A gauntlet¹ at their feet he laid,
 And thus the terms of fight he said:—
 "If in the lists² good Musgrave's sword
 Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
 Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's Lord,
 Shall hostage for his clan remain:
 If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
 The boy his liberty shall have.
 Howe'er it falls, the English band,
 Unharming Scots, by Scots unharm'd,
 In peaceful march, like men unarm'd,
 Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

530

535

540

¹ **Gauntlet**—The throwing down of a glove was at this time the mark of defiance. If the person challenged wished to accept, he picked up the glove.

² **Lists**—The enclosed space within which the combat took place.

XXXIII

Unconscious of the near relief,
 The proffer pleased each Scottish chief, 545
 Though much the Ladye sage gainsay'd;
 For though their hearts were brave and true,
 From Jedwood's¹ recent sack they knew,
 How tardy was the Regent's² aid:
 And you may guess the noble Dame 550
 Durst not the secret precedence own,
 Sprung from the art she might not name,
 By which the coming help was known.
 Closed was the compact, and agreed
 That lists should be enclosed with speed, 555
 Beneath the castle, on a lawn:
 They fix'd the morrow for the strife,
 On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
 At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;
 When Deloraine, from sickness freed, 560
 Or else a champion in his stead,
 Should for himself and chieftain stand,
 Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV

I know right well, that, in their lay,
 Full many minstrels sing and say, 565
 Such combat should be made on horse,
 On foaming steed, in full career,
 With brand to aid, when as the spear
 Should shiver in the course:

¹ **Jedwood**—A reference to the sack of Jedwood by the English under the Earl of Hertford in 1545.

² **The Regent**—The Earl of Arran was Regent of Scotland at the time of the sack of Jedwood. He was succeeded by the Queen-mother, Mary of Guise.

But he, the jovial Harper,¹ taught 570
 Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
 In guise which now I say;
 He knew each ordinance and clause
 Of Black Lord Archibald's² battle-laws, 575
 In the old Douglas' day.
 He brook'd not, he, that scoffing tongue
 Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
 Or call his song untrue:
 For this, when they the goblet plied,
 And such rude taunt had chafed his pride, 580
 The Bard of Reull he slew.
 On Teviot's side, in fight they stood,
 And tuneful hands were stain'd with blood;
 Where still the thorn's white branches wave, 585
 Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV

Why should I tell the rigid doom,
 That dragg'd my master to his tomb,
 How Ousenam's³ maidens tore their hair,
 Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
 And wrung their hands for love of him, 590
 Who died at Jedwood Air⁴?
 He died! — his scholars, one by one,

¹ **Jovial Harper**—An ancient Border minstrel known by the name of Rattling Roaring Willie. While drinking at Newmill, near Hawick, Willie chanced to quarrel with a minstrel from Rule Water, known as Sweet Milk. They fought with swords and Sweet Milk was killed. Willie was taken and executed at Jedburgh. A thorn tree called Sweet Milk Thorn still marks the spot where the minstrel fell.

² **Black Lord Archibald**—Archibald Douglas the third earl, surnamed the Grim, who died in 1401. It was he who fixed the rules governing Border conflicts of this nature.

³ **Ousenam**—A place between Branksome and Jedburgh.

⁴ **At Jedwood Air**—At the time of the Assizes at Jedwood.

To the cold silent grave are gone;
 And I, alas! survive alone,
 To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
 And grieve that I shall hear no more
 The strains, with envy heard before;
 For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
 My jealousy of song is dead.

896

He paused: the listening dames again
 Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
 With many a word of kindly cheer,—
 In pity half, and half sincere,—
 Marvell'd the Duchess how so well
 His legendary song could tell —
 Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
 Of feuds, whose memory was not;
 Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
 Of towers, which harbour now the hare;
 Of manners, long since changed and gone;
 Of chiefs, who under their grey stone
 So long had slept, that fickle Fame
 Had blotted from her rolls their name,
 And twined round some new minion's head
 The fading wreath for which they bled;
 In sooth, 'twas strange, this old man's verse
 Could call them from their marble hearse.¹

900

905

910

915

The Harper smiled, well-pleased; for ne'er
 Was flattery lost on poet's ear;
 A simple race! they waste their toil
 For the vain tribute of a smile;
 E'en when in age their flame expires,
 Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:

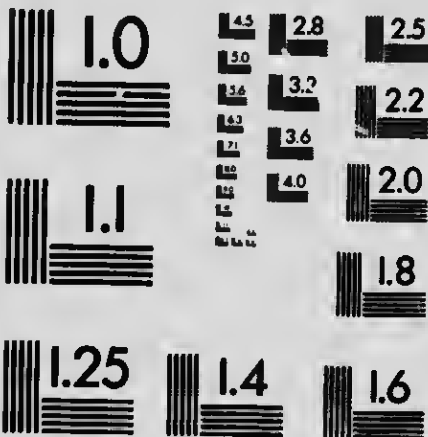
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¹ Hearse—Tomb.



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Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

825

Smiled then, well pleased, the Aged Man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH

I

CALL it not vain:— they do not err,
 Who say, that when the Poet dies,
 Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
 And celebrates his obsequies:
 Who say, tall cliff, and cavern lone, 5
 For the departed Bard make moan;
 That mountains weep in crystal rill;
 That flowers in tears of balm distil;
 Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
 And oaks, in deeper groan, reply; 10
 And rivers teach their rushing wave
 To murmur dirges round his grave.

II

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
 Those things inanimate ean mourn;
 But that the stream, the wood, the gale 15
 Is voeal with the plaintive wail
 Of those, who, else forgotten long,
 Lived in the poet's faithful song,
 And, with the poet's parting breath,
 Whose memory feels a second death. 20
 The Maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
 That love, true love, should be forgot,
 From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
 Upon the gentle Minstrel's bier:
 The phantom Knight, his glory fled, 25
 Mourns o'er the field he heap'd with dead;
 Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain,

And shrieks along the battle-plain.
 The Chief, whose antique crownlet long
 Still sparkled in the feudal song, 30
 Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
 Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
 His ashes undistinguish'd lie,
 His place, his power, his memory die:
 His groans the lonely caverns fill, 35
 His tears of rage impel the rill:
 All mourn the Minstrel's harp unstrung,
 Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III

Scarcely the hot assault was staid,
 The terms of truce were scarcely made, 40
 When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
 The advancing march of martial powers.
 Thick clouds of dust afar appear'd,
 And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
 Bright spears, above the columns dun, 45
 Glanced momentary to the sun;
 And feudal banners fair display'd
 The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
 From the fair Middle Marches¹ came; 50
 The Bloody Heart² blazed in the van,
 Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!

¹ **Middle Marches**—The Border was divided into East, Middle and West Marches, over each of which divisions a Warden was appointed.

² **Bloody Heart**—"The well-known cognizance of the House of Douglas, assumed from the time of good Lord James, to whose care Robert Bruce committed his heart to be carried to the Holy Land."—*Scott*.

Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
 Where the Seven Spears¹ of Wedderburne
 Their men in battle-order set; 55
 And Swinton² laid the lance in rest,
 That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
 Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
 Nor list I say what hundreds more,
 From the rich Merse³ and Lammermore,⁴ 60
 And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
 Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar,⁵
 And Hepburn's⁶ mingled banners come,
 Down the steep mountain glittering far,
 And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!" 65

V

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
 On many a courteous message went;
 To every chief and lord they paid
 Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid
 And told them,—how a truce was made, 70
 And how a day of fight was ta'en
 'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
 And how the Ladye pray'd them dear,
 That all would stay the fight to see,

¹ **Seven Spears**—The seven sons of Sir David Home of Wedderburne.

² **Swinton**—"At the battle of Beaugé, in France, the Duke of Clarence, brother of Henry V, was unhorsed by Sir John Swinton, who distinguished him by a coronet of precious stones which he wore round his crest."—*Scott*.

³ **Merse**—A very fertile section of Berwickshire.

⁴ **Lammermoor**—A ridge of hills running through Berwick and Haddington shires.

⁵ **Old Dunbar**—The Earls of Home as descendants of the Dunbars, Earls of March, carried the arms of that ancient house. Their war-cry was, *A Home! A Home!*

⁶ **Hepburn**—A powerful Border family usually in close alliance with the Homes.

And deign, in love and courtesy,
 To taste of Branksome cheer.
 Nor, while they bade' to feast each Seot,
 Were England's noble Lords forgot.
 Himself, the hoary Seneschal
 Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
 Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
 Accepted Howard, than whom knight
 Was never dubb'd, more bold in fight;
 Nor, when from war and armour free,
 More famed for stately courtesy:
 But angry Daere rather chose
 In his pavilion to repose.

75

80

85

VI

Now, noble Dame, perchance you ask,
 How these two hostile armies met?
 Deeming it were no easy task
 To keep the truce which here was set;
 Where martial spirits, all on fire,
 Breathed only blood and mortal ire.—
 By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
 By habit, and by nation, foes,
 They met on Teviot's strand;
 They met and sate them mingled down,
 Without a threat, without a frown,
 As brothers meet in foreign land:
 The hands, the spear that lately grasp'd,
 Still in the mailèd gauntlet clasp'd,
 Were interchanged in greeting dear;
 Visors were raised, and faces shown,
 And many a friend, to friend made known,
 Partook of social cheer.
 Some drove the jolly bowl about;
 With dice and draughts some chased the day;
 And some, with many a merry shout,

90

95

100

105

In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the foot-ball play.

110

VII

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown,
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers,¹ now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day:
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun's declining ray.

115

120

125

VIII

The blithesome signs of wassel² gay
Decay'd not with the dying day;
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang:
And frequent, on the darkening plain,

130

135

¹ **Whinger**—A sort of knife or poniard.

² **Wassel**—Noisy festivity.

Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
 As bands, their stragglers to regain,
 Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
 And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
 Douglas or Dacre's conquering name.

140

IX

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
 At length the various clamours died:
 And you might hear, from Branksome hill,
 No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
 Save when the changing sentinel
 The challenge¹ of his watch could tell;
 And save, where, through the dark profound,
 The clanging axe and hammer's sound
 Rung from the nether lawn;¹
 For many a busy hand toil'd there,
 Strong pales to shape, and beams to square,
 The lists' dread barriers to prepare
 Against the morrow's dawn.

145

150

X

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
 Despite the Dame's reproving eye;
 Nor mark'd she, as she left her seat,
 Full many a stifled sigh;
 For many a noble warrior strove
 To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
 And many a bold ally.—
 With throbbing head and anxious heart,
 All in her lonely bower apart,
 In broken sleep she lay:
 By times, from silken couch she rose;

155

160

165

¹ **Nether lawn**—The lawn beneath the castle wall.

While yet the banner'd hosts repose,
She view'd the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI

She gazed upon the inner court, 170
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay;
Where coursers' clang, and stamp, and snort,
Had rung the livelong yesterday;
Now still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,— 175
A stately warrior pass'd below;
But when he raised his plumed head —
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers, 180
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak —
Oh! if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary¹ wears, 185
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page; 190
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.²

¹ **Queen Mary**—Either Mary of Guise, the Queen Dowager, or her daughter Mary Stuart, at this time an infant in France.

² **Hermitage**—A castle on the Border, the property of the Douglas family. A knight from there would naturally be regarded as an ally of the Scots.

Unchallenged thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he cross'd,

195

For all the vassalage:

But O! what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!

She started from her seat;

While with surprise and fear¹ she strove,
And both could scarcely master love —

200

Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII

Oft have I mused, what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had

205

To bring this meeting round;

For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite

In such no joy is found;

And oft I've deem'd, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought

210

Sorrow, and sin, and shame;

And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle ladye bright,

Disgrace and loss of fame.

215

But earthly spirit could not tell

The heart of them that loved so well.

True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:

It is not fantasy's hot fire,

Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;

220

It liveth not in fierce desire,

With dead desire it doth not die;

It is the secret sympathy,

The silver link, the silken tie,

225

Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,

¹ **Surprise and fear**—*Surprise* at his appearance, *fear* for his safety.

In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port aroused each clan; 230
In haste, the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick wood;¹
To Branksome many a look they threw, 235
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast,
About the knight each favour'd most.

XV

Meantime full anxious was the Dame;
For now arose disputed claim, 240
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane:
They 'gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;
But yet not long the strife — for, lo! 245
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seem'd, and free from pain,
In armour sheath'd from top to toe,
Appear'd, and craved the combat due.
The Dame her charm successfu' knew, 250
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

XVI

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein

¹ **Ettrick wood**—Ettrick forest in Selkirkshire.

Did noble Howard hold;
 Unarmed by her side he walk'd, 284
 And much, in courteous phrase, they talk'd
 Of feats of arms of old.
 Costly his garb — his Flemish ruff
 Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
 With satin slash'd and lined; 290
 Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
 His cloak was all of Poland fur,
 His hose with silver twined;
 His Bilboa blade,¹ by Marchme. felt,
 Hung in a broad and studded belt; 296
 Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
 Call'd noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII

Behind Lord Howard and the Dame,
 Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
 Whose foot-cloth² swept the ground: 270
 White was her wimple,³ and her veil,
 And her loose locks a chaplet⁴ pale
 Of whitest roses bound;
 The lordly Angus, by her side,
 In courtesy to cheer her tried; 276
 Without his aid, her hand in vain
 Had strove to guide her broider'd rein.
 He deem'd, she shudder'd at the sight
 Of warriors met for mortal fight;
 But cause of terror, all unguess'd, 280
 Was fluttering in her gentle breast,

¹ **Bilboa blade**—Bilboa, in Spain, was famous for its steel.

² **Foot-cloth**—A covering which completely covered the horse, reaching to its heels.

³ **Wimple**—A covering for the head, sides of face and neck, formerly worn by women.

⁴ **Chaplet**—Wreath.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

91

When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The Dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch,
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he long'd to see the fight.
Within the lists, in knightly pride,
High Horne and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading-staffs¹ of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field;
While to each knight their care assign'd
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen, and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, hy look, or sign, or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke,
Till thus the alternate Heralds spoke:—

XIX

ENGLISH HERALD

“Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth, that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God, and his good cause!”

¹ *Leading-staffs*—Batons carried as badges of authority.

XX

SCOTTISH HERALD

"Here standeth William of Deloraine, 316
 Good knight and true, of noble strain,
 Who sayeth, that foul treason's stain,
 Since he bore arms, ne'er soil'd his coat;
 And that, so help him God above!
 He will on Musgrave's body prove, 318
 He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
 Sound trumpets!"——

LORD HOME

——"God defend the right!"——
 Then, Teviot! how thine echoes rang,
 When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang 320
 Let loose the martial foes,
 And in mid-list, with shield poised high,
 And measured step and wary eye,
 The combatants did close.

XXI

Ill would it suit your gentle ear, 325
 Ye lovely listeners, to hear
 How to the axe the helms did sound,
 And blood pour'd down from many a wound;
 For desperate was the strife and long,
 And either warrior fierce and strong. 330
 But, were each dame a listening knight,
 I well could tell how warriors fight!

For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
 Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
 Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing, 335
 And scorn'd, amid the reeling strife,
 To yield a step for death or life.—

XXII

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
 Has stretch'd him on the bloody plain;
 He strives to rise — Brave Musgrave, no! 340
 Thence never shalt thou rise again!
 He chokes in blood — some friendly hand
 Undo the visor's barred band,
 Unfix the gorget's ¹ iron clasp,
 And give him room for life to gasp! — 345
 O, bootless aid! — haste, holy Friar,
 Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
 Of all his guilt let him be shriven,²
 And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII

In haste the holy Friar sped;— 350
 His naked foot was dyed with red,
 As through the lists he ran;
 Unmindful of the shouts on high,
 That hail'd the conqueror's victory,
 He raised the dying man; 355
 Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
 As o'er him he kneel'd down in prayer;
 And still the crucifix on high
 He holds before his darkening eye;

¹ **Gorget**—Throat armour.

² **Shriven**—Hear his dying confession and give him absolution.

And still he bends an anxious ear,
 His faltering penitence to hear;
 Still props him from the bloody sod,
 Still, even when soul and body part,
 Pours ghostly ¹ comfort on his heart,
 And bids him trust in God!
 Unheard he prays; — the death-pang 's o'er!
 Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

360

365

XXIV

As if exhausted in the fight,
 Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
 The silent victor stands;
 His beaver ² did he not unclasp,
 Mark'd not the shouts, felt not the grasp
 Of gratulating hands.
 When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
 Mingled with seeming terror, rise
 Among the Scottish bands;
 And all, amid the throng'd array,
 In panic haste gave open way
 To a half-naked ghastly man,
 Who downward from the castle ran:
 He cross'd the barriers at a bound,
 And wild and haggard look'd around,
 As dizzy, and in pain;
 And all, upon the armèd ground,
 Knew William of Deloraine!
 Each ladye sprung from seat with speed;
 Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
 "And who art thou," they cried,
 "Who hast this battle fought and won?" —
 His plumèd helm was soon undone —

370

375

380

385

390

¹ **Ghostly**—Spiritual.

² **Beaver**—The mouthpiece of the helmet.

“Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I’ve fought and won,”—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV

Full oft the rescued boy she kiss’d,
And often press’d him to her breast; 395
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbbed at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deign’d she greet,
Though low he kneelèd at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made, 400
What Douglas, Home, and Howard, said —
— For Howard was a generous foe —
And how the clan united pray’d
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour 405
Of Cranstoun’s Lord and Teviot’s Flower.

XXVI

She look’d to river, look’d to hill,
Thought on the Spirit’s prophecy,¹
Then broke her silence stern and still,—
“Not you, but Fate, has vanquish’d me. 410
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot’s tide and Branksome’s tower,
For pride is quell’d; and love is free.”—
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand; 415
That hand to Cranstoun’s lord gave she:—
“As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be;

¹ Spirit’s prophecy—Canto I—xv.

For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay,
To grace it with their company.'—

420

XXVII

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain;
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his pag, and of the Book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armour dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.
But half his tale he left unsaid,
And linger'd till he joined the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the Book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told, of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose,
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell:
One day, fair maids, you'll know them wel'

425

430

435

440

445

XXVIII

William of Deloraine, some chance
Had waken'd from his deathlike trance;
And taught that, in the listed plain,

450

Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.

Hence, to the field, unarm'd, he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.

Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,

He greeted him right heartilie:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,

Though rude, and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.

He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe:

And so 'twas seen of him, e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he look'd down;

Grief darken'd on his rugged brow,

Though half disguis'd with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made.

XXIX

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here!

I w'en, my deadly enemy;

For, if I slew thy brother dear,

Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;

And when I lay in dungeon dark,

Of Naworth Castle, long months three,

Till ransom'd for a thousand mark,¹

Dark Musgrave, it was long of thee.

And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,

¹ **Mark**—A mark was worth thirteen shillings and fourpence.

And thou wert now alive, as I,
 No mortal man should us divide,
 Till one, or both of us, did die:
 Yet rest thee God! for well I know
 I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
 In all the northern counties here,
 Whose word is Snaffle, spur, and spear,
 Thou wert the best to follow gear!
 'Twas pleasure, as we look'd behind,
 To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
 Cheer the dark blood-hound on his way,
 And with the bugle rouse the fray!
 I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
 Dark Musgrave were alive again."—

485

490

495

XXX

So mourn'd he, till Lord Dacre's band
 Were bowning back to Cumberland.
 They raised brave Musgrave from the field,
 And laid him on his bloody shield;
 On levell'd lances, four and four,
 By turns, the noble burden bore.
 Before, at times, upon the gale,
 Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
 Behind, four priests, in sable stole,²
 Sung requiem for the warrior's soul:
 Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
 With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
 And thus the gallant knight they bore,
 Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore;
 Thence to Holme Coltrame's³ lofty nave,
 And laid him in his father's grave.

500

505

510

¹ **Follow gear**—Chase the plunderers.

² **Stole**—A loose robe reaching to the feet.

³ **Holme Coltrame**—In Cumberland, on the Solway Firth.

THE harp's wild notes, though hush'd the song,
The mimie march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear;
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep;
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full ehoir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell,
Why he, who touch'd the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern Land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The Aged Harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it rank'd so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still, that scornful jeer
Misprised the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound, as thus again
The Bard resumed his Minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH

I

BREATHES there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd,
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd,

From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;

For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;

Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentr'd all in self,

Living shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung.

II

O Caledonia! stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poet's child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band,
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now, and what hath been,
Seems as, to me, of all bereft,

Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
 And thus I love them better still,
 Even in extremity of ill.

By Yarrow's streams still let me stray, 30
 Though none should guide my feeble way;
 Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
 Although it chill my wither'd cheek;
 Still lay my head by Teviot Stone,
 Though there, forgotten and alone, 35
 The Bard may draw his parting groan.

III

Not scorn'd like me! to Branksome Hall
 The Minstrels came, at festive call;
 Trooping they came, from near and far,
 The jovial priests of mirth and war; 40
 Alike for feast and fight prepared,
 Battle and banquet both they shared.
 Of late, before each martial clan,
 They blew their death-note in the van,
 But now, for every merry mate, 45
 Rose the portcullis' ¹ iron grate;
 They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
 They dance, they revel, and they sing,
 Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV

Me lists not at this tide declare 50
 The splendour of the spousal rite,
 How muster'd in the chapel fair
 Both maid and matron, squire and knight;

¹ **Portcullis**—A sliding iron door in front of the gateway of the castle, which could be drawn up or let down at will by means of heavy chains.

Me lists not tell of owches¹ rare,
 Of mantles green, and braided hair, 55
 And kirtles furr'd with miniver;²
 What plumage waved the altar round,
 How spurs and ringing chainlets sound;
 And hard it were for hard to speak
 The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek; 60
 That lovely hue which comes and flies,
 As awe and shame alternate rise!

V

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
 Chapel or altar came not nigh;
 Nor durst the rights of spousal grace, 65
 So much she fear'd each holy place.
 False slanders these:—I trust right well
 She wrought not by forbidden spell;
 For mighty words and signs have power
 O'er sprites in planetary hour:³ 70
 Yet scarce I praise their venturous part,
 Who tamper with such dangerous art.
 But this for faithful truth I say,
 The Ladye by the altar stood,
 Of sable velvet her array, 75
 And on her head a crimson hood,
 With pearls embroider'd and entwined,
 Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
 A merlin⁴ sat upon her wrist
 Held by a leash of silken twist. 80

¹ **Owches**—Golden ornaments set with precious stones.

² **Miniver**—A small fur-bearing animal something like the ermine.

³ **Planetary hour**—When the planets are in the ascendant, that is, can exercise their influence.

⁴ **Merlin**—A hawk.

VI

The spousal rites were ended soon:
 'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
 And in the lofty archèd hall
 Was spread the gorgeous festival.
 Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
 Marshall'd the rank of every guest;
 Pages, with ready blade, were there,
 The mighty meal to carve and share:
 O'er capon, heron-shew,¹ and crane,
 And princely peacock's gilded train,
 And o'er the boar-head, garnish'd brave.
 And cygnet from St. Mary's wave;
 O'er ptarmigan and venison,
 The priest had spoke his benison.²
 Then rose the riot and the din,
 Above, beneath, without, within!
 For, from the lofty balcony,
 Rung trumpet, shalm,³ and psaltery:
 Their clanging bowls old warriors quaff'd,
 Loudly they spoke, and loudly laugh'd;
 Whisper'd young knights, in tone more mild,
 To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
 The hooded hawks,⁴ high perch'd on beam,
 The clamour join'd with whistling scream,
 And flapp'd their wings, and shook their bells,
 In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
 Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
 From Bordeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;

¹ **Heron-shew**—A young heron.

² **Benison**—Blessing.

³ **Shalm and Psaltery**—A *Shalm* is a wind instrument, and a *Psaltery* a stringed instrument resembling a harp.

⁴ **Hooded hawks**—The hawks had their heads covered by leathern caps. Hawking or falconry was a favourite sport of the nobles at this time.

Their tasks the busy sewers¹ ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

110

VII

The Coblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humour highly cross'd,
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote, with his gauntlet, stout Hunthill;
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon² Draw-the-sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.
Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose:
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove,³ and shook his head.—
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, co'd, and drench'd in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog⁴ found;
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;

115

120

125

130

¹ **Sewers**—Waiters.

² **Dickon**—Dickon Rutherford of Hunthill, one of the nine sons of the formidable Border warrior known as the Cock of Hunthill.

³ **Bit his glove**—"To bite the thumb, or the glove, seems not to have been considered upon the Border as a gesture of contempt, though so used by Shakespeare, but as a pledge of mortal revenge."—*Scott*.

⁴ **Lyme-dog**—A hunting dog.

But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Diekon wore a Cologne blade.

135

VIII

The dwarf, who fear'd his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espy,
Now sought the castle buttery,¹

Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revell'd as merrily and well

140

As those that sat in lordly selle.

Watt Tinlinn, there, did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;²

And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howa' 's merry-men sent it round.

145

To quit them,³ on the English side,

Red Roland Forster loudly cried,

"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"—

At every pledge, from vat and pail,

150

Foam'd forth in floods the nut-brown ale;

While shout the riders every one;

Such day of mirth ne'er cheer'd their clan,

Since old Buceleuch⁴ the name did gain,

When in the cleuch⁵ the buck was ta'en.

155

¹ **Buttery**—Large pantry.

² **Arthur Fire-the-Braes**—An Elliot of Liddesdale, belonging, of course, to the faction which had up to this time been at deadly enmity with the Scotts.

³ **To qui' them**—Return the compliment.

⁴ **Cleuch**—A hollow between high banks.

⁵ **Buceleuch**—Scott explains the origin of this name as follows: "Two brethren, natives of Galloway, having been banished from that country for a riot, came to Rankleburn in Ettrick Forest, where they were welcomed by the keeper on account of their skill in winding the horn and in the other mysteries of the chase. Kenneth MacAlpin, then King of Scotland, came soon after to hunt in the royal forest, and pursued a buck from Ettrick-heugh to the glen now called Buck-cleugh.....Here the stag stood at bay: and the king and his attendants, who followed on horseback, were thrown out by

IX

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
 Remember'd him of Tinlinn's yew,
 And swore, it should be dearly bought
 That ever he the arrow drew. 160
 First, he the yeoman did molest,
 With bitter gibe and taunting jest;
 Told, how he fled at Solway strife,¹
 And how Hob Armstrong cheer'd his wife;
 Then, shunning still his powerful arm, 165
 At unawares he wrought him harm;
 From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
 Dash'd from his lips his can of beer;
 Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
 With bodkin² pierced him to the bone: 170
 The venom'd wound, and festering joint,
 Long after rued that bodkin's point.
 The startled yeoman swore and spurn'd,
 And board and flagons overturn'd.
 Riot and clamour wild began; 175
 Back to the hall the Urchin ran;
 Took in a darkling nook his post,
 And grinn'd, and mutter'd, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X

By this, the Dame, lest farther fray
 Should mar the concord of the day,

the steepness of the hill and the morass. John, one of the brethren from Galloway, had followed the chase on foot, and now coming in, seized the buck by the horns, and being a man of great strength and activity, threw him on his back, and ran with his burden about a mile up the steep hill, to a place called Cracra-Cross, where Kenneth had halted, and laid the buck at the sovereign's feet."

¹ **Solway strife**—The fight of Solway Moss in 1542, at which ten thousand Scots are said to have fled before three hundred English horsemen.

² **Bodkin**—A small dagger.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

107

Had bid the Minstrels tune their lay.
And first stept forth old Albert Græme,
The Minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well,
Within the Land Debateable;¹
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made their broth,
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

180

185

190

XI

ALBERT GRÆME

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

195

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
For ire that Love was lord of all.

200

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,

¹ **Land Debateable**—A district on the Border claimed by both the Scots and the English. The Græmes lived in this district, and preyed with impunity on both the English and Scots, as neither country would allow punishment by the other as that would admit authority.

And he swore her death, ere he would see 205
A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII

That wine she had not tasted well,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
When dead, in her true love's arms, she fell,
For Love was still the lord of all! 210

He pierced her brother to the heart,
Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall:—
So perish all would true love part,
That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,¹ 215
(Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,)
And died for her sake in Palestine,
So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall,) 220
Pray for their souls who died for love,
For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII

As ended Albert's simple lay,
Arose a bard of loftier port;
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay,² 225
Renown'd in haughty Henry's³ court:

¹ **Cross divine**—He became a Crusader, and died in the Holy Land.

² **Roundelay**—A kind of ballad, containing a line that comes round again and again.

³ **Haughty Henry**—Henry VIII of England.

There rung thy harp, unrivall'd long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!

The gentle Surrey ¹ loved his lyre —
Who has not heard of Surrey's fame? 230
His was the hero's soul of fire,
And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV

They sought, together, climes afar, 235
And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stay'd,
And deem'd, that spirits from on high, 240
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine,
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV

Fitztraver! O what tongue may say 245
The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey of the deathless lay,
Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp call'd wrath and vengeance down. 250
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,

¹ The gentle Surrey—"The gallant and unfortunate Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was unquestionably the most accomplished cavalier of his time; and his sonnets display beauties which would do honour to a more polished age. He was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1546, a victim to the mean jealousy of Henry VIII, who could not bear so brilliant a character near his throne."—*Scott*.

Windsor's green glades, and courtly bowers,
 And faithful to his patron's name,
 With Howard still Fitztraver came;
 Lord William's foremost favourite he,
 And chief of all his minstrelsy.

255

XVI

FITZTRAVER

'Twas All-souls'¹ eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
 He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
 Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
 When wise Cornelius² promised, by his art,
 To show to him the ladye of his heart,
 Albeit betwixt them roar'd the ocean grim;
 Yet so the sage had hight³ to play his part,
 That he should see her form in life and limb,
 And mark, if still she loved, and still she thought of
 him.

260

265

XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
 To which the wizard led the gallant Knight,
 Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
 A hallow'd taper shed a glimmering light
 On mystic implements of magic might;
 On cross, and character, and talisman,
 And almagest,⁴ and altar, nothing bright:

270

¹ **All-souls' eve**—The evening before All-souls' Day. November 2nd.

² **Cornelius**—Cornelius Henry Agrippa, a famous magician who died in 1535. He was a famous warrior and secretary to the Emperor Maximilian I. After quitting the army he devoted himself to the study of science.

³ **Hight**—Promised.

⁴ **Almagest**—A collection of problems in astronomy and geometry made in 140 A.D. by Claudius Ptolemy.

For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watchlight by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII

But soon, within that mirror huge and high, 275
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the Earl 'gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct, as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging, and defined, they seem 280
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's¹ silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in
gloom.

XIX

Fair all the pageant — but how passing fair
The slender form, which lay on couch of Ind! 285
O'er her white bosom stray'd her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And, pensive, read from tablet eburnine,² 290
Some strain that seem'd her inmost soul to find:
That favour'd strain was Surrey's raptur'd line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

XX

Slow roll'd the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away —
So royal envy roll'd the murky storm 295
O'er my belovèd Master's glorious day.

¹ *Agra*—In India, noted for its silk.

² *Eburnine*—Of ivory.

Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
 On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
 The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
 The gory bridal bed,¹ the plunder'd shrine,² 300
 The murder'd Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

XXI

Both Scots, and Southern cheers, prolong
 Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
 These³ hated Henry's name as death, 305
 And those³ still held the ancient faith.—
 Then, from his seat, with lofty air,
 Rose Harold, bard of brave St. Clair;⁴
 St. Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
 Had with that lord to battle come.
 Harold was born where restless seas 310
 Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;⁵
 Where erst St. Clairs held princely sway
 O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
 Still nods their palace to its fall,

¹ **Gory bridal bed**—A reference to the marriage of Henry VIII to Jane Seymour, the day after the execution of Anne Boleyn.

² **Plundered shrine**—A reference to the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII.

³ **These—Those**—The Scots hated Henry on account of the defeat at Flodden, and the Howards were of the Catholic faith. Some hold that *these* refers to the English and *those* to the Scots, but the meaning given is the more likely.

⁴ **St. Clair**—"The St. Clairs are of Norman extraction, being descended from William de St. Clair, second son of Walderne, Comte de St. Clair, and Margaret, daughter of Richard Duke of Normandy. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Malice Spar, Earl of Orkney and Stratherne, in whose right their son Henry was in 1379 created Earl of Orkney by Haco King of Norway. In exchange for this earldom the castle and domains of Ravenscraig or Ravensheuch were conferred on William St. Clair, Earl of Caithness."—*Scott*.

⁵ **Orcades**—The Orkney Islands.

Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall¹!— 313
 Thence oft he mark'd fierce Pentland² rave,
 As if grim Odin³ rode her wave;
 And watch'd, the whilst, with visage pale,
 And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
 For all of wonderful and wild 320
 Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII

And much of wild and wonderful
 In these rude isles might fancy cull;
 For thither came, in times afar,
 Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,⁴ 325
 The Norsemen, train'd to spoil and blood,
 Skill'd to prepare the raven's food;⁵
 Kings of the main their leaders brave,
 Their barks the dragons of the wave.
 And there, in many a stormy vale, 330
 The Scald⁶ had told his wondrous tale;
 And many a Runic⁷ column high
 Had witness'd grim idolatry.
 And thus had Harold in his youth,
 Learn'd many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,— 335

¹ **Kirkwall**—Kirkwall Castle is now in a ruinous condition. It is their *pride* as it reminds them of the former glory of their race, and their *sorrow* on account of its ruined condition.

² **Pentland**—Pentland Firth.

³ **Odin**—The chief god of the Norse. The Orkney Islands formerly belonged to Norway.

⁴ **Sons of war**—The Norse sea-rovers. **Lochlin** is the Gaelic name for Scandinavia.

⁵ **Raven's food**—Bodies of the dead on which the ravens feed.

⁶ **Scald**—Scandinavian poet.

⁷ **Runic**—The Norse alphabet consisted of sixteen letters or *runes*.

Of that Sea-Snake,¹ tremendous curl'd,
 Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
 Of those dread Maids,² whose hideous yell
 Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
 Of Chiefs,³ who, guided through the gloom 340
 By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
 Ransack'd the graves of warriors old,
 Their falchions wrench'd from corpses' hold,
 Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
 And bade the dead arise to arms! 345

With war and wonder all on flame,
 To Roslin's⁴ bowers young Harold came,
 Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
 He learn'd a milder minstrelsy;
 Yet something of the Northern spell 350
 Mix'd with the softer numbers well.

¹ **Sea-Snake**—The Midgard Serpent, a huge snake that encircles the earth with its body. At the last great fight between Odin and the Powers of Darkness, the serpent will fight with the latter, but will be slain by the war-god, Thor, who will himself be slain by the venom which the serpent pours forth.

² **Dread Maids**—The Valkyries, sent forth to every battlefield to choose the heroes who were carried to Valhalla. Though dead on earth the warriors still live in Odin's Hall, where they are trained to fight in order that they may be ready to support the gods in the day of the great conflict with the powers of evil.

³ **Chiefs**—"The Northern warriors were usually entombed with their arms and their other treasures.... Their ghosts were not wont tamely to suffer their tombs to be plundered; and hence the mortal heroes had an additional temptation to attempt such adventures; for they held nothing more worthy of their valour than to encounter supernatural beings."—*Scott*.

⁴ **Roslin**—A castle on the Firth of Forth.

XXIII

HAROLD

O listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

366

—“Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravenshuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

“The blackening wave is edged with white:
To inch¹ and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water-Sprite,²
Whose screams forbode that wreck is nigh.

368

“Last night the gifted Seer³ did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, Fair, in Ravensheuch:
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?”—

369

“’Tis not because Lord Lindesay’s heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

370

“’Tis not because th⁴ ring⁴ they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,

¹ **Inch**—Small island.

² **Water-Sprite**—A spirit that by means of unearthly noises gave warning of the destruction of ships and the drowning of men and women.

³ **Seer**—Prophet.

⁴ **The ring**—Tilting at the ring, the carrying away of a suspended ring with the lance while riding at full speed, was a favourite sport of the knighthood at this time.

But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not filled by Rosabelle.'—

373

O'er Roslin all that dreary night,
A wondrous blaze¹ was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moon-beam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copse-wood glen;
'Twas seen from Dryden's groves² of oak,
And seen from cavern'd Hawthornden.³

380

Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each Baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

383

Seem'd all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy⁴ and altar's pale;⁵
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail.

386

Blazed battlement and pinnet high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair —
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high St. Clair.

395

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;

¹ **Wondrous blaze**—The chapel of Roslin Castle was said to blaze with light immediately before the death of a member of the family.

² **Dryden's groves**—Groves of oak at Dryden, south of Roslin.

³ **Hawthornden**—A castle about twelve miles from Edinburgh. Under the castle are a series of huge caverns connected by long passages.

⁴ **Sacristy**—Vestry.

⁵ **Pale**—Enclosure.

Each one the holy vault doth hold —
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each St. Clair was buried there, 400
With candle, with book, and with knell;¹
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce mark'd the guests the darken'd hall, 405
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all:
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drain'd by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told; 410
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbour's face,
Could scarce his own stretch'd hand behold.
A secret horror check'd the feast,
And chill'd the soul of every guest; 415
E'en the high Dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elvish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, mutter'd, "Found! found! found!"

XXV

Then sudden, through the darken'd air, 420
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seem'd on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall; 425

¹ Candle, book, knell—With all the rites of the church.

Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
 Were instant seen, and instant gone;
 Full through the guests' bedazzled band
 Resistless flash'd the levin-brand,¹
 And fill'd the hall with smouldering smoke, 430
 As on the elvish page it broke.

It broke, with thunder long and loud,
 Dismay'd the brave, appall'd the proud,—
 From sea to sea the larum rung;
 On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal, 435
 To arms the startled warders sprung.
 When ended was the dreadful roar,
 The elvish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
 Some saw a sight, not seen by all; 440
 That dreadful voice was heard by some,
 Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN,² COME!"
 And on the spot where burst the brand,
 Just where the page had flung him dour
 Some saw an arm, and some a hand, 445
 And some the waving of a gown.
 The guests in silence pray'd and shook,
 And terror dimm'd each lofty look.
 But none of all the astonish'd train
 Was so dismay'd as Deloraine; 450
 His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
 'Twas fear'd his mind would ne'er return;
 For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
 Like him of whom the story ran,

¹ *Levin-brand*—Flash of lightning.

² *Gylbin*—The dwarf's name was Gylbin or Gilpin Horner.

Who spoke the spectre-hound¹ in Man. 454
 At length, by fits, he darkly told,
 With broken hint, and shuddering cold —
 That he had seen, right certainly,
A shape with amice wrapp'd around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound, 456
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
 And knew — but how it matter'd not —
 It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
 All trembling heard the wondrous tale; 466
 No sound was made, no word was spoke,
 Till noble Angus silence broke;
 And he a solemn sacred plight
 Did to St. Bride of Douglas² make,
 That he a pilgrimage would take 470
 To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
 Of Michael's restless sprite.
 Then each, to ease his troubled breast,
 To some bless'd saint his prayers address'd:
 Some to St. Modan³ made their vows, 473
 Some to St. Mary of the Lowes,
 Some to the Holy Rood⁴ of Lisle,
 Some to our Ladye of the Isle;
 Each did his patron witness make,
 That he such pilgrimage would take, 480

¹ *Spectre-hound*—A dog called the *Mauthe Doog*, formerly haunted the Isle of Man. On one occasion a drunken soldier encountered the spectre and spoke to it. He was struck dumb and died three days later in agony.

² *St. Bride*—The favourite saint of the house of Douglas, and of the Earl of Angus in particular.

³ *St. Modan*—A Scottish abbot of the seventh century.

⁴ *Holy Rood*—Holy Cross.

And monks should sing, and bells should toll,
 All for the weal of Michael's soul.
 While vows were ta'en, and prayers were pray'd,
 'Tis said the noble dame, dismay'd,
 Renounced, for aye, dark magic's aid. 485

XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
 Which after in short space befell;
 Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
 Bless'd Teviot's Flower, and Cranstoun's heir:
 After such dreadful scene, 'twere vain 490
 To wake the note of mirth again.

More meet it were to mark the day
 Of penitence and prayer divine,
 When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
 Sought Melrose' holy shrine. 495

XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
 And arms enfolded on his breast,
 Did every pilgrim go;
 The standers-by might hear uneath,
 Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath, 500

Through all the lengthen'd row:
 No lordly look, nor martial stride,
 Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
 Forgotten their renown;

Silent and slow, like ghosts they glide
 To the high altar's hallow'd side, 505

And there they knelt them down:
 Above the suppliant chieftains wave
 The banners of departed brave;
 Beneath the letter'd stones¹ were laid 510

¹ Letter'd stones—Tombstones covered with inscriptions.

The ashes of their fathers dead;
 From many a garnish'd niche around,
 Stern saints and tortured martyrs frown'd.

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
 With sable cowl and scapular,¹ 515
 And snow-white stoles, in order due,
 The holy Fathers, two and two,
 In long procession came;
 Taper and host,² and book they bare,
 And holy banner, flourish'd fair 520
 With the Redeemer's name.
 Above the prostrate pilgrim band
 The mitred Abbot stretch'd his hand,
 And bless'd them as they kneel'd;
 With holy cross he sign'd them all, 525
 And pray'd they might be sage in hall,
 And fortunate in field.
 Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
 And solemn requiem for the dead;
 And bells toll'd out their mighty peal, 530
 For the departed spirit's weal;
 And ever in the office close³
 The hymn of intercession rose;
 And far the echoing aisles prolong
 The awful burthen⁴ of the song,— 535

¹ **Scapular**—"A part of a monk's dress, consisting of two kinds of woollen stuff crossing the shoulders, one hanging behind, one before."

² **Host**—The consecrated wafer used in the service of the church.

³ **Office close**—At the close of each part of the service.

⁴ **Burthen**—Refrain.

DIES IRÆ,¹ DIES ILLA,
 SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA;
 While the pealing organ rung;
 Were it meet with sacred strain
 To close my lay, so light and vain,
 Thus the holy Fathers sung.

540

XXXI

HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
 When heaven and earth shall pass away,
 What power shall be the sinner's stay?
 How shall he meet that dreadful day?

545

When, shrivelling like a parchèd scroll,
 The flaming heavens together roll;
 When louder yet, and yet more dread,
 Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
 When man to judgment wakes from clay,
 Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
 Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

550

HUSH'D is the harp — the Minstrel gone.
 And did he wander forth alone?
 Alone, in indigence and age,
 To linger out his pilgrimage?
 No; close beneath proud Newark's tower,
 Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower;

555

¹ *Dies iræ*—The famous Latin hymn sung for the repose of the souls of the dead, composed by Thomas of Celano in 1230. The first words are here given: "The day of wrath, that day shall the world melt in ashes."

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

123

A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There shelter'd wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begg'd before.
So pass'd the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath;
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourish'd, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged Harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high,
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he roll'd along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

560

565

570

575

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555

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