Lady of the Lake

By
Sir Walter Scott

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CHICAGO
ORVILLE BREWER PUBLISHING CO.
1908
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SIR WALTER SCOTT
(1771-1832)

Sir Walter Scott, "the Wizard of the North," was born in Edinburgh. His father was a successful lawyer and a man of good education. When less than two years old, a fever caused Walter partially to lose the use of one of his limbs, and he was sent to the home of his grandfather Scott at Sandy-Knowe, where he gradually recovered his health, though as a result of his misfortune, he was lame the remainder of his life. For several years he was under the care of his maiden aunt and his grandmother, each of whom delighted in telling him stories or reading to him from books containing old Scotch ballads and tales of highland and border life. The young lad memorized many passages from these works, occasionally learning, without effort, entire ballads, and these he frequently repeated, sometimes to the edification, but more frequently to the annoyance, of visitors.

While in school and college, Scott was distinguished for his remarkable memory and his ability to repeat ballads and poems and to tell stories. This power, combined with his genial nature, made him very popular with his schoolfellows. When but a mere boy he became deeply interested in the old tales and ballads of the Scottish border, and thus early in life he unconsciously began the preparation for the literary career which has made his name a household word wherever the English language is spoken.
Sir Walter Scott

Scott's father intended that he should be a lawyer, and when he completed his college course he entered his father's office to prepare for that profession. Here he remained for a number of years and afterward engaged in business for himself for a time, in all practicing law about fourteen years, and this with a good degree of success. However, during this time he gave more or less attention to literature. Although lame, he was fond of tramping and made many excursions over the neighboring counties in search of places noted for battles, sieges or the beauty of their scenery. So frequent were these excursions that, notwithstanding his success at law, his father said that he was better fitted for a peddler than a lawyer.

Scott's first work of importance was a book on The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border. This publication appeared in January, 1802, and was a great success, giving him immediate distinction in the field of literature. This work was followed in quite rapid succession by The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Marmion and The Lady of the Lake, which was first published in 1810. It is by these three long poems that Scott is most widely known as a poet. The English critic Jeffrey says of them: "The Lay, if I may venture to state the creed now established, is, I should say, generally considered as the most natural and original; Marmion as the most powerful and splendid; The Lady of the Lake as the most interesting, romantic, picturesque and graceful of his great poems."

These ballads were followed by Rokeby and The Lord of the Isles. Besides these, Scott wrote a large number of short poems, many of which were connected with his novels. However, after the publication of The Lady of the Lake his prestige as a poet began to wane. Lord Byron at that time had published several poems of im-
portance and was attracting more attention than Scott. It is thought by some of his friends that this was one of the strong reasons for his abandoning poetry for fiction. However, long before this he had been attracted to this field of literature and had decided to write one or more novels.

In the summer of 1814 Scott took up and completed a Jacobite story which he had begun several years before and laid aside. This story was Waverley and was the first of that series of novels to which it gave the name. Waverley was published anonymously, but it immediately attracted wide attention and was read and re-read by the best critics of the day as well as by the public at large. For a time the author was referred to as “The Great Unknown.” However, the best literary men conceived that no one but Scott could have written such a story. In fourteen years following the appearance of Waverley, Scott wrote twenty-three novels, besides numerous short tales and articles on history. Some of these works were written very rapidly, and his critics consider that those that were completed in the shortest time are in many respects the strongest.

The Waverley novels can be divided into two great classes: those which are historical and those referring to private life. Among the most prominent of the historical novels are Waverley, Legend of Montrose, Old Mortality, The Monastery, The Abbot, The Fair Maid of Perth and Castle Dangerous, all referring to Scotch history. The great English novels of historical character are Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, The Fortunes of Nigel, Peverel of the Peak, The Talisman, and Woodstock. Quentin Durward, Anne of Geirstein and Count Robert of Paris treat of events which transpired on the continent of Europe. Among the most important novels of
the second class are *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Black Dwarf*. The periods covered by the historical novels extend from the time of the Crusades to that of the Pretenders in 1745.

Soon after the publication of *Waverley*, Scott formed a partnership with Ballantyne Brothers, printers. The management of their business was unfortunate, and within a few years they failed with a heavy indebtedness.

While Scott’s relation to the firm was such that he could not be held responsible for this debt, yet he felt that he should pay it, and when he was fifty-five years of age he settled down to the task of paying off nearly six hundred thousand dollars by the work of his pen. For two years he worked with unremitting zeal and reduced the debt nearly two hundred thousand dollars; but the task was too severe and his health failed. He would not listen to the importunities of his friends to take much-needed rest until it was too late. A trip to Italy, where he remained several months, was ineffective, and he returned home to die on his estate at Abbotsford, where he passed away September 21, 1832.

Scott’s fame and place in literature rest mainly upon the fact that he was the originator of the historic novel. His works have lived because of their clear and attractive descriptions of scenery, their keen delineation of character and their purity of tone. When about to die he said to his son-in-law, Lockhart, “I am drawing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage; I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day, and it is a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man’s faith, to corrupt no man’s principle.”
Sir Walter Scott

His novels are peculiar in that nearly all of them treat of public phases of life instead of private individuals; therefore his characters are represented as individuals affected by public strifes and the social divisions of the day. "No man can read Scott without being more of a public man," his son-in-law and most faithful biographer, Lockhart, says of the influence of his writings; "but his moral, political and religious character has sufficiently impressed itself upon the great body of his writings. He is indeed one of the few great authors of modern Europe who stand acquitted of having written a line that ought to have embittered the bed of death. His works teach the practical lessons of morality and Christianity in the most captivating form, unobtrusively and unaffectedly." The following tribute was paid to his powers of description by Hon. E. J. Phelps, American ambassador to the court of Saint James, in a speech given at a banquet tendered him by the corporation of Glasgow. Mr. Phelps said:

"Mankind naturally frequents scenes of great historical events, where great men have lived, where great things have been done and where history has been made. Was the spectacle ever before seen in this world of thousands upon thousands of intelligent, cultivated people thronging to see the scenery and localities of events that never happened and the hearths and homes of people that never lived? Yet this is to be seen in Scotland every summer and will continue to be seen far into those summers that we shall never see."
THE LADY OF THE LAKE

INTRODUCTION

The scene of *The Lady of the Lake* is laid in the County of Perthshire, in the south central part of Scotland and in a region remarkable for the beauty of its scenery, but which was practically unknown until the publication of this poem. While engaged in the practice of law, Scott was called to this region on professional duties, and its beauty made such an impression upon him that he revisited it many times.

The period to which the poem relates is the early part of the sixteenth century, during the reign of James V of Scotland, who lived from 1513 to 1542. The incidents upon which *The Lady of the Lake* is based are the feuds which existed between the Scotch Highlanders and the Lowlanders, and the habit which James V had of wandering about his kingdom in disguise. The narrative of the poem describes one of these expeditions.

In order that the poem may be understood, one needs to know something of the inhabitants and the political conditions at the time. During the Middle Ages and for some time thereafter the inhabitants of Scotland were divided into two classes, known as the Highlanders and the Lowlanders. The northern portion of Scotland is very mountainous, and it was into this inhospitable region that the native inhabitants of Britain were driven by the Romans when they conquered that country. These people were never subdued and during the reign of the Romans and for centuries following
made frequent predatory raids upon the more fertile country to the South, their object being plunder and revenge. It was from this stock that the Scotch Highlanders descended. They spoke and still speak a language different from that of the Lowlanders and known as the Gaelic. In stature they were large. Their mode of dress was peculiar. They wore a mantle, generally known as the plaid, made of checked or striped stuff called tartan. One end of this was wrapped around the waist so as to form a short petticoat or kilt, which descended to the knee, while the remainder was folded around them like a cloak. They wore buskins made of rawhide and those who could procure bonnets had these coverings for their heads, though many of them never wore these articles during their entire lives. The men always went armed, carrying bows, arrows and large broadswords which they wielded with both hands. These they called claymores. They also used daggers for close fighting and a round wooden shield filled with nails as a protection in battle.

The Highlanders lived in tribes known as clans. All the members of the clan believed themselves to have descended at some distant period from a common ancestor. Each clan had its symbol, known as its tartan, which was a peculiar pattern of plaid. The common name Mac applied to these clans, such as MacGregor, MacNeil, MacDonald, expressed the belief that all the members of the clan belonged to one family, since this prefix means the son of, as MacGregor is the son of Gregor. The government was wholly patriarchal, and each member of the clan owed to his chief complete allegiance. Some of these clans were large and very strong, and they often, either singly or in combination, openly defied the government of the kingdom. This de-
fiancée together with their frequent predatory expeditions made the Highlanders a source of terror to the inhabitants of the plains, or the Lowlanders. Because of this the king often made military expeditions into their country and took summary vengeance upon such leaders and their followers as he could find.

The Lowlanders, on the other hand, while of equal courage, were more civilized than their Highland neighbors. They wore a different style of dress, resembling quite closely in their apparel the English. They spoke a different language, usually fought on horseback and used different weapons from the Highlanders. Between these two classes of inhabitants there was constant warfare until Scotland was subdued by the English forces.

James V, the FitzJames of the poem, was the son of James IV of Scotland and Margaret, sister of Henry VIII. His father was killed in the battle of Flodden, and James became king when two years of age. For a time his mother managed the affairs of the kingdom as regent but she became unpopular and lost the regency, also the control of the young king, who was placed under the care of the family of Douglases. This family governed under the name of the king. Nevertheless they kept him under such restraint and care that they practically ruled the kingdom according to their own desires. After he had become a young man, James decided to break away from this restraint and after two attempts succeeded. He fled to Stirling Castle, a strong fortress, and there gathered around him numerous nobles who were favorable to his rule and assumed the reins of government. He was naturally very bitter toward the Douglas family and outlawed them. However, in so doing he was unjust to Archibald Douglas, who had been very kind to him as a boy and was in no
The Lady of the Lake

wise concerned with the usurpation of government by the other members of the family. Archibald is the Douglas mentioned in the poem.

The reign of James V was in the main wise, conservative and beneficial to Scotland. He subdued the lawless tribes in the Highlands and made life and property safe throughout the kingdom. A short time before his death the queen gave birth to a daughter, who is known in history as the unfortunate Mary, Queen of Scots.

In the poem Scott describes Highland life and character as they existed in the sixteenth century. The time included in the narrative occupies six days, and the poem is divided into six cantos, each canto recounting the events of a day.

Because of the length of this poem, certain passages which are irrelevant to the narrative have been omitted, and wherever an explanatory connection is needed because of such omission, it occurs in the text. The notes contain such explanations as the editor has found valuable in the classroom. They are placed in the back of the book and are numbered to correspond with the line or lines which they respectively explain.
The Lady of the Lake

Canto First

The Chase

I

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

II

As chief, who hears his warder call,
"To arms! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flank he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
A moment listen'd to the cry,
That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.
Yell'd on the view the opening pack;  
Rock, glen, and cavern, paid them back:  
To many a mingled sound at once  
The awaken'd mountain gave response.  
A hundred dogs bay'd deep and strong,  
Clatter'd a hundred steeds along,  
Their peal the merry horns rung out,  
A hundred voices join'd the shout;  
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,  
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.  
Far from the tumult fled the roe,  
Close in her covert cower'd the doe,  
The falcon, from her cairn on high,  
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,  
Till far beyond her piercing ken  
The hurricane had swept the glen.  
Faint and more faint, its failing din  
Return'd from cavern, cliff, and linn,  
And silence settled, wide and still,  
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

The noble stag was pausing now,  
Upon the mountain's southern brow,  
Where broad extended, far beneath,  
The varied realms of fair Menteith.  
With anxious eye he wander'd o'er  
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,  
And ponder'd refuge from his toil,  
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.  
But nearer was the copsewood gray,  
That waved and wept on Loch-Achray,  
And mingled with the pine-trees blue.
The Lady of the Lake

On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigour with the hope return'd,
With flying foot the heath he spurn'd,
Held westward with unwearied race,
And left behind the panting chase.

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambus-more:
What reins were tighten'd in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunn'd to stem the flooded Teith,—
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.

Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach'd the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman pld the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Emboss'd with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sob he drew,
The labouring stag strain'd full in view.

Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,
Vindictive toil'd the bloodhounds stanch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
The Lady of the Lake

Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VII

The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deemed the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barr'd the way;
Already glorying in the prize,
Measured his antlers with his eyes;
For the death-wound and death-halloo,
Muster'd his breath, his whinyard drew;—
But thundering as he came prepared,
With ready arm and weapon bared,
The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
And turn'd him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken,
In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
His solitary refuge took.
There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wild-flowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

VIII

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanish'd game;
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
The Lady of the Lake

To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o' er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more;
Then, touched with pity and remorse,
He sorrowed o' er the expiring horse.
"I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine,
That Highland eagle e' er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey!"

IX

Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limp'd, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase,
And on the hunter hied his way,
To join some comrades of the day;
Yet often paused, so strange the road,
So wondrous were the scenes it show'd.

x

The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o' er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle.
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
The Lady of the Lake

Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower
Found in each clift a narrow bower;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak;
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glistening streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.
The Lady of the Lake

The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,
And islands that, empurpled bright,
Float amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses throw
Crags, knolls and mounds, confusedly hurl'd
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north, through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

XIII

From the steep promontory gazed
The stranger, raptured and amazed.
And, "What a scene were here," he cried,
"For princely pomp, or churchman's pride!
On this bold brow, a lordly tower:
In that soft vale, a lady's bower;
On yonder meadow, far away,
The turrets of a cloister grey.
Blithe were it then to wander here!
But now,—beshrew yon nimble deer,—
Like that same hermit's, thin and spare,
The copse must give my evening fare;
Some mossy bank my couch must be,
The Lady of the Lake

Some rustling oak my canopy.
But hosts may in these wilds abound,
Such as are better miss’d than found;
To meet with Highland plunderers here,
Were worse than loss of steed or deer.
I am alone:—my bugle-strain
May call some straggler of the train;
Or, fall the worst that may betide,
Ere now this falchion has been tried.”

But scarce again his horn he wound,
When lo! forth starting at the sound,
From underneath an aged oak,
That slanted from the islet rock,
A damsel guider of its way,
A little skiff shot to the bay,
That round the promontory steep
Led its deep line in graceful sweep,
Eddying, in almost viewless wave,
The weeping willow-twig to lave,
And kiss, with whispering sound and slow,
The beach of pebbles bright as snow.
The boat had touched this silver strand,
Just as the Hunter left his stand,
And stood conceal’d amid the brake,
To view this Lady of the Lake.
The maiden paused, as if again
She thought to catch the distant strain.
With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art,
In listening mood, she seem’d to stand,
The guardian Naiad of the strand.
The Lady of the Lake

xv

A Chieftain's daughter seem'd the maid;
Her satin snood, her silken plaid,
Her golden brooch, such birth betray'd.
And seldom was a snood amid

Such wild luxuriant ringlets hid,
Whose glossy black to shame might bring
The plumage of the raven's wing;
And seldom o'er a breast so fair,
Mantled a plaid with modest care,
And never brooch the folds combined
Above a heart more good and kind.
Her kindness and her worth to spy,
You need but gaze on Ellen's eye;
Not Katrine, in her mirror blue,
Gives back the shaggy banks more true,
Than every free-born glance confess'd
The guileless movements of her breast;
Whether joy danced in her dark eye
Or woe or pity claim'd a sigh,
Or meek devotion pour'd a prayer,
Or tale of injury call'd forth
The indignant spirit of the North.
One only passion unreveal'd,
With maiden pride and maid conceal'd,
Yet not less purely felt the flame;
O need I tell that passion's name!

xvi

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

XVII

On his bold visage middle age
Had slightly press'd its signet sage,
Yet had not quench'd the open truth
And fiery vehemence of youth;
Forward and frolic glee was there,
The will to do, the soul to dare,
The sparkling glance, soon blown to
Of hasty love, or headlong ire.
His limbs were cast in manly mould,
For hardy sports or contest bold;
And though in peaceful garb array'd,
And weaponless, except his blade,
His stately mien as well implied
A high-born heart, a martial pride,
As if a baron's crest he wore,
And sheathed in armour trode the shore.
Slighting the petty need he show'd,
He told of his benighted road;
His ready speech flow'd fair and free,
In phrase of gentlest courtesy;
Yet seem'd that tone, and gesture bland,
Less used to sue than to command.

A while the maid the stranger eyed,
And, reassured, at length replied,
That Highland halls were open still
To wilder'd wanderers of the hill.
"Nor think you unexpected come
To yon lone isle, our desert home;
Before the heath had lost the dew,
This morn, a couch was pull'd for you;
On yonder mountain's purple head
Have ptarmigan and heath-cock bled,
And our broad nets have swept the mere
To sh forth your evening cheer."—
"Now, by the rood, my lovely maid,
Your courtesy has err'd," he said;
"No right have I to claim, misplaced,
The welcome of expected guest.
A war by fortune lost,
Mine ends, my courser lost.
I ne'er before, believe me, fair,
Have ever drawn your mountain air,
Till on this lake's romantic strand,
I found a fay in fairy land!"—

"I well believe," the maid replied,
As her light skiff approached the side,
"I well believe, that ne'er before
Your foot has trod Loch Katrine's shore;
The Lady of the Lake

But yet, as far as yesternight,
Old Allan-bane foretold your plight,
A gray-haired sire, whose eye intent
Was on the visioned future bent.

He saw your steed, a dappled gray,
Lie dead beneath the birchen way;
Painted exact your form and mien,
Your hunting suit of Lincoln green,
That tasselled horn so gayly gilt,
That falchion's crooked blade and hilt,
That cap with heron plumage trim,
And yon two hounds so dark and grim.

He bade that all should ready be
To grace a guest of fair degree;
But light I held his prophecy,
And deemed it was my father's horn
Whose echoes o'er the lake were borne:"

xx

The stranger smiled:— Since to your home
A destined errant-knight I come,
Announced by prophet sooth and old,
Doomed, doubtless, for achievement bold,
I'll lightly front each high emprise
For one kind glance of those bright eyes.

Permit me first the task to guide
Your fair frigate o'er the tide:"

The maid, with smile suppressed and sly,
The toil unwonted saw him try;
For seldom, sure, if e'er before,
His noble hand had grasped an oar:
Yet with main strength his strokes he drew,
And o'er the lake the shallop flew;
With heads erect and whimpering cry,
The hounds behind their passage ply.
The Lady of the Lake

Nor frequent does the bright oar break,
The darkening mirror of the lake,
Until the rocky isle they reach,
And moor their shallop on the beach.

xxi

The stranger viewed the shore around;
'T was all so close with copsewood bound,
Nor track nor pathway might declare
That human foot frequented there,
Until the mountain maiden showed
A clambering unsuspected road,
That winded through the tangled screen,
And opened on a narrow green,
Where weeping birch and willow round
With their long fibres swept the ground
Here, for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower.

xxii

It was a lodge of ample size,
But strange of structure and device;
Of such materials as around
The workman's hand had readiest found.
Due westward, fronting to the green,
A rural portico was seen,
Aloft on native pillars borne,
Of mountain fir with bark unshorn,
Where Ellen's hand had taught to twine
The ivy and Idæan vine,
The clematis, the favored flower
Which boasts the name of virgin-bower,
And every hardy plant could bear
Loch Katrine's keen and searching air.
An instant in this porch she stayed,
And gayly to the stranger said:
'On heaven and on thy lady call,
And enter the enchanted hall!'

XXIII

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

xxiv

The wondering stranger round him gazed,
And next the fallen weapon raised:—
Few were the arms whose sinewy strength
Sufficed to stretch it forth at length.
And as the brand he poised and swayéd,
"I never knew but one," he said,
"Whose stalwart arm might brook to wield
A blade like this in battle-field."
She sighed, then smiled and took the word:
"You see the guardian champion's sword."

xxv

The mistress of the mansion came,
Mature of age, a graceful dame,
Whose easy step and stately port
Had well become a princely court,
To whom, though more than kindred knew,
Young Ellen gave a mother's due.
Meet welcome to her guest she made,
And every courteous rite was paid
That hospitality could claim,
Though all unasked his birth and name.
Such then the reverence to a guest,
That fellest foe might join the feast,
And from his deadliest foeman's door
Unquestioned turn, the banquet o'er.
At length his rank the stranger names,
"The Knight of Snowdoun, James Fitz-James;
Lord of a barren heritage,
Which his brave sires, from age to age,
By their good swords had held with toil;
His sire had fallen in such turmoil,
And he, God wot, was forced to stand
The Lady of the Lake

Oft for his right with blade in hand.
This morning with Lord Moray's train
He chased a stalwart stag in vain,
Outstripped his comrades, missed the deer,
Lost his good steed, and wandered here."

Fain would the Knight in turn require
The name and state of Ellen's sire.
Well showed the elder lady's mien
That courts and cities she had seen;
475
Ellen, though more her looks displayed
The simple grace of sylvan maid,
In speech and gesture, form and face,
Showed she was come of gentle race.
480
'T were strange in ruder rank to find
Such looks, such manners, and such mind.
Each hint the Knight of Snowdoun gave,
Dame Margaret heard with silence grave;
Or Ellen, innocently gay,
485
Turned all inquiry light away.

The hall was cleared,—the stranger's bed,
Was there of mountain heather spread,
Where oft a hundred guests had lain,
And dreamed their forest sports again.
But vainly did the heath-flower shed
Its moorland fragrance round his head;
Not Ellen's spell had lulled to rest
The fever of his troubled breast.
In broken dreams the image rose
Of varied perils, pains, and woes:
495
His steed now flounders in the brake,
The Lady of the Lake

Now sinks his barge upon the lake;
Now leader of a broken host,
His standard falls, his honor's lost.
Then,—from my couch may heavenly might Chase that worst phantom of the night!—
Again returned the scenes of youth,
Of confident, undoubting truth;
Again his soul he interchanged
With friends whose hearts were long estranged.

At length, with Ellen in a grove
He seemed to walk and speak of love;
She listened with a blush and sigh,
His suit was warm, his hopes were high.
He sought her yielded hand to clasp,
And a cold gauntlet met his grasp:
The phantom's sex was changed and gone,
Upon its head a helmet shone;
Slowly enlarged to giant size,
With darkened cheek and threatening eyes,
The grisly visage, stern and hoar,
To Ellen still a likeness bore.—
He woke, and, panting with affright,
Recalled the vision of the night.
The hearth's decaying brands were red,
And deep and dusky lustre shed,
Half showing, half concealing, all
The uncouth trophies of the hall.
Mid those the stranger fixed his eye
Where that huge falchion hung on high,
And thoughts on thoughts, a countless throng,
Rushed, chasing countless thoughts along,
Until, the giddy whirl to cure,
He rose and sought the moonshine pure.
The wild rose, eglantine, and broom
Wasted around their rich perfume;
The birch-trees wept in fragrant balm;
The aspens slept beneath the calm;
The silver light, with quivering glance,
Played on the water's still expanse,—
Wild were the heart whose passion's sway
Could rage beneath the sober ray!
He felt its calm, that warrior guest,
While thus he communed with his breast:—
'Why is it, at each turn I trace
Some memory of that exiled race?
Can I not mountain maiden spy,
But she must bear the Douglas-eye?
Can I not view a Highland brand,
But it must match the Douglas hand?
Can I not frame a fevered dream,
But still the Douglas is the theme?
I'll dream no more,—by manly mind
Not even in sleep is will resigned.
My midnight orisons said o'er,
I'll turn to rest, and dream no more.'
His midnight orisons he told,
A prayer with every bead of gold,
Consigned to heaven his cares and woes,
And sunk in undisturbed repose,
Until the heath-cock shrilly crew,
And morning dawned on Benvenue.
The Lady of the Lake

CANTO SECOND

THE ISLAND

The second canto deals with the events of the second day. Early in the morning Fitz James is furnished with a guide and takes his departure. Ellen watches him with interest and the old minstrel wafts him on his way with a song, which continues until the boat reaches the opposite shore. Fitz James lingers on the beach for a moment, hoping to receive a final token of farewell.

I

While yet he loitered on the spot,
It seemed as Ellen marked him not;
But when he turned him to the glade,
One courteous parting sign she made;
And after, oft the knight would say,
That not when prize of festal day,
Was dealt him by the brightest fair
Who e'er wore jewel in her hair
So highly did his bosom swell
As at that simple mute farewell.

Now with a trusty mountain-guide,
And his dark stag-hounds by his side,
He parts,—the maid, unconscious still,
Watched him wind slowly round the hill;
But when his stately form was hid,
The guardian in her bosom chid,—
"Thy Malcolm! vain and selfish maid!"
'Twas thus upbraiding conscience said,—
"Not so had Malcolm idly hung
On the smooth phrase of Southern tongue;
The Lady of the Lake

Not so had Malcolm strained his eye
Another step than thine to spy."—
"Wake, Allan-bane," aloud she cried
To the old minstrel by her side,—
"Arouse thee from thy moody dream!
I'll give thy harp heroic theme,
And warm thee with a noble name;
Pour forth the glory of the Graeme!"

II

The minstrel waked his harp,—three times
Arose the well-known martial chimes,
And thrice their high heroic pride
In melancholy murmurs died.
"Vainly thou bidst, O noble maid,"
Clasping his withered hands, he said,
"Vainly thou bidst me wake the strain,
Though all unwont to bid in vain.
Alas! than mine a mightier hand
Has tuned my harp, my strings has spanned!
I touch the chords of joy, but low
And mournful answer notes of woe;
And the proud march which victors tread
Sinks in the wailing for the dead.

III

"But ah! dear lady, thus it sighed,
The eve thy sainted mother died;
And such the sounds which, while I strove
To wake a lay of war or love,
Came marring all the festal mirth,
Appalling me who gave them birth,
And, disobedient to my call,
Wailed loud through Bothwell'sbannered hall,
The Lady of the Lake

Ere Douglases, to ruin driven,
Were exiled from their native heaven.—
O! if yet worse mishap and woe
My master's house must undergo,
Or aught but weal to Ellen fair
Brood in these accents of despair,
No future bard, sad Harp! shall fling
Triumph or rapture from thy string;
One short, one final strain shall flow,
Fraught with unutterable woe,
Then shivered shall thy fragments lie,
Thy master cast him down and die!"

iv

Soothing she answered him: "Assuage,
Mine honored friend, the fears of age;
All melodies to thee are known
That harp has rung or pipe has blown,
In Lowland vale or Highland glen,
From Tweed to Spey—what marvel, then,
At times unbidden notes should rise,
Confusedly bound in memory's ties,
Entangling, as they rush along,
The war-march with the funeral song?"—
Her smile, her speech, with winning sway,
Wiled the old Harper's mood away.
With such a look as hermits throw,
When angels stoop to soothe their woe,
He gazed, till fond regret and pride
Thrilled to a tear, then thus replied:
"Loveliest and best! thou little know'st
The rank, the honors, thou hast lost!
O, might I live to see thee grace,
In Scotland's court, thy birthright place,
To see my favorite's step advance
The lightest in the courtly dance.
The cause of every gallant's sigh,
And leading star of every eye,
And theme of every minstrel's art,
The Lady of the Bleeding Heart!"

v

"Fair dreams are these," the maiden cried,—
Light was her accent, yet she sighed,—
"Yet is this mossy rock to me
Worth splendid chair and canopy;
Nor would my footstep spring more gay
In courtly dance than blithe strathspey,
Nor half so pleased mine ear incline
To royal minstrel's lay as thine."
The ancient bard her glee repressed:
"Ill hast thou chosen theme for jest!
For who, through all this western wild,
Named Black Sir Roderick e'er, and smiled?
In Holy-Rood a knight he slew;
I saw, when back the dirk he drew,
Courtiers give place before the stride
Of the undaunted homicide;
And since, though outlawed, hath his hand
Full sternly kept his mountain land.
Who else dared give—ah! woe the day,
That I such hated truth should say!—
The Douglas, like a stricken deer,
Disowned by every noble peer,
Even the rude refuge we have here?
Alas, this wild marauding Chief
Alone might hazard our relief,
And now thy maiden charms expand,
The Lady of the Lake

Looks for his guerdon in thy hand;
Full soon may dispensation sought,
To back his suit, from Rome be brought.
Then, though an exile on the hill,
Thy father, as the Douglas, still
Be held in reverence and fear;
That thou mightst guide with silken thread,
Slave of thy will, this chieftain-dread,
Yet, O !oved maid, thy mirth refrain!
Thy hand is on a lion's mane.”—

vi

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

vii

"What think I of him?—woe the while
That brought such wanderer to our isle!
Thy father's battle-brand, of yore
For Tine-man forged by fairy lore,
What time he leagued, no longer foes,
His Border spears with Hotspur's bows,
Did, self-unsabbarded foreshow
The footstep of a secret foe.
If courtly spy hath harbored here,
What may we for the Douglas fear?
What for this island, deemed of old
Clan-Alpine's last and surest hold?
Beware!—But hark! what sounds are these?
My dull ears catch no faltering breeze,
No weeping birch nor aspens wake,
Nor breath is dimpling in the lake;
Still is the canna's hoary beard,
Yet, by my minstrel faith, I heard—
And hark again! some pipe of war
Sends the bold pibroch from afar."

viii

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

IX

Ever, as on they bore, more loud
And louder rung the pibroch proud.
At first the sounds, by distance tame;
Mellowed along the waters came,
And, lingering long by cape and bay,
Waied every harsher note away.
Then bursting bolder on the ear,
The clan's shrill Gathering they could hear,
Those thrilling sounds that call the might
Of old Clan-Alpine to the fight.
Thick beat the rapid notes, as when
The mustering hundreds shake the glen,
And hurrying at the signal dread,
The battered earth returns their tread,
Then prelude light, of livelier tone,
Expressed their merry marching on,
Ere peal of closing battle rose,
With mingled outery, shrieks, and blows;
And mimic din of stroke and ward,
As broadsword upon target jarred;
And groaning pause, ere yet again,
The Lady of the Lake

Condensed, the battle yelled amain:
The rapid charge, the rallying shout,
Retreat borne headlong into rout;
And bursts of triumph, to declare
Clan-Alpine's conquest—all were there.
Nor ended thus the strain, but slow
Sunk in a moan prolonged and low,
And changed the conquering clarion swell
For wild lament o'er those that fell.

x

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

XI

BOAT SONG.

Hail to the Chief who in triumph advances!
Honored and blessed be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line!
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to bourgeon and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
The Lady of the Lake

"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Ours is no sapling, chance-sown by the fountain,
Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade;
When the whirlwind has stripped every leaf
on the mountain
The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
Moored in the rifted rock,
Proof to the tempest's shock,
Firmer he roots him the ruder it blow;
Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
Echo his praise again,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

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

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine!
O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem,
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepmost glen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"
With all her joyful female band  
Had Lady Margaret sought the strand.  
Loose on the breeze their tresses flew,  
And high their snowy arms they threw,  
As echoing back with shrill acclaim,  
And chorus wild, the Chieftain's name;  
While, prompt to please, with mother's art,  
The darling passion of his heart,  
The Dame called Ellen to the strand,  
To greet her kinsman ere he land:  
"Come, loiterer, come! a Douglas thou,  
And shun to wreath a victor's brow?"  
Reluctantly and slow, the maid  
The unwelcome summoning obeyed,  
And when a distant bugle rung,  
In the mid-path aside she sprung:—  
"List, Allan-bane! From mainland cast  
I hear my father's signal blast.  
Be ours," she cried, "skiff to guide,  
And waft him from the mountain-side."  
Then, like a sunbeam, swift and bright,  
She darted to her shallop light,  
And, eagerly while Roderick scanned,  
For her dear form, his mother's band,  
The islet far behind her lay,  
And she had landed in the bay.

Some feelings are to mortals given  
With less of earth in them than heaven;  
And if there be a human tear  
From passion's dross refined and clear,  
A tear so limpid and so meek  
It would not stain an angel's cheek,  
'Tis that which pious fathers shed
The Lady of the Lake

310
Upon a duteous daughter's head!
And as the Douglas to his breast
His darling Ellen closely pressed,
Such holy drops her tresses steeped,
Though 't was an hero's eye that weeped.
Nor while on Ellen's faltering tongue
Her filial welcomes crowded hung,
Marked she that fear—affection's proof—
Still held a graceful youth aloof:
No! not till Douglas named his name,
Although the youth was Malcolm Græme.

320
Of statute fair, and slender frame,
But firmly knit, was Malcolm Græme.
The belted plaid and tartan hose
Did ne'er more graceful limbs disclose;
His flaxen hair, of sunny hue,
Curled closely round his bonnet blue.
Trained to the chase, his eagle eye
The ptarmigan in snow could spy;
Each pass, by mountain, lake, and heath,
He knew, through Lennox and Menteith;
Vain was the bound of dark-brown doe
When Malcolm bent his sounding bow,
And scarce that doe, though winged with fear,
Outstripped in speed the mountaineer:
Right up Ben Lomond could he press,
And not a sob his toil confess.
His form accorded with a mind
Lively and ardent, frank and kind;
A blither heart, till Ellen came,
Did never love nor sorrow tame;
It danced as lightsome in his breast
As played the feather on his crest.
The Lady of the Lake

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

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

Sir Roderick, who to meet them came,
Reddened at sight of Malcolm Graeme,
The Lady of the Lake

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

XVIII

"Short be my speech;—nor time affords,
Nor my plain temper, glozing words.
Kinsman and father,—if such name
Douglas vouchsafe to Roderick's claim;
Mine honored mother;—Ellen,—why,
My cousin, turn away thine eye?—
And Graeme, in whom I hope to know
Full soon a noble friend or foe,
When age shall give thee thy command,
And leading in thy native land,—
List all!—The King's vindictive pride
Boasts to have tamed the Border-side,
Where chiefs, with hound and hawk who came
To share their monarch's sylvan game,
Themselves in bloody toils were snared,
The Lady of the Lake

And when the banquet they prepared,
And wide their loyal portals flung,
O'er their own gateway struggling hung.
Loud cries their blood from Meggat's mead,
From Yarow braes and banks of Tweed,
Where the lone streams of Ettrick glide,
And from the silver Teviot's side;
The dales, where martial clans did ride,
Are now one sheep-walk, waste and wide.
This tyrant of the Scottish throne,
So faithless and so ruthless known,
Now hither comes; his end the same,
The same pretext of sylvan game.
What grace for Highland Chiefs, judge ye
By fate of Border chivalry.
Yet more; amid Glenfinlas' green,
Douglas, thy stately form was seen.
This by espial sure I know:
Your counsel in the streight I show."

Ellen and Margaret fearfully
Sought comfort in each other's eye,
Then turned their ghastly look, each one,
This to her sire, that to her son.
The hasty color went and came
In the bold cheek of Malcolm Graeme,
But from his glance it well appeared
'Twas but for Ellen that he feared;
While, sorrowful, but undismayed,
The Douglas thus his counsel said:
"Brave Roderick, though the tempest roar,
It may but thunder and pass o'er;
Nor will I here remain an hour,
To draw the lightning on thy bower;
The Lady of the Lake

For well thou know'st, at this gray head
The royal bolt was fiercest sped.
For thee, who, at thy King's command,
Canst aid him with a gallant band,
Submission, homage, humbled pride,
Shall turn the Monarch's wrath aside.
Poor remnants of the Bleeding Heart,
Ellen and I will seek apart
The refuge of some forest cell,
There, like the hunted quarry, dwell,
Till on the mountain and the moor
The stern pursuit be passed and o'er;"—

xx

"No, by mine honor," Roderick said,
"So help me Heaven, and my good blade!
No, never! Blasted be yon Pine,
My father's ancient crest and mine,
If from its shade in danger part
The lineage of the Bleeding Heart!
Hear my blunt speech: grant me this maid
To wife, thy counsel to mine aid;
To Douglas, leagued with Roderick Dhu,
Will friends and allies flock anon;
Like cause of doubt, distrust, and grief,
Will bind to us each Western Chief.
When the loud pipes my bridal tell,
The Links of Forth shall hear the knell,
The guards shall start in Stirling's porch;
And when I light the nuptial torch,
A thousand villages in flames
Shall scare the slumbers of King James!—
Nay, Ellen, blench not thus away,
And, mother, cease these signs, I pray;
I meant not all my heat might say.—
The Lady of the Lake

Small need of inroad or of fight,
When the sage Douglas may unite
Each mountain clan in friendly band,
To guard the passes of their land,
Till the foiled King from pathless glen
Shall bootless turn him home again."

xxi

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

xxii

Such purpose dread could Malcolm spy
In Ellen's quivering lip and eye,
And eager rose to speak,—but ere
The Lady of the Lake

His tongue could hurry forth his fear,
Had Douglas marked the hectic strife,
Where death seemed combating with life;
For to her cheek, in feverish flood,
One instant rushed the throbbing blood,
Then ebbing back, with sudden sway,
Left its domain as wan as clay.
“Roderick, enough! enough!” he cried,
“My daughter cannot be thy bride;
Not that the blush to wooer dear,
Nor paleness that of maiden fear.
It may not be,—forgive her, Chief,
Nor hazard aught for our relief.
Against his sovereign, Douglas ne’er
Will level a rebellious spear.
’T was I that taught his youthful hand
To rein a steed and wield a brand;
I see him yet, the princely boy!
Not Ellen more my pride and joy;
I love him still, despite my wrongs
By hasty wrath and slanderous tongues.
O, seek the grace you well may find,
Without a cause to mine combined!”

XXIII

Twice through the hall the Chieftain strode;
The waving of his tartans broad,
And darkened brow, where wounded pride
With ire and disappointment vied,
Seemed, by the torch’s gloomy light,
Like the ill Demon of the night,
Stooping his pinions’ shadowy sway
Upon the nighted pilgrim’s way;
But, unrequited Love! thy dart
The Lady of the Lake

Plunged deepest its envenomed smart,
And Roderick, with thine anguish stung,
At length the hand of Douglas wrung,
While eyes that mocked at tears before
With bitter drops were running o'er.
The death-pangs of long-cherished hope
Scarce in that ample breast had scope,
But, struggling with his spirit proud,
Convulsive heaved its checkered shroud,
While every sob—so mute were all—
Was heard distinctly through the hall.
The son's despair, the mother's look,
Ill might the gentle Ellen brook;
She rose, and to her side there came,
To aid her parting steps, the Graeme.

Then Roderick from the Douglas broke—
As flashes flame through sable smoke,
With stalwart grasp his hand he laid
On Malcolm's breast and belted plaid:
"Back, beardless boy!" he sternly said,
"Back, minion! holdst thou thus at naught
The lesson I so lately taught?
This roof, the Douglas, and that maid,
Thank thou for punishment delayed."
Eager as greyhound on his game,
Fiercely with Roderick grappled Graeme.
"Perish my name, if aught afford
Its Chieftain safety save his sword!"
Thus as they strove their desperate hand
Griped to the dagger or the brand,
And death had been—but Douglas rose,
And thrust between the struggling foes.
The Lady of the Lake

His giant strength:—"Chieftains, forego! I hold the first who strikes my foe. Madmen, forbear your frantic jar! What! is the Douglas fallen so far, His daughter's hand is deemed the spoil Of such dishonorable broil?"
Sullen and slowly they unclasp,
As struck with shame, their desperate grasp, And each upon his rival glared, With foot advanced and blade half bared.

xxv

Ere yet the brands aloft were flung,
Margaret on Roderick's mantle hung,
And Malcolm heard his Ellen's scream, As faltered through terrific dream. Then Roderick plunged in sheath his sword, And veiled his wrath in scornful word:
"Rest safe till morning; pity 't were Such cheek should feel the midnight air! Malise, what ho!"—his henchman came: "Give our safe-conduct to the Grane."
Young Malcolm answered, calm and bold: "Fear nothing for thy favorite hold; The spot an angle deigned to grace Is blessed, though robbers haunt the place. Thy churlish courtesy for those Reserve, who fear to be thy foes. As safe to me the mountain way At midnight as in blaze of day, Though with his boldest at his back Even Roderick Dhu beset the track.— Brave Douglas,—lovely Ellen,—nay, Naught here of parting will I say.
Earth does not hold a lonesome glen
So secret but we meet again.—
Chieftain! we too shall find an hour,"—
He said, and left the sylvan bower.

xxvi

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

xxvii

Then spoke abrupt: "Farewell to thee,
Pattern of old fidelity!"
The Minstrel’s hand he kindly pressed,—
"O, could I point a place of rest!
My sovereign holds in ward my land,
My uncle leads my vassal band;
To tame his foes, his friends to aid,
Poor Malcolm has but heart and blade.
Yet, if there be one faithful Graeme
Who loves the chieftain of his name,
The Lady of the Lake

Not long shall honored Douglas dwell
Like hunted stag in mountain cell;
Nor, ere yon pride-swollen robber dare,—
I may not give the rest to air!
Tell Roderick Dhu I owed him naught,
Not the poor service of a boat,
To waft me to yon mountain-side."
Then plunged he in the flashing tide.
Bold o'er the flood his head he bore,
And stoutly steered him from the shore;
And Allan strained his anxious eye,
Far mid the lake his form to spy,
Darkening across each puny wave,
To which the moon her silver gave.
Fast as the cormorant could skim,
The swimmer plded each active limb;
Then landing in the moonlight dell,
Loud shouted of his weal to tell
The Minstrel heard the far halloo,
And joyful from the shore withdrew.
CANTO THIRD
THE GATHERING

The third canto is devoted almost entirely to the gathering of the clan, and has but little connection with the general trend of the story. The gathering is accomplished by sending a special messenger to bear the fiery cross through the domain over which Roderick Dhu held sway. Concerning this symbol of destruction and death, Scott says:

"When a chieftain designed to summon his clan, upon any sudden or important emergency, he slew a goat, and making a cross of any light wood, seared its extremities in the fire, and extinguished them in the blood of the animal. This was called the Fiery Cross, also Crean Tarigh, or the Cross of Shame, because disobedience to what the symbol implied, inferred infamy. It was delivered to a swift and trusty messenger, who ran full speed with it to the next hamlet, where he presented it to the principal person, with a single word, implying the place of rendezvous. He who received the symbol was bound to send it forward, with equal dispatch, to the next village; and thus it passed with incredible celerity through all the district which owed allegiance to the chief, and also among his allies and neighbors, if the danger was common to them. At sight of the Fiery Cross, every man, from sixteen years old to sixty, capable of bearing arms, was obliged instantly to repair, in his best arms and accoutrements, to the place of rendezvous. He who failed to appear suffered the extremities of fire and sword, which were emblematically denounced to the disobedient by the
bloody and burnt marks upon this warlike signal. During the civil war of 1745-6, the Fiery Cross often made its circuit; and upon one occasion it passed through the whole district of Breadalbane, a tract of thirty-two miles, in three hours. The late Alexander Stewart, Esq., of Invernahyle, described to me his having sent round the Fiery Cross through the district of Appine, during the same commotion. The coast was threatened by a descent from two English frigates, and the flower of the young men were with the army of Prince Charles Edward, then in England; yet the summons was so effectual that even old age and childhood obeyed it; and a force was collected in a few hours, so numerous and so enthusiastic, that all attempt at the intended diversion upon the country of the absent warriors was in prudence abandoned, as desperate."

The effect on this occasion is expressed in the following lines of the poem:

Each valley, each sequestered glen,
Mustered its little horde of men,
That met as torrents from the height
In Highland dales their streams unite,
Still gathering, as they pour along,
A voice more loud, a tide more strong,
Till at the rendezvous they stood
By hundreds prompt for blows and blood;
Each trained to arms since life began,
Owning no tie but to his clan,
No oath but by his chieftain's hand,
No law but Roderick Dhu's command.

Meantime Douglas, Ellen and the old minstrel leave the island and seek shelter in Goblin's cave, a weird nook in a steep hollow on the side of Benvenue, and overhanging the southeastern extremity of Loch Kat-
rine. The place was so wild that it was shunned by the ignorant and superstitious Highlanders, who believed it to be the abode of evil spirits. For this reason it afforded Douglas a safe retreat.

Malise, who started with the fiery cross, soon passed his ensign on to another and departed for the border to discover and report on the number and location of the enemy. Roderick makes provision for the safety of the women, children and old men of the clan, by placing them on an island and mooring all the boats on its shores, so they cannot be reached by the enemy in case Clan Alpine is defeated in the expected battle. He sends his followers forward to the designated meeting place; and, attended by a single page to bear his sword, lingers behind to investigate conditions at Goblin's cave. As he approaches he hears Ellen singing the Ave Maria, and feels that it is the last time he shall hear her voice. After listening for a short time he departs with a heavy heart, and without letting his presence be known, and joins his men.
CANTO FOURTH
THE PROPHECY

During the night Brian, the priest, tries by a weird augury to foretell which party will win the coming battle. Roderick sleeps apart from his men and in the middle of the night he is aroused by Brian, who tells him that after fearful experience he has learned the sequel to the fight, which is stated in these words:

"Which spills the foremost foeman's life
That party conquers in the strife."

Roderick is pleased with this announcement, and tells Brian that he is certain of victory, for a spy had sought his land that morning and was being conducted to an ambush where he was sure to be slain by some of Roderick's men. This spy was Fitz James. During the conversation Malise returns. When questioned by Roderick concerning the foe, he replies:

“At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive
Two Barons proud their banners wave.
I saw the Moray's silver star,
And marked the sable pale of Mar,

"By Alpine's soul, high tidings those!
I love to hear of worthy foes.
When move they on?" "To-morrow's noon
Will see them here for battle bounce."

"Then shall it see a meeting stern!
But, for the place,—say, couldst thou learn
Nought of the friendly clans of Earn?
Strengthened by them, we well might bide
The battle on Benledi's side.
The Lady of the Lake

Thou couldst not?—well! Clan-Alpine's men
Shall man the Trosachs' shaggy glen;
Within Loch Katrine's gorge we'll fight,
All in our maids' and matrons' sight,
Each for his hearth and household fire,
Father for child, and son for sire,
Lover for maid beloved!—But why—
Is it the breeze affects mine eye?
Or dost thou come, ill-omened tear!
A messenger of doubt or fear?
No! sooner may the Saxon lance
Unfix Benledi from his stance,
Than doubt or terror can pierce through
The unyielding heart of Roderick Dhu!
'Tis stubborn as his trusty targe.
Each to his post!—All know their charge.'
The pibroch sounds, the bands advance,
The broadswords gleam, the banners dance,
Obedient to the Chieftain's glance.—
I turn me from the martial roar,
And seek Coir-Uriskin once more.
Where is the Douglas?—he is gone;
And Ellen sits on the gray stone
Fast by the cave, and makes her moan,
While vainly Allan's words of cheer
Are poured on her unheeding ear.
"He will return—dear lady, trust!"
With joy return;—he will—he must.
Well was it time to seek afar
Some refuge from impending war.
When e'en Clan-Alpine's rugged swarm
Are cowed by the approaching storm.
I saw their boats with many a light,
Floating the livelong yesternight,
Shifting like flashes darted forth
The Lady of the Lake

By the red streamers of the north;
I marked at morn how close they ride,
Thick moored by the lone islet's side,
Like wild ducks couching in the fen
When swoops the hawk upon the glen.
Since this rude race dare not abide
The peril on the mainland side,
Shall not thy noble father's care
Some safe retreat for thee prepare?"

II

"No, Allan, no! Pretend so kind
My wakeful terrors could not blind.
When in such tender tone, yet grave,
Douglas a parting blessing gave,
The tear that glistened in his eye
Drowned not his purpose fixed and high.
My soul though feminine and weak,
Can image his; e'en as the lake,
Itself disturbed by slightest stroke,
Reflects the invulnerable rock.
He hears report of battle rife,
He deems himself the cause of strife.
I saw him redden when the theme
Turned, Allan, on thine idle dream
Of Malcolm Græme in fetters bound,
Which I, thou saidst, about him wound.
Think'st thou he trowed thine omen aught?
O no! 't was apprehensive thought
For the kind youth,—for Roderick too—
Let me be just—that friend so true;
In danger both, and in our cause!
Minstrel, the Douglas dare not pause.
Why else that solemn warning given,
'If' not on earth, we meet in heaven!'
Why else, to Cambus-kenneth's fane,
If eve return him not again,
Am I to hie and make me known?
Alas! he goes to Scotland's throne,
Buys his friends' safety with his own;
He goes to do—what I had done,
Had Douglas' daughter been his son?"

"Nay, lovely Ellen!—dearest, nay!
If aught should his return delay,
He only named yon holy fane
As fitting place to meet again.
Be sure he's safe; and for the Graeme,—
Heaven's blessing on his gallant name!—
My visioned sight may yet prove true,
Nor bode of ill to him or you.
When did my gifted dream beguile?
Think of the stranger at the isle,
And think upon the harpings slow
That pressaged this approaching woe!
Sooth was my prophecy of fear;
Believe it when it augurs cheer.
Would we had left this dismal spot!
Ill luck still haunts a fairy grot.
Of such a wondrous tale I know—
Dear lady, change that look of woe,
My harp was wont thy grief to cheer."
"Well, be it as thou wilt; I hear,
But cannot stop the bursting tear."
The minstrel tried his simple art,
But distant far was Ellen's heart.

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

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

Fitz-James knew every wily train
A lady's fickle heart to gain,
But here he knew and felt them vain.
There shot no glance from Ellen's eye,
The Lady of the Lake

To give her steadfast speech the lie;
In maiden confidence she stood,
Though mantled in her cheek the blood,
And told her love with such a sigh
Of deep and hopeless agony;
As death had sealed her Malcolm's doom
And she sat sorrowing on his tomb.
Hope vanished from Fitz-James's eye,
But not with hope fled sympathy.
He proffered to attend her side,
As brother would a sister guide.
"O little know'st thou Roderick's heart!
Safer for both we go apart.
O haste thee, and from Allan learn
If thou mayst trust yon wily kern."
With hand upon his forehead laid,
The conflict of his mind to shade,
A parting step or two he made;
Then, as some thought had crossed his brain,
He paused, and turned, and came again.

VII

"Hear, lady, yet a parting word!—
It chanced in fight that my poor sword
Preserved the life of Scotland's lord.
This ring the grateful Monarch gave,
And bade, when I had boon to crave,
To bring it back, and boldly claim
The recompense that I would name.
Ellen, I am no courtly lord,
But one who lives by lance and sword,
Whose castle is his helm and shield,
His lordship the embattled field.
What from a prince can I demand,
Who neither reck of state nor land?
The Lady of the Lake

Ellen, thy hand—the ring is thine; Each guard and usher knows the sign.
Seek thou the King without delay; This signet shall secure thy way: And claim thy suit, whate’er it be As ransom of his pledge to me.
He placed the golden circlet on, Paused—kissed her hand—and then was gone.
The aged Minstrel stood aghast, So hastily Fitz-James shot past.
He joined his guide, and wending down The ridges of the mountain brown,
Across the stream they took their way That joins Loch Katrine to Achray.

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

Now wound the path its dizzy ledge Around a precipice’s edge, When lo! a wasted female form,
The Lady of the Lake

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

"Who is this maid? what means her 'lay?
She hovers o'er the hollow way,
And flutters wide her mantle gray,
As the lone heron spreads his wing,
By twilight, o'er a hunted spring."
"'Tis Blanche of Devan," Murdoch said,
"A crazed and captive Lowland maid,
Ta'en on the morn she was a bride,
When Roderick forayed Devan-side.
The gay bridegroom resistance made,
And felt our Chief's unconquered blade.
The Lady of the Lake

I marvel she is now at large,
But oft she 'scapes from Maudlin's charge.—
Hence, brain-sick fool!"—He raised his bow:
"Now, if thou strik'st her but one blow,
I'll pitch thee from the cliff as far
As ever peasant pitched a bar!"
"Thanks, champion, thanks!" the Maniac cried,
And pressed her to Fitz-James's side.
"See the gray pennons I prepare,
To seek my true love through the air!
I will not lend that savage groom,
To break his fall, one downy plume!
No!—deep amid disjointed stones,
The wolves shall batten on his bones,
And then shall his detested plaid,
By bush and brier in mid-air stayed,
Wave forth a banner fair and free,
Meet signal for their revelry."

"Hush thee, poor maiden, and be still!"
"O! thou look'st kindly, and I will.
Mine eye has dried and wasted been,
But still it loves the Lincoln green;
And, though mine ear is all unstrung,
Still, still it loves the Lowland tongue.

"For O my sweet William was forester true,
He stole poor Blanche's heart away!
His coat it was all of the greenwood hue,
And so blithely he trilled the Lowland lay!

"It was not that I meant to tell . . .
But thou art wise and guessest well."
Then, in a low and broken tone,
And hurried note, the song went on.
Still on the Clansman fearfully
She fixed her apprehensive eye,
Then turned it on the Knight, and then
Her look glanced wildly o'er the glen.

xii

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

XIII

She sat beneath the birchen tree,
Her elbow resting on her knee;
She had withdrawn the fatal shaft,
And gazed on it, and feebly laughed;
Her wreath of broom and feathers gray,
Draggled with blood, beside her lay.
The Knight to stanch the life-stream tried,—
"Stranger, it is in vain!" she cried.
"This hour of death has given me more
Of reason's power than years before;
For, as these ebbing veins decay,
My frenzied visions fade away.
A helpless injured wretch I die,
And something tells me in thine eye
That thou wert mine avenger born.
Seest thou this tress?—O, still I've worn
This little tress of yellow hair,
Through danger, frenzy, and despair!
It once was bright and clear as thine,
But blood and tears have dimmed its shine
I will not tell thee when 'twas shred,
Nor from what guiltless victim's head,
My brain would turn!—but it shall wave
Like plumage on thy helmet brave,
Till sun and wind shall bleach the stain,
And thou wilt bring it me again.
I waver still.—O God! more bright.
Let reason beam her parting light!—
O, by thy knighthood's honored sign,
And for thy life preserved by mine,
When thou shalt see a darksome man,
The Lady of the Lake

Who boasts him Chief of Alpine’s Clan,
With tartans broad and shadowy plume,
And hand of blood, and brow of gloom,
Be thy heart bold, thy weapon strong,
And wreak poor Blanche of Devan’s wrong!—
They watch for thee by pass and fell . . .
Avoid the path . . . O God! . . . farewell.”

xiv

A kindly heart had brave Fitz-James;
Fast poured his eyes at pity’s claims;
And now, with mingled grief and ire,
He saw the murdered maid expire.
“God, in my need, be my relief,
As I wreak this on yonder Chief!”
A lock from Blanche’s tresses fair
He blended with her bridegroom’s hair;
The mingled braid in blood he dyed,
And placed it on his bonnet-side:
“By Him whose word is truth, I swear,
No other favor will I wear,
Till this sad token I imbrue
In the best blood of Roderick Dhu!
But hark! what means yon faint halloo?
The chase is up—but they shall know,
The stag at bay’s a dangerous foe.”
Barred from the known but guarded way,
Through copse and cliff’s Fitz-James must stray,
And oft must change his desperate track,
By stream and precipice turned back.
Heartless, fatigued, and faint, at length,
From lack of food and loss of strength,
He couched him in a thicket hoar,
And thought his toils and perils o’er:—
“Of all my rash adventures past,
The Lady of the Lake

This frantic feat must prove the last!
Who e'er so mad but might have guessed
That all this Highland hornet's nest
Would muster up in swarms so soon
As e'er they heard of bands at Doune?—
Like bloodhounds now they search me out,—
Hark, to the whistle and the shout!—
If farther through the wilds I go,
I only fall upon the foe:
I'll couch me here till evening gray,
Then darkling try my dangerous way."

xv

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

xvi
Beside its embers red and clear,
Basked in his plaid a mountaineer;
The Lady of the Lake

And up he sprung with sword in hand,— 440
"Thy name and purpose! Saxon, stand!"
"A stranger." "What dost thou require?"
"Rest and a guide, and food and fire.
My life's beset, my path is lost,
The gale has chilled my limbs with frost."
"Art thou a friend to Roderick?" "No."
"Thou dar'st not call thyself a foe?"
"I dare! to him and all the band
He brings to aid his murderous hand."
"Bold words!—but, though the beast of game 450
The privilege of chase may claim,
Though space and law the stag we lend,
Ere hound we slip or bow we bend,
Who ever recked, where, how, or when,
The prowling fox was trapped or slain?
Thus treacherous scouts—yet sure they lie,
Who say thou cam'st a secret spy!—
"They do, by heaven!—come Roderick Dhu,
And of his clan the boldest two,
And let me but till morning rest,
I write the falsehood on their crest."
"If by the blaze I mark aright,
Thou bear'st the belt and spur of Knight."
"Then by these tokens mayst thou know
Each proud oppressor's mortal foe."
"Enough, enough; sit down and share
A soldier's couch, a soldier's fare."

-XVII

He gave him of his Highland cheer,
The hardened flesh of mountain deer;
Dry fuel on the fire he laid, 470
And bade the Saxon share his plaid.
He tended him like welcome guest,
Then thus his further speech addressed:—
"Stranger, I am to Roderick Dhu
A clansman born, a kinsman true;
Each word against his honor spoke
Demands of me avenging stroke;
Yet more,—upon thy fate, 't is said,
A mighty augury is laid.
It rests with me to wind my horn,—
Thou art with numbers overborne;
It rests with me, here, brand to brand,
Worn as thou art, to bid thee stand:
But, not for clan, nor kindred's cause,
Will I depart from honor's laws;
To assail a wearied man were shame,
And stranger is a holy name;
Guidance and rest, and food and fire,
In vain he never must require.
Then rest thee here till dawn of day;
Myself will guide thee on the way,
O'er stock and stone, through watch and ward,
Till past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard,
As far as Coiltantogle's ford;
From thence they warrant is thy sword."
"I take thy courtesy, by heaven,
As freely as 'tis nobly given!"
"Well, rest thee; for the bittern's cry
Sings us the lake's wild lullaby."
With that he shook the gathered heath,
And spread his plaid upon the wreath;
And the brave foemen, side by side,
Lay peaceful down like brothers tried,
And slept until the dawning beam
Purpled the mountain and the stream.
CANTO FIFTH
THE COMBAT

I

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

II

That early beam, so fair and sheen,
Was twinkling through the hazel screen,
When, rousing at its glimmer red,
The warriors left their lowly bed,
Looked out upon the dappled sky,
Muttered their soldier matins by,
And then awaked their fire, to steal,
As short and rude, their soldier meal.
That o'er, the Gael around him threw
His graceful plaid of varied hue,
And, true to promise, led the way,
By thicket green and mountain gray.
A wildering path!—They winded now
Along the precipice's brow.
'Twas oft so steep, the foot was fain
Assistance from the hand to gain;
So tangled oft that, bursting through,
The Lady of the Lake

Each hawthorn shed her showers of dew,—
That diamond dew, so pure and clear,
It rivals all but Beauty's tear!

iii

At length they came where, stern and steep,
The hill sinks down upon the deep.
Here Vennachar in silver flows,
There, ridge on ridge, Benledi rose;
Ever the hollow path twined on,
Beneath steep bank and threatening stone;
A hundred men might hold the post
With hardihood against a host.
The rugged mountain's scanty cloak
Was dwarfish shrubs of birch and oak,
With shingles bare, and cliffs between,
And patches bright of bracken green,
And heather black, that waved so high,
It held the copse in rivalry.
So toilsome was the road to trace,
The guide, abating of his pace,
Led slowly through the pass's jaws,
And asked Fitz-James by what strange cause
He sought these wilds, traversed by few,
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.

iv

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

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

VI

Wrathful at such arraignment foul,
Dark lowered the clansman's sable scowl.
A space he paused, then sternly said,
"And heardst thou why he drew his blade?
Heardst thou that shameful word and blow
Brought Roderick's vengeance on his foe?
What recked the Chieftain if he stood
On Highland heath or Holy-Rood?
He rights such wrong where it is given,
If it were in the court of heaven."
"Still was it outrage;—yet, 't is true,
Not then claimed sovereignty his due;
While Albany with feeble hand
Held borrowed truncheon of command,
The young King, mewed in Stirling tower,
Was stranger to respect and power.
But then, thy Chieftain's robber life!—
Winning mean prey by causeless strife,
Wrenching from ruined Lowland swain
His herds and harvest reared in vain,—
Methinks a soul like thine should scorn
The spoils from such foul foray borne."

VII

The Gael beheld him grim the while,
And answered with disdainful smile:
The Lady of the Lake

"Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
I marked thee send delighted eye
Far to the south and east, where lay,
Extended in succession gay,
Deep waving fields and pastures green,
With gentle slopes and groves between:—
These fertile plains, that softened vale,
Were once the birthright of the Gael;
The stranger came with iron hand,
And from our fathers reft the land.
Where dwell we now? See, rudely swell
Crag over crag, and fell o’er fell.
Ask we this savage hill we tread
For fattened steer or household bread,
Ask we for flocks these shingles dry,
And well the mountain might reply,—
‘To you, as to your sires of yore,
Belong the target and claymore!
I give you shelter in my breast,
Your own good blades must win the rest.’
Pent in this fortress of the North,
Think’st thou we will not sally forth,
To spoil the spoiler as we may,
And from the robber rend the prey?
Ay, by my soul!—While on yon plain
The Saxon rears one shock of grain,
While of ten thousand herds there strays
But one along yon river’s maze,—
The Gael, of plain and river heir,
Shall with strong hand redeem his share.
Where live the mountain Chiefs who hold
That plundering Lowland field and fold
Is aught but retribution true?
Seek other cause ’gainst Roderick Dhu."
Answered Fitz-James: "And, if I sought, Think'st thou no other could be brought? What deem ye of my path waylaid? My life given o'er to ambuscade?"
"As of a need to rashness due
Hadst thou sent warning fair and true,— I seek my hound or falcon strayed,
I seek, good faith, a Highland maid,— Free hadst thou been to come and go;
But secret path marks secret foe.
Nor yet for this, even as a spy,
Hadst thou, unheard, been doomed to die,
Save to fulfil an augury.
"Well, let it pass; nor will I now
Fresh cause of enmity avow,
To chafe thy mood and cloud thy brow.
Enough, I am by promise tied
To match me with this man of pride:
Twice have I sought Clan-Alpine's glen In peace; but when I come again,
I come with banner, brand, and bow, As leader seeks his mortal foe.
For love-lorn swain in lady's bower
Ne'er panted for the appointed hour,
As I, until before me stand This rebel Chieftain and his band!"

"Have then thy wish!"—He whistled shrill, And he was answered from the hill;
Wild as the scream of the curlew, From crag to crag the signal flew. Instant, through copse and heath, arose Bonnets and spears and bended bows,
The Lady of the Lake

On right, on left, above, below,
Sprung up at once the lurking foe;
From shingles gray their lances start,
The bracken bush sends forth the dart,
The rushes and the willow-wand
Are bristling into axe and brand,
And every tuft of broom gives life
To plaided warrior armed for strife.
That whistle garrisoned the glen
At once with full five hundred men,
As if the yawning hill to heaven
A subterranean host had given.
Watching their leader's beck and will,
All silent there they stood and still.
Like the loose crags whose threatening mass
Lay tottering o'er the hollow pass,
As if an infant's touch could urge
Their headlong passage down the verge,
With step and weapon forward flung,
Upon the mountain-side they hung.
The Mountaineer cast glance of pride
Along Benledi's living side,
Then fixed his eye and sable brow
Full on Fitz-James: "How say'st thou now?
These are Clan-Alpine's warriors true;
And, Saxon,—I am Roderick Dhu!"

Fitz-James was brave:—though to his heart
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,
He manned himself with dauntless air,
Returned the Chief his haughty stare,
His back against a rock he bore,
And firmly placed his foot before:—
"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly
From its firm base as soon as I."
The Lady of the Lake

Sir Roderick marked,—and in his eyes
Respect was mingled with surprise,
And the stern joy which warriors feel
In foeman worthy of their steel.
Short space he stood—then waved his hand:
Down sunk the disappearing band;
Each warrior vanished where he stood,
In broom or bracken, heath or wood;
Sunk brand and spear and bended bow,
In osiers pale and copses low;
It seemed as if their mother Earth
Had swallowed up her warlike birth.
The wind's last breath had tossed in air
Pennon and plaid and plumage fair,—
The next but swept a lone hill-side,
Where heath and fern were waving wide:
The sun's last glance was glinted back
From spear and glaive, from targe and jack,—
The next, all unreflected, shown
On bracken green and cold gray stone.

Fitz-James looked round,—yet scarce believed
The witness that his sight received;
Such apparition well might seem
Delusion of a dreadful dream.
Sir Roderick in suspense he eyed,
And to his look the Chief replied:
"Fear naught—nay, that I need not say—
But—doubt not aught from mine array.
Thou art my guest;—I pledged my word
As far as Coilantogle ford:
Nor would I call a clansman's brand
For aid against one valiant hand,
Though on our strife lay every vale
Rent by the Saxon from the Gael.
So move we on;—I only meant
To show the reed on which you leant,
Deeming this path you might pursue
Without a pass from Roderick Dhu.”

The Chief in silence strode before
And reached that torrent’s sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennacher in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurled.
And here his course the Chieftain stayed,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said:
“Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine’s outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain’s vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here all vantageless I stand,
Armed like thyself with single brand;
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword.”

The Saxon paused: “I ne’er delayed,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;
Nay more, brave Chief, I vowed thy death;
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved: 290
Can naught but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?"—"No, stranger, none!
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate by prophet bred 295
Between the living and the dead:
'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife.'"
"Then, by my word," the Saxon said,
"The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate hath solved her prophecy;
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James at Stirling let us go, 300
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favor free,
I plight mine honor, oath, and word
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand
That aids thee now to guard thy land."

XIV

Dark lighting flashed from Roderick's eye:
"Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew, 315
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate;—
My clansman's blood demands revenge.
Not yet prepared?—By heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valor light
As that of some vain carpet knight,
Who ill deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair."

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

Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot and point and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

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

XVI

"Now yield thee, or by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"
"Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die."
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but recked not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.—
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel
Through bars of brass and triple steel!
They tug, they strain! down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compressed,
His knee was planted on his breast;
His Clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleamed aloft his dagger bright!
But hate and fury ill supplied
The Lady of the Lake

The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game:
For, while the dagger gleamed on high,
Reeled soul and sense, reeled brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

XVII

He faltered thanks to Heaven for life,
Redeemed, unhoped, from desperate strife;
Next on his foe his look he cast,
Whose every gasp appeared his last;
In Roderick's gore he dipped the braid,—
"Poor Blanche! thy wrongs are dearly paid;
Yet with thy foe must die, or live,
The praise that faith and valor give."
With that he blew a bugle note,
Undid the collar from his throat,
Unbonneted, and by the wave
Sat down his brow and hands to lave.
Then faint afar are heard the feet
Of rushing steeds in gallop fleet;
The sounds increase, and now are seen
Four mounted squires in Lincoln green;
Two who bear lance, and two who lead
By loosened rein a saddled steed;
Each onward held his headlong course,—
And by Fitz-James reined up his horse,—
With wonder viewed the bloody spot,—
"Exclaim not, gallants! question not.—
The Lady of the Lake

You, Herbert and Luffness, alight,
And bind the wounds of yonder knight;
Let the gray palfrey bear his weight,
We destined for a fairer freight,
And bring him on to Stirling straight;
I will before at better speed,
To seek fresh horse and fitting weed.
The sun rides high;—I must be boune
To see the archer-game at noon;
But lightly Bayard clears the lea.—
De Vaux and Herries, follow me.''

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

The King must stand upon his guard;
Douglas and he must meet prepared."
Then right-hand wheeled their steeds, and straight
They won the Castle's postern gate.

XIX

The Douglas, who had bent his way
From Cambus-kenneth's abbey gray,
Now, as he climbed the rocky shelf,
Held sad communion with himself:—
"Yes! all is true my fears could frame;
A prisoner lies the noble Græme,
And fiery Roderick soon will feel
The vengeance of the royal steel.
I, only I, can ward their fate,—
God grant the ransom come not late!
The Abbess hath her promise given,
My child shall be the bride of Heaven;—
Be pardoned one repining tear!
For He who gave her knows how dear,
How excellent!—but that is by,
And now my business is—to die.—
Ye towers! within whose circuit dread
A Douglas by his sovereign bled;
And thou, O sad and fatal mound!
That oft hast heard the death-axe sound,
As on the noblest of the land
Fell the stern headsman's bloody hand,—
The dungeon, block, and nameless tomb
Prepare—for Douglas seeks his doom!
But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what masquers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum,
And merry morrice-dancers come.
The Lady of the Lake

I guess, by all this quaint array,
The burghers hold their sports to-day.
James will be there; he loves such show,
Where the good yeoman bends his bow,
And the tough wrestler foils his foe,
As well as where, in proud career,
The high-born tilter shivers spear.
I'll follow to the Castle-park,
And play my prize;—King James shall mark
If age has tamed these sinews stark,
Whose force so oft in happier days
His boyish wonder loved to praise."

xx

The Castle gates were open flung,
The quivering drawbridge rocked and rung,
And echoed loud the flinty street
Beneath the coursers' clattering feet,
As slowly down the steep descent
Fair Scotland's King and nobles went,
While all along the crowded way
Was jubilee and loud huzza.
And ever James was bending low
To his white jennet's saddle-bow,
Doffing his cap to city dame,
Who smiled and blushed for pride and shame.
And well the simperer might be vain,—
He chose the fairest of the train.
Gravely he greets each city sire,
Commends each pageant's quaint attire,
Gives to the dancers thanks aloud,
And smiles and nods upon the crowd,
Who rend the heavens with their acclaims,—
"Long live the Commons' King; King James!"
Behind the King thronged peer and knight,
And noble dame and damsel bright,
Whose fiery steeds ill brooked the stay
Of the steep street and crowded way.
But in the train you might discern
Dark lowering brow and visage stern;
There nobles mourned their pride restrained,
And the mean burgher's joys disdained;
And chiefs, who, hostage for their clan,
Were each from home a banished man,
There thought upon their own gray tower,
Their waving woods, their feudal power,
And deemed themselves a shameful part
Of pageant which they cursed in heart.

XXI

Now, in the Castle-park, drew out
Their checkered bands the joyous rout.
There morricers, with bell at heel
And blade in hand, their mazes wheel;
But chief, beside the butts, there stand
Bold Robin Hood and all his band,—
Friar Tuck with quarterstaff and cowl,
Old Scathelocke with his surly scowl,
Maid Marian, fair as ivory bone,
Scarlet, and Mutch, and Little John;
Their bugles challenge all that will,
In archery to prove their skill.
The Douglas bent a bow of might,—
His first shaft centered in the white,
And when in turn he shot again,
His second split the first in twain.
From the King's hand must Douglas take
A silver dart, the archer's stake;
Fondly he watched, with watery eye,
Some answering glance of sympathy,—
The Lady of the Lake

No kind emotion made reply!
Indifferent as to archer wight,
The monarch gave the arrow bright.

XXII

Now clear the ring! for, hand to hand,
The manly wrestlers take their stand.
Two o’er the rest superior rose,
And proud demanded mightier foes,—
Nor called in vain, for Douglas came.—
For life is Hugh of Larbert lame;
Scarce better John of Allon’s fare,
Prize of the wrestling match, the King
To Douglas gave a golden ring,
While coldly glanced his eye of blue,
As frozen drop of wintry dew.
Douglas would speak, but in his breast
His struggling soul his words suppressed;
Indignant then he turned him where
Their arms the brawny yeomen bare,
To hurl the massive bar in air.
When each his utmost strength had shown,
The Douglas rent an earth-fast stone
From its deep bed, then heaved it high,
And sent the fragment through the sky
A rood beyond the farthest mark;
And still in Stirling’s royal park,
The gray-haired sires, who know the past,
To strangers point the Douglas cast,
And moralize on the decay
Of Scottish strength in modern day.

XXIII

The vale with loud applauses rang,
The Ladies’ Rock sent back the clang.
The Lady of the Lake

The King, with look unmoved, bestowed
A purse well filled with pieces broad.
Indignant smiled the Douglas proud,
And threw the gold among the crowd,
Who now with anxious wonder scan,
And sharper glance, the dark gray man;
Till whispers rose among the throng,
That heart so free, and hand so strong,
Must to the Douglas blood belong.
The old men marked and shook the head,
To see his hair with silver spread,
And winked aside, and told each son
Of feats upon the English done,
Ere Douglas of the stalwart hand,
Was exiled from his native land.
The women praised his stately form,
Though wrecked by many a winter's storm;
The youth with awe and wonder saw
His strength surpassing Nature's law.
Thus judged, as is their wont, the crowd,
Till murmurs rose to clamors loud.
But not a glance from that proud ring
Of peers who circled round the King
With Douglas held communion kind,
Or called the banished man to mind;
No, not from those who at the chase
Once held his side the honored place,
Begirt his board, and in the field
Found safety underneath his shield;
For he whom royal eyes disown,
When was his form to courtiers known!

The Monarch saw the gambols flag,
And bade let loose a gallant stag,
Whose pride, the holiday to crown,
Two favorite greyhounds should pull down,
That venison free and Bourdeaux wine
Might serve the archery to dine.
But Lufra,—whom from Douglas’ side
Nor bribe or threat could e’er divide,
The fleetest hound in all the North,—
Brave Lufra saw, and darted forth.
She left the royal hounds midway,
And dashing on the antlered prey,
Sunk her sharp muzzle in his flank,
And deep the flowing life-blood drank.
The King’s stout huntsman saw the sport
By strange intruder broken short,
Came up, and with his leash unbound
In anger struck the noble hound.
The Douglas had endured, that morn,
The King’s cold look, the nobles’ scorn,
And last, and worst to spirit proud,
Had borne the pity of the crowd;
But Lufra had been fondly bred,
To share his board, to watch his bed,
And oft would Ellen Lufra’s neck,
In maiden glee with garlands deck;
They were such playmates that with name
Of Lufra Ellen’s image came.
His stifled wrath is brimming high,
In darkened brow and flashing eye;
As waves before the bark divide,
The crowd gave way before his stride;
Needs but a buffet and no more,
The groom lies senseless in his gore.
Such blow no other hand could deal,
Though gauntleted in glove of steel.
The Lady of the Lake

xxv
Then clamored loud the royal train,
And brandished swords and staves amain,
But stern the Baron's warning: "Back!
Back, on your lives, ye menial pack!
Beware the Douglas.—Yes! behold,
King James! The Douglas, doomed of old,
And vainly sought for near and far,
A victim to atone the war,
A willing victim, now attends,
Nor craves thy grace but for his friends.—"
"Thus is my clemency repaid?
Presumptuous Lord!" the Monarch said.
"Of thy misproud ambitious clan,
Thou, James of Bothwell, wert the man,
The only man, in whom a foe
My woman-mercy would not know;
But shall a Monarch's presence brook
Injurious blow and haughty look?—
What ho! the Captain of our Guard!
Give the offender fitting ward.—
Break o'f the sports!"—for tumult rose,
And yeomen 'gan to bend their bows,—
"Break o'f the sports!" he said and frowned,
"And bid our horsemen clear the ground."

xxvi
Then uproar wild and misarray
Marred the fair form of festal day.
The horsemen pricked among the crowd,
Repelled by threats and insult loud;
To earth are borne the old and weak,
The timorous fly, the women shriek;
With flint, with shaft, with staff, with bar,
The hardier urge tumultuous war.
The Lady of the Lake

At once round Douglas darkly sweep,
The royal spears in circle deep,
And slowly scale the pathway steep,
While on the rear in thunder pour
The rabble with disordered roar.
With grief the noble Douglas saw
The Commons rise against the law,
And to the leading soldier said:
"Sir John of Hyndford, 't was my blade
That Knighthood on thy shoulder laid;
For that good deed permit me then
A word with these misguided men.—

XXVII

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

And curse the Douglas for the cause.
O let your patience ward such ill,
And keep your right to love me still!"

xxviii

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

xxix

The offended Monarch rode apart,
With bitter thought and swelling heart,
And would not vouchsafe again
Through Stirling streets to lead his train.
“O Lennox, who would wish to rule
This changeling crowd, this common fool?
Hear’st thou,” he said, “the loud acclaim
With which they shout the Douglas name?
With like acclaim the vulgar throat
Strained for King James their morning note,
With like acclaim they hailed the day
The Lady of the Lake

When I first broke the Douglas sway;
And like acclaim would Douglas greet
If he could hurl me from my seat.
Who o'er the herd would wish to reign,
Fantastic, fickle, fierce, and vain?

xxx

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

xxxi

"Thou warn'st me I have done amiss,
I should have earlier looked to this;
I lost it in this bustling day.—
Retrace with speed thy former way;
Spare not for spoiling of thy steed,
The best of mine shall be thy meed.
Say to our faithful Lord of Mar,
We do forbid the intended war;
Roderick this morn in single fight
The Lady of the Lake

Was made our prisoner by a knight,
And Douglas hath himself and cause
Submitted to our Kingdom's laws.
The tidings of their leaders lost
Will soon dissolve the mountain host,
Nor would we that the vulgar feel,
For their Chief's crimes, avenging steel.
Bear Mar our message, Braco, fly!"
He turned his steed,—"My liege, I hie,
Yet ere I cross this lily lawn
I fear the broadswords will be drawn."
The turf the flying courser spurned,
And to the towers the King returned.
CANTO SIXTH
THE GUARD-ROOM

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

II
They held debate of bloody fray;
Fought 'twixt Loch Katrine and Achray.
Fierce was their speech, and mid their words
Their hands oft grappled to their swords;
Nor sunk their tone to spare the ear
Of wounded comrades groaning near,
Whose mangled limbs and bodies gored
Bore token of the mountain sword,
Though, neighboring to the Court of Guard,
Their prayers and feverish wails were heard,—
Sad burden to the ruffian joke,
And savage oath by fury spoke!—
At length up started John of Brent,
A yeoman from the banks of Trent;
A stranger to respect or fear,
In peace a chaser of the deer,
In host a hardy mutineer,
But still the boldest of the crew
When deed of danger was to do.
He grieved that day their games cut short,
And marred the dicer's brawling sport,
And shouted loud, "Renew the bowl!
And, while a merry catch I troll,
Let each the buxom chorus bear,
Like brethren of the brand and spear."

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

iv

"No, comrade;—no such fortune mine.
After the fight these sought our line,
That aged harper and the girl,
And, having audience of the Earl,
Mar bade I should purvey them steed,
And bring them hitherward with speed.
Forbear your mirth and rude alarm,
For none shall do them shame or harm.—"
"Hear ye his boast?" cried John of Brent,
Ever to strife and jangling bent;
"Shall he strike doe beside our lodge,
And yet the jealous niggard grudge
To pay the forester his fee?
I'll have my share howe'er it be,
Despite of Moray, Mar, or thee."
Bertram his forward step withstood;
And, burning in his vengeful mood,
Old Allan, though unfit for strife,
Laid hand upon his dagger-knife;
But Ellen boldly stepped between,
The Lady of the Lake

And dropped at once the tartan screen:—
So, from his morning cloud, appears
The sun of May through summer tears.
The savage soldiery, amazed,
As on descended angel gazed;
Even hardy Brent, abashed and tamed,
Stood half admiring, half ashamed.

v

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

vi

Their Captain came, a gallant young,—
Of Tullibardine's house he sprung,—
Nor wore he yet the spurs of knight;
Gay was his mien, his humor light,
And, though by courtesy controlled,
Forward his speech, his bearing bold.
The high-born maiden ill could brook
The scanning of his curious look
And dauntless eye:—and yet, in sooth,
Young Lewis was a generous youth;
But Ellen's lovely face and mien,
Ill suited to the garb and scene,
Might lightly bear construction strange,
And give loose fancy scope to range.
"Welcome to Stirling towers, fair maid!
Come ye to seek a champion's aid,
On palfrey white, with harper hoar,
Like errant damosel of yore?
Does thy high quest a knight require,
Or may the venture suit a squire?"
Her dark eye flashed;—she paused and sighed:—
"O what have I to do with pride!—
Through scenes of sorrow, shame, and strife,
A suppliant for a father's life,
I crave an audience of the King.
Behold, to back my suit, a ring;
The royal pledge of grateful claims,
Given by the Monarch to Fitz-James."

The signet-ring young Lewis took
With deep respect and altered look,
And said: "This ring our duties own;
And pardon, if to worth unknown,
In semblance mean obscurely veiled,
Lady, in aught my folly failed.
Soon as the day flings wide his gates,
The Lady of the Lake

The King shall know what suitor waits.
Please you meanwhile in fitting bower
Repose you till his waking hour;
Female attendance shall obey
Your hest, for service or array.
Permit I marshal you the way."
But, ere she followed, with the grace
And open bounty of her race,
She bade her slender purse be shared
Among the soldiers of the guard.
The rest with thanks their guerdon took,
But Brent, with shy and awkward look,
On the reluctant maiden's hold
Forced bluntly back the proffered gold:
"Forgive a haughty English heart,
And O, forget its ruder part!
The vacant purse shall be my share,
Which in my barrel-cap I'll bear,
Perchance, in jeopardy of war,
Where gayer crests may keep afar."
With thanks—"twas all she could—the maid
His rugged courtesy repaid.

VIII

When Ellen forth with Lewis went,
Allan made suit to John of Brent:—
"My lady safe, O let your grace
Give me to see my master's face!
His minstrel I,—to share his doom
Bound from the cradle to the tomb.
Tenth in descent, since first my sires
Waked for his noble house their lyres,
Nor one of all the race was known
But prized its weal above their own.
With the Chief's birth begins our care;
The Lady of the Lake

Our harp must soothe the infant heir,
Teach the youth tales of fight, and grace
His earliest feat of field or chase;
In peace, in war, our rank we keep,
We cheer his board, we soothe his sleep,
Nor leave him till we pour our verse
A doleful tribute!—o'er his hearse.
Then let me share his captive lot,
It is my right,—deny it not!"
“Little we reck,” said John of Brent,
“We Southern men, of long descent;
Nor wot we how a name—a word—
Makes clansmen vassals to a lord;
Yet kind my noble landlord's part,—
God bless the house of Beaudesert!
And, but I loved to drive the deer
More than to guide the laboring steer,
I had not dwelt an outcast here.
Come, good old Minstrel, follow me;
Thy Lord and Chieftain shalt thou see.”

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

They entered:—'t was a prison-room
Of stern security and gloom,
Yet not a dungeon; for the day
Through lofty gratings found its way,
And rude and antique garniture
Decked the sad walls and oaken floor,
Such as the rugged days of old
Deemed fit for captive noble's hold,

"Here," said De Brent, "thou mayst remain
Till the Leech visit him again
Strict is his charge, the warders tell,
To tend the noble prisoner well."
Retiring then the bolt he drew,
And the lock's murmurs growled anew.

Roused at the sound, from lowly bed
A captive feebly raised his head;
The wondering Minstrel looked, and knew—
Not his dear lord, but Roderick Dhu!
For, come from where Clan-Alpine fought,
They, erring, deemed the Chief he sought.

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

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

XI

The Chieftain reared his form on high,
And fever’s fire was in his eye;
But ghastly, pale, and livid streaks
Checkered his swarthy brow and cheeks.
“Hark, Minstrel! I have heard thee play,
With measure bold on festal day,
In yon lone isle,—again where ne’er
Shall Harper play or warrior hear!—
That stirring air that peals on high,
O’er Dermid’s race our victory:—
Strike it!—and then,—for well thou canst,—
The Lady of the Lake

Free from thy minstrel-spirit glanced,
Fling me the picture of the fight,
When met my clan the Saxon might.
I'll listen, till my fancy hears
The clang of swords, the crash of spears!
These grates, these walls, shall vanish then
For the fair field of fighting men,
And my free spirit burst away,
As if it soared from battle fray."
The trembling Bard with awe obeyed,
Slow on the harp his hand he laid;
But soon remembrance of the sight
He witnessed from the mountain's height,
With what old Bertram told at night,
Awakened the full power of song,
And bore him in career along;—
As shallop launched on river's tide,
That slow and fearful leaves the side,
But, when it feels the middle stream,
Drives downward swift as lightning's beam.
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand kept feeble time;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafened ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp,—his hands are clenched,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrenched;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;
Thus, motionless and mornless, drew
His parting breath stout Roderick Dhu!—
Old Allan-bane looked on aghast,
While grim and still his spirit passed;
But when he saw that life was fled,
He poured his wailing o'er the dead.

xii

Ellen the while, with bursting heart,
Remained in lordly bower apart,
Where played, with many-colored gleams,
Through storied pane the rising beams.
In vain on gilded roof they fall,
And lightened up a tapestried wall,
And for her use a menial train
A rich collation spread in vain.
The banquet proud, the chamber gay,
Scarce drew one curious glance astray;
Or if she looked, 'twas but to say,
With better omen dawned the day
In that lone isle, where waved on high
The dun-deer's hide for canopy;
Where oft her noble father shared
The simple meal her care prepared,
While Lufra, crouching by her side,
Her station claimed with jealous pride,
And Douglas, bent on woodland game,
Spoke of the chase to Malcolm Græme,
Whose answer, oft at random made,
The wandering of his thoughts betrayed.
Those who such simple joys have known
Are taught to prize them when they're gone.
But sudden, see, she lifts her head,
The window seeks with cautious tread.
What distant music has the power
To win her in this woful hour?
'Twas from a turret that o'erhung
Her latticed bower, the strain was sung.
The Lady of the Lake

XIII
LAY OF THE IMPRISONED HUNTSMAN

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

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

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

XIV

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

Within ’twas brilliant all and light;
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glowed on Ellen’s dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue fancy frames
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought who owned this state,
The dreaded Prince whose will was fate!—
She gazed on many a princely port
The Lady of the Lake

Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,—
Then turned bewildered and amazed,
For all stood bare; and in the room
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent,
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,—
And Snowdoun's Knight is Scotland's King!

As wreath of snow on mountain-breast
Slides from the rock that gave it rest,
Poor Ellen glided from her stay,
And at the Monarch's feet she lay;
No word her choking voice commands,—
She showed the ring,—she clasped her hands.
O, not a moment could he brook,
The generous Prince, that suppliant look!
Gently he raised her,—and, the while,
Checked with a glance the circle's smile;
Graceful, but grave, her brow he kissed,
And bade her terrors be dismissed:—
"Yes, fair; the wandering poor Fitz-James
The fealty of Scotland claims.
To him thy woes, thy wishes, bring;
He will redeem his signet ring.
Ask naught for Douglas;—yester even,
His Prince and he have much forgiven;
Wrong hath he from slanderous tongue,
I, from his rebel kinsmen, wrong.
We would not, to the vulgar crowd,
Yield what they craved with clamor loud;
Calmly we heard and judged his cause,
The Lady of the Lake

Our council aided and our laws.
I stanched thy father's death-feud stern
With stout De Vaux and gray Glencairn;
And Bothwell's Lord henceforth we own
The friend and bulwark of our throne.—
But, lovely infidel, how now?
What clouds thy misbelieving brow?
Lord James of Douglas, lend thine aid;
Thou must confirm this doubting maid.”

xvii

Then forth the noble Douglas sprung,
And on his neck his daughter hung.
The Monarch drank, that happy hour,
The sweetest, holiest draught of Power,—
When it can say with godlike voice,
"'Arise, sad Virtue, and rejoice!'"
Yet would not James the general eye
On nature's raptures long should pry;
He stepped between—"Nay, Douglas, nay,
Steal not my proselyte away!
The riddle 'tis my right to read,
That brought this happy chance to speed.
Yes, Ellen, when disguised I stray
In life's more low but happier way,
'Tis under name which veils my power,
Nor falsely veils,—for Stirling's tower
Of yore the name of Snowdoun's claims,
And Normans call me James Fitz-James.
Thus watch I o'er insulted laws,
Thus learn to right the injured cause.”
Then, in a tone apart and low,—
"Ah, little traitress! none must know
What idle dream, what lighter thought,
What vanity full dearly bought,
The Lady of the Lake

Joined to thine eye's dark witchcraft, drew
My spell-bound steps to Benvenue
In dangerous hour, and all but gave
Thy Monarch's life to mountain glaive!"
Aloud he spoke: "Thou still dost hold
That little talisman of gold,
Pledge of my faith, Fitz-James' ring,—
What seeks fair Ellen of the King?"

XVIII

Full well the conscious maiden guessed
He probed the weakness of her breast;
But with that consciousness there came
A lightening of her fears for Græme,
And more she deemed the Monarch's ire
Kindled 'gainst him who for her sire
Rebellious broadsword boldly drew;
And, to her generous feeling true,
She craved the grace of Roderick Dhu.
"Forbear thy suit;—the King of kings
Alone can stay life's parting wings.
I know his heart, I know his hand,
Have shared his cheer, and proved his brand;—
My fairest earldom would I give
To bid Clan-Alphine's Chieftain live!—
Hast thou no other boon to crave?
No other captive friend to save?"
Blushing, she turned her from the King,
And to the Douglas gave the ring,
As if she wished, her sire to speak
The suit that stained her glowing cheek.
"Nay, then, my pledge has lost its force,
And stubborn justice holds her course.
Malcolm, come forth!"—and, at the word,
Down kneeled the Græme to Scotland's Lord.
"For thee, rash youth, no suppliant sues,
From thee may Vengeance claim her dues,
Who, nurtured underneath our smile,
Hast paid our care by treacherous wile,
And sought amid thy faithful clan
A refuge for an outlawed man,
Dishonoring thus thy loyal name.—
Fetters and warder for the Græme!"
His chain of gold the King unstrung,
The links o’er Malcolm’s neck he flung,
Then gently drew the glittering band,
And laid the clasp on Ellen’s hand.
Notes on the Lady of the Lake

Note.—The measure of the poem is iambic tetrameter, that is, the accent is on even syllables, and there are eight syllables to the line. This measure is employed by Scott in all his long poems except The Vision of Don Roderick.

CANTO FIRST


4. Glenartney.—A valley in Scotland between Benvoirlich and Uam-Var. The Artney, a small stream, flows through it.

4. Beacon.—A signal fire. Signal fires were common among the Highlanders in olden times and the poet here uses an appropriate simile, comparing the rising sun to a beacon.

5. Benvoirlich.—Ben is the Scotch word for mountain. Benvoirlich is a mountain north of Glenartney. Its altitude is 3180 feet.

10. Horn.—It was customary for the leaders of the hunt to carry a horn, on which they blew signals to the dogs and to their followers.

11. Warder.—Keeper.

18. Beamed Frontlet.—The stag's forehead adorned with antlers of full size.

20. Uam-Var.—"Ua-Var, as the name is pronounced, or more properly Ualghmor, is a mountain to the northeast of the village of Callender in Menteith, deriving its name, which signifies the great den or cavern, from a sort of retreat among the rocks on the south side, said by tradition to have been the abode of a giant. In latter times it was the refuge of robbers and banditti, who have been extirpated only within these last forty or fifty years. Strictly speaking, this stronghold is not a cave, as the name would imply, but a sort of small enclosure or recess, surrounded by large rocks and open above head."—Scott.

37. Roe.—A species of small deer.

38. Doe.—A female deer.

29. Falcon.—A species of hawk.
The Lady of the Lake

Cairn.—A heap of stones. Here used poetically for the rocky point from which the falcon surveys the surrounding country.

41. Ken.—Here meaning sight. The word sometimes means to know.

51. Menteith.—A region south of Uam-Var drained by the River Teith.

53. Moss.—A bog or morass.

Moor.—A patch of waste land covered with heath.

54. Lochard.—A small lake a few miles south of Loch Katrine. Aberfoyle is a small village about one and one-half miles east of the lake. Scott has made this lake famous by references to it in some of his other works. On the eastern side lies the scene of Helen MacGregor's conflict with the king's forces described in Rob Roy. On the north is a waterfall which was Flora Mclvor's favorite retreat in Waverley.

57. Loch-Achray.—A small lake east of Loch Katrine.

59. Benvenue.—A mountain south of Loch Katrine, altitude 2386 feet.

61. Heath.—A low shrub common on the hills and lowlands of Scotland.


68. Bochastle's Heath.—A level plain situated between the Teith and a small stream that flows out of Loch Venoch.

68. The Flooded Teith.—The Teith is formed by the union of streams flowing from lochs Katrine, Voil and Venoch. It joins the Forth before entering the sea.

72. Vennachar.—"The Lake of the Fair Valley." A sheet of water east of Loch Achray. It is about five miles long and one-half mile wide.

73. Brig of Turk.—A bridge over a small stream that flows into the outlet of Loch Achray. Brig is the Scotch for bridge.

76. Scourge and Steel.—Whip and spur.

81. Black Saint Hubert's Breed.—A famous breed of hunting hounds which take their name from the fact that they were kept by the abbots of Saint Hubert's monastery. They were of various colors.

89. Quarry.—The hunted animal.

91. Brake:—Coarse ferns or bushes.
98. For the Death Wound.—"When the stag turned to bay the ancient hunter had the perilous task of going in upon and killing the desperate animal. At certain times this was held particularly dangerous, a wound received from a stag's horn being then deemed poisonous. At all times, however, the task was dangerous and to be ventured upon wisely and warily, either by getting behind the stag while he was gazing on the hounds or by watching an opportunity to gallop roundly in upon him and kill him with the sword."—Scott.

Death-Halloo.—The shout given by the hunter when he had killed the stag.

106. Trosachs.—The name generally applied to the entire region around Loch Katrine, but strictly speaking it should be applied only to the region between Loch Katrine and Loch Achray. The word means rough or bristled country.

124. Seine.—A river of France where the horse evidently was purchased.

127. Woe Worth the Chase.—Woe be to the chase. Worth is an ancient form of the verb be used in the imperative, a use not now sanctioned.

138. Level way.—Reference to the horizontal rays of the setting sun.

139. Flinty spire.—This is a reference to the character of the rock revealed in the crags and precipices.

151. Pagod.—Pagoda, a Hindoo or Buddhist temple.

152. Mosque.—A Mohammedan temple.

155. Eglantine.—A species of wild rose. The name is also given to sweet briar.

165. Aspen.—A species of poplar. It is also called the trembling poplar, because of the almost constant quivering of the leaves.

166. Warrior Oak.—Probably so called because the timber of the oak was in general use in the construction of ships of war.

181. Unless he climb, etc.—"Until the present road was made through the romantic pass which I have presumptuously attempted to describe in the preceding stanzas, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trosachs, excepting by a short ladder composed of the branches and roots of trees."—Scott.

183. Broom.—A brushy shrub having dark green leaves and flowers of a deep golden yellow. The branches are often woven into brooms.
186. Living gold.—The lake reflected the golden tints of the sky and the ripple upon the surface made it appear as though the waters were possessed with life.

187. Loch Katrine.—This lake is about eight miles long and two miles wide. It is surrounded by high mountains and deep ravines, and because of its beauty is often referred to as "The Queen of the Scottish Lakes." Ellen's Isle is near the outlet in the wild region of the Trosachs. In his Fair Maid of Perth Scott tells us that the lake derived its name from the Catterans, a band of Highland robbers that once infested the region.

194. To sentinel.—To guard.

199. Wildering.—Bewildering.


210. Cloister.—A monastery or a convent. The word signifies a place of retirement for religious purposes.

212. Beshrew.—A mild form of imprecation meaning about the same as "Ill luck befall."

217. But hosts, etc.—"The clans who inhabited the romantic regions in the neighborhood of Loch Katrine, were, even until a late period, much addicted to predatory excursions upon their lowland neighbors."—Scott.

222. Fall the worst.—Let the worst that may befall.

223. Falchion.—A broad sword having the blade curved.

246. Monument of Grecian Art.—The maiden is compared to a Greek statue.

248. Naiad.—A water nymph. The naiads were goddesses supposed to preside over rivers, springs and fountains.

250. Snood.—The band of ribbon with which Scottish maidens bound their hair. The rich material of her apparel and the golden brooch betray her rank.

Plaid (played).—The plaid was the distinguishing garment of the Highlanders. It consisted of about a dozen yards of woolen cloth checked in bright colors. The plaid was wrapped around the middle of the body and fastened with a belt. In male attire it extended about to the knees and formed a sort of kilt. It was frequently worn as an over-garment by both men and women, and each clan was distinguished by its own plaid. Plaid refers to the garment and tartan to the pattern.

269. Indignant spirit of the North.—Reference is here made to the bold character and free spirit of the Highlanders, who brooked no restraint except at the point of the sword.
292. Prune.—To trim and arrange the feathers with the bill.
296. Wont.—Accustomed.
310. Baron.—In England and Scotland the lowest title of one who could hold a seat in the House of Lords.
314. Benighted Road.—That is, he was overtaken by night while on the road.
325. Heath.—A low green shrub, also called heather. The twigs were used for beds and brooms.
329. Ptarmigan.—The white grouse. Heath-cock.—The black grouse.
330. Mere.—Water.
332. By the rood.—By the cross; the same as "by the rod."
337. Fay.—A fairy or imaginary spirit.
342. Yesternight.—Meaning last night. Now obsolete.
345. The Visioned Future.—Concerning this belief in the second sight Scott says: "If force of evidence could authorize us to believe facts inconsistent with the general laws of nature, enough might be produced in favor of the existence of the second sight." And Martin, a thorough believer in this power, says of it in his Description of the Western Islands: "The second sight is a singular faculty of seeing an otherwise invisible object without any previous means used by the person that used it for that end. The vision makes such a lively impression upon the seers that they neither see nor think of anything else except the vision, as long as it continues; and then they appear pensive or jovial according to the object that was presented to them."
349. Lincoln Green.—Lowland huntsmen were usually clad in suits of green cloth, formerly manufactured at Lincoln, hence the name, Lincoln green.
351. Heron.—A wading bird that has long legs and a long neck.
361. Errant Knight.—Knight-errant, a term frequently applied to a knight wandering in search of adventure. The term is now used to mean any adventurer.
362. Sooth.—The meaning is preserved in soothsayer.
364. Emprise.—Enterprise—here meaning a hazardous undertaking.
378. The Rocky Isle.—This is still known as Ellen's Isle. It is situated at the foot of the lake and contains two or three acres of land. In Hunnewell's Lands of Scott we find the following description of it: "It is rather high and irregularly pyramidal. It is mostly com-
posed of dark gray rocks, mottled with pale and gray lichens, peeping out here and there amid the trees that mantle them—chiefly light graceful birches, intermingled with red-berried mountain ashes and a few dark-green, spiry pines. The landing is beneath an aged oak; and as did the Lady of the Lake and the Knight, the traveler now ascends 'a clambering unsuspected road' by rude steps to the small irregular summit of the island."

385. Winded.—Wound.

390. *Here for Retreat*, etc.—"The Celtic chieftains whose lives were continually exposed to peril, had usually in the most retired spot of their domains, some place of retreat for the hour of necessity, which as circumstances would admit, was a tower, a cavern, or a rustic hut in a strong and a secluded situation. One of these last gave refuge to the unfortunate Charles Edward, in his perilous wanderings after the battle of Culloden."—Scott.

401. Idean Vine.—The red whortle-berry.

404. *And Every Hardy Plant Could Bear*.—That is every plant which could endure the climate of the locality.

422. A Target.—A small shield or target used in battle.

424. Store.—Stored or laid up.

435. Garnish.—Finish.

442. Brook.—To bear or endure. The modern meaning is to endure against one's inclination or will.

450. To Whom, etc.—The mistress was Lady Margaret, Ellen's maternal aunt. Ellen's mother was dead and she bestowed upon her aunt a daughter's affection.

455. Though All Unasked, etc.—The Highlanders, who carried hospitality to a punctilious excess, are said to have considered it as churlish to ask a stranger his name or lineage, before he had taken refreshment. Feuds were so frequent among them, that a contrary rule would in many cases have produced the discovery of some circumstances which might have excluded the guest from the benefit of the assistance he stood in need of.—Scott.

447. Fellest.—Most cruel.

461. Snowdoun.—An old name for Stirling castle.

462. Lord of a Barren Heritage.—At this time the kingly power in Scotland was little more than a name, as shown by the reference to political conditions in the
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Introduction. Each feudal chief rendered the king such obedience as suited his convenience and no more.

466. Wot.—Knows, the word is now obsolete.

550. Orisons.—Prayers.

CANTO SECOND

24. To the old minstrel, etc.—That Highland chieftains, to a late period, retained in their services the bard as a family officer admits of very easy proof. The author of The Letters from North Scotland mentions these minstrels as late as 1720. The bard was skilled in the genealogy of all the Highland families and he sometimes acted as teacher for chieftains' sons. He was able to sing of all the warlike deeds of the successive heads of the clan, and to sing his own lyrics when occasion required. Many minstrels remained through life in the same family, and they were accounted among the leader's most faithful followers. Scott, in his Lay of the Last Minstrel, pays a high tribute to their character and fidelity.

28. Greame.—"The ancient and powerful family of Graham (which for metrical reasons is here spelt after the Scotch pronunciation) held extensive possessions in the counties of Dumbarton and Stirling. Few families can boast of more historical renown, having claim to three of the most remarkable characters in Scottish history. Sir John the Greame, the faithful and undaunted partaker of the labors and patriotic warfare of Wallace, fell in the unfortunate field of Falkirk, in 1298. The celebrated Marquis of Montrose, in whom De Retz saw realized his abstract idea of the heroes of antiquity, was the second of these worthies. And, notwithstanding the severity of his temper, and the rigor with which he executed the oppressive mandates of the princes whom he served, I do not hesitate to name as the third John Greame of Claverhouse, Viscount of Dundee, whose heroic death in the arms of victory may be allowed to cancel the memory of his cruelty to the Nonconformists, during the reigns of Charles II and James II."

Scott.

36. Uncont.—Unaccustomed.

49. Bothwell's bannered hall.—Bothwell Castle, situated near Glasgow. It is now in ruins.
50. *Douglasses.*—Scott says that the downfall of the Douglasses of the house of Angus during the reign of James V is the event alluded to in the text. The Earl of Angus had married the queen dowager and availed himself of the right thus acquired and of his extensive power to keep the young king in captivity some years after he was entitled to the throne. When James finally escaped and seized the reigns of power he was so incensed at the Douglas family that he banished them all. Archibald Douglas of Killspindle, who had been a great favorite with the young king in his childhood, is the imaginary Douglas of the poem.

68. *From Tweed to Spey.*—Two rivers of Scotland. The Tweed formed the southern and the Spey the northern boundary of the country over which the king held sway. Therefore from Tweed to Spey meant the whole country.

86. *The Bleeding Heart.*—The shield of the Douglas family bore a red heart crowned. Burton, in his *History of Scotland,* gives the following legend of the emblem:

"Robert Bruce, on his deathbed, bequeathed his heart to the good Lord James, to be borne in war against the Saracens. He joined Alphonso, King of Leon and Castile, then at war with the Moorish chief Osurga of Grenada, and in a keen contest with the Moslems he flung before him the casket containing the precious relic, crying out 'Onward as thou wert wont, thou noble heart, Douglas will follow thee.' Douglas was slain, but his body was recovered, and also the precious casket, and in the end Douglas was laid with his ancestors, and the heart of Bruce deposited in the church of Melrose Abbey."

92. *Strathspey.*—A lively Highland dance.

97. *Black Sir Roderick.*—See note on 231.

98. *Holy-Rood.*—A castle in Edinburgh. Concerning the slaying of the knight, Scott says:

"This was by no means uncommon in the Court of Scotland; nay the presence of the sovereign himself scarcely restrained the ferocious and inveterate feuds which were the perpetual source of bloodshed among the Scottish nobility."

108. *Disowned by every noble peer.*—"The exiled state of this powerful race is not exaggerated in this and
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subsequent passages. The hatred of James against the race of Douglas was so inveterate, that, numerous as their allies were, and disregarded as regal authority had usually been in similar cases, their nearest friends, even in the most remote parts of Scotland, durst not entertain them unless under the strictest and closest disguise.

112. Guerdon.—Reward.

114. Dispensation.—Ellen and Roderick were cousins, and according to the rules of the Church they could not marry without a dispensation from the Pope.

132. Shrouds.—Shields or protects.

140. Maronnan's Cell.—"The parish of Kilmaronock, at the eastern extremity of Loch Lamond, derives its name from cell or chapel dedicated to Saint Maronock or Maronnan."

152. "Tine-Man".—Archibald, the third earl of Douglas, was so unfortunate in all his enterprises that he acquired the epithet of Tineman because he tined or lost his followers in every battle which he fought."

154. Hotspur's Bows.—The reference is to the alliance of Douglas with the English under Percy or Hotspur, in the rebellion against Henry IV of England, the Scots were armed with spears and the English with the crossbow.

155. Did self unscabbarded.—"Ancient warriors, whose hope and confidence rested chiefly in their blades, were accustomed to deduce omens from them, especially from such as was supposed to have been fabricated by enchanted skill, of which we have various instances in the romances and legends of the time."

The reference here is to the falling of the sword as Fitz-James entered the lodge. The old minstrel believed this to be an ill omen.

166. Canna.—Cotton-grass.

169. Pibroch.—A tune played upon the bagpipe and peculiar to the Highlands and islands west of Scotland. Scott says of it: "the connoissuers in pipe music affect to discover in a well-composed pibroch the imitation sounds of March conflict, flight, pursuit, and all the current of a heady fight."

174. Glengyle.—A small valley at the northern end of Loch Katrine.
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176. Brianchoil.—A headland or promontory on the north shore of the lake.

179. Bannered Pine.—The pine was the ensign of Clan Alpine, and was displayed upon their flags.

182. Tartans.—Meaning here the showy plaids so much worn in the country. The tartan is also a badge or emblem of the clan and the members of each clan usually wore at least a small article of clothing made from the clan tartan. The practice is still followed by the descendants of some of the Highland families.

184. Bonnet.—Bonnet is the Scotch name for the ordinary cap worn by the men.

190. Chanters.—The tubes of the bagpipe.

212. Ward.—A motion for the purpose of parrying a blow.

222. Clarion.—A trumpet giving a clear shrill note.

231. Burden.—The chorus.

235. Rodrick, Vich Alpine hot ieroe!—“Besides his ordinary name and surname which were chiefly used in the intercourse with the Lowlands, every Highland chief had an epithet expressive of his patriarchal dignity as head of the clan and which was common to all his predecessors and successors, as Pharaoh to the kings of Egypt, or Arsaces to those of Porthia, this name was usually a patronymic expression of his descent from the founder of the family. But besides this title which belonged to his office and dignity, the chieftain had usually another peculiar to himself which distinguished him from the chieftains of the same race. This was sometimes derived from the complexion of dhù (black) or ray (red); sometimes from syl or beg or more; at other times from some peculiar explicit or some peculiar habit or appearance.” The line signifies Black Rodrick, descendant of Alpine.

238. Hail to the Chief.—“The song itself is intended as an imitation of the Parrant, or boat songs of the Highlanders, which were usually composed in honor of a favorite chief. They were so adapted as to keep time to the sweep of the oars.”

244. Burgeon.—Meaning to bud or sprout.

249. Beltane.—A May festival held by the Highlanders in honor of the sun. Fires were kindled on the hilltops and dancing and merrymaking accompanied the ceremonies.
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255. *Menteith and Breadalbane.*—Districts lying north of Loch Lomond.

258. *Glen Fruin.*—This and the names in the lines that follow refer to valleys on the borders of Loch Lomond.

261. *And the best of Loch Lomond, etc.*—"The Lennox, as the district is called, which encircles the lower extremity of Loch Lomond, was exposed to the incursions of the mountaineers, who inhabited the inaccessible fastnesses at the upper end of the lake, and the neighboring districts of Loch Katrine. These were often marked by circumstances of great ferocity."

Scott.

The battle to which the line refers was fought between the clan Macgregor on the one side and the Colquhouns on the other, and in which the Colquhouns were defeated with great slaughter.

327. *Ptarmigan.*—The white grouse.

335. *Ben Lomond.*—The highest mountain on the shores of Loch Lomond, having an altitude of 3192 feet.

336. *Not a sob, etc.*—He could ascend the mountain without panting.

350. *Quail.*—To give way to, or cower.

361. *Glenfinlas.*—A wooded valley between Benledi and Ben-An, with its entrance between Loch Achray and Loch Vennachar.

*Royal ward.*—Greame was under the protection of the king. Since Douglas had been outlawed Greame was running the risk of incurring the king's displeasure in rendering assistance to Douglas or any member of his family.

403. *Boasts to have tamed, etc.*—In 1529, James, in order to clear the Border of robbers, who during his minority had committed many depredations, assembled an army of 10,000 men, and with this force he so thoroughly subdued the outlaws that for a term of years the region was as safe as the country around the king's castle at Stirling.

The reference in the poem is to the hanging over their own gates of several noted Highland chieftains who were captured by strategy.

410. *Meggarts, Yarrow, etc.*—These are names of small streams flowing into the Tweed.

424. *Espial.*—Espying or discovery.

425. *Streight.*—Emergency or difficulty.
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455. *Blasted be yon Pine.*—The expression refers to the banner of Clan Alpine, and is equivalent to saying "Let yon banner fall."

458. *Lineage of the Bleeding Heart.*—See above, line 86.

460. *To wife.*—For my wife. Roderick believed that should he and Douglas join forces they would soon gain enough followers to enable them to conquer the king.

462. *Enow.*—The old form of enough.

466. *Links of Forth.*—The windings of the Forth between Stirling and Alloa.

467. *Stirling's Porch.*—Stirling Castle, the residence of the Scottish kings.

511. *Domain.*—Her cheek.

524. *I love him still.*—Notwithstanding the wrongs which Douglas had suffered from James V, he retained the feeling of a father towards the young King, and he here asserts his loyalty.

545. *Checkered shroud.*—His plaid of tartan.

585. *Pity 'twere, etc.*—"Hardihood was in every respect so essential to the character of the Highlander, that the reproach of effeminency was the most bitter that could be thrown upon him."—Scott.

586. *His henchman.*—"This officer is a sort of secretary, and is to be ready upon all occasions to venture his life for his master; and at drinking bouts he stands behind his seat, at his haunch, from which the title is derived, and watches the conversation to see if any one offends his patron."—Scott.

609. *Fiery cross.*—See below, Canto III.

625. *My sovereign holds, etc.*—Malcom was not of age, therefore his estate was in charge of the Crown.

CANTO FOURTH

1. *Doune.*—The Braes of Doune were the hill country north of the Teith.

3. *Moray's silver star.*—The Earl of Moray's banner bore a single silver star, and that of the Earl of Mar had a black band called a pale extending down the center of the shield. These earls were supporters of the King.


25. *Stance.*—Support or foundation.
28. **Targe.**—A shield, usually made of bull's hide.

34. **Coir-Urskin.**—Also written Coir-nan-Urskin. Scott gives the following description of this place:

“This is a very steep and most romantic hollow in the mountain of Benvenue, overhanging the south-eastern extremity of Loch Katrine. It is surrounded with stupendous rocks, and overshadowed with birch trees, mingled with oaks, the spontaneous production of the mountain, even where its cliffs appear denuded of soil.”

The name *Corri* means the den of wild or shaggy men, but the fabled Urisk supposed to have inhabited the cave in the past ages had a figure between a goat and a man.

49. **Red streamers of the north.**—The northern lights.

54. **Since this rude race, etc.**—The reference in these lines is to the gathering of the women and children on the island as explained in the story of Canto Third.

82. **Cambus-kenneth.**—This was an abbey near Stirling, across the Forth. A portion of the tower still remains.

110. *The Minstrel sings,* a ballad, hoping to turn Ellen's mind from her father whom she considers to be in great danger.

121. **Hap.**—Chance or circumstance.

126. **Bourne.**—Boundary.

131. **Augur scathe.**—Predict harm or mischief.

132. **Kern.**—A serf or slave.

150. **Bochastle.**—See Canto I, line 68.

210. **His lordship, etc.**—That is his estate was the battlefield.

212. **Rock of.**—Mind or care for.

215. **Signet.**—The seal in the ring. This commanded the same attention as a passport from the King.

239. **Fared.**—Journeyed.

245. **Weeds.**—Dress. The woman was clothed in a tattered gray mantle.

298. **Lincoln green.**—See above, Canto I, line 349.

301. **O my sweet William.**—The sight of Fitz James in his lowland garb reminds the insane woman of her husband, and she warns the stranger of his peril.

324. **Thrilled.**—Quivered.

331. **Thine ambushed kin.**—Roderick's men were lying in wait for Fitz James and Murdoch was to lead him into an ambush where he would be slain.

349. **Draggled.**—Wet or spattered with her blood.
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379. *Blanche of Devan.*—The insane woman was from the valley of the Devan, a beautiful stream that flows from the hills of Perthshire to the great plain of Stirling.

394. *Imbue.*—Drench or soak, especially in blood.

398. *The stag at bay.*—Fitz James, alone in a strange region with Roderick's men in pursuit, likens himself to a stag at bay.

401. *Desperate track.*—Difficult and dangerous track.

449. *Who ever recked,* etc.—The following quotation from Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* explains the custom to which the lines refer:

"It was true we gave laws to hares and deer, because they are beasts of the chase; but it was never accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes or wolves on the head as they can be found, because they are beasts of prey."

The mountaineer, considering Fitz James a spy, hints that he deserves no better treatment than was accorded foxes and wolves.

464. *The hardened flesh of mountain deer.*—The Highlanders of these times had a method of preparing the flesh of the deer for eating without cooking it. This consisted in compressing the flesh between two pieces of wood so as to force out the blood and render the meat very hard. When thus prepared venison was considered a great delicacy.

474. *A mighty augury.*—This refers to Brian's prophecy explained in the introduction to this canto.

482. *Stranger is a holy name.*—See above, Canto I, line 455.

489. *Coilantogle Ford.*—A ford near the outlet of Loch Venachar. When he arrived at this point Fitz James would have passed the boundaries of Roderick's domain and entered the domains under the control of the King. He would then need no further protection from his guide.

CANTO FIFTH

1. *Fair as the earliest beam.*—This stanza is introductory.

The early sunbeam which lights the mountain path is used by the poet to show the beauty of that faith and courtesy which Fitz James and Roderick manifested towards each other, although they were bitter enemies.

15. *Soldiers' matins.*—The morning prayers that they were accustomed to offer.
18. Gael.—The Scotch name for the Highlanders, as Saxon was their name for the Lowlanders. (See Introduction.)

22. Wildering.—Bewildering.

38. Scanty cloak.—The sparse vegetation covering the mountain side.

40. Shingles.—Gravel.

81. Muster.—A gathering of troops.

96. Who in Regent's court.—See Canto II, line 98.

112. Albany.—This was John Stewart, Duke of Albany, who was regent during the minority of James V. Concerning the lawlessness of this period Scott says:

"There is scarcely a more disorderly period in Scottish history than that which succeeded the battle of Flodden, and occupied the minority of James V. Feuds of ancient standing broke out like old wounds, and every quarrel among the independent nobility, which occurred daily and almost hourly, gave rise to fresh bloodshed."

141. Target and claymore.—These were the weapons of the ancient Britons, from whom the Highlanders descended.

151. Maze.—A winding course.

153. Shall with strong hand, etc.—Concerning this practice of the Highlanders Scott says:

"So far, indeed, was a Creagh, or foray, from being held disgraceful, that a young chief was always expected to show his talents for command so soon as he assumed it, by leading his clan on a successful enterprise of this nature, either against a neighboring sept, for which constant feuds usually furnished an apology, or against the Sassenach, Saxons, or Lowlanders, for which no apology was necessary. The Gaels, great traditional historians, never forgot that the Lowlands had, at some remote period, been the property of their Celtic forefathers, which furnished an ample vindication of all the ravages that they could make on the unfortunate districts which lay within their reach."

186. Curlew.—A species of wading bird, found upon the seashore during winter and among the mountains in the summer.

218. Manned himself, etc.—Notwithstanding the odds against him, Fitz James resolved to defend himself to the last, therefore he assumed a bold attitude.
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240. *Glinted.*—Flashed or reflected.

241. *Glaive, targe and jack.*—The glaive was the broadsword; the targe was a shield and the jack a leather jacket worn by horsemen as a protection in battle.

216. *Without a pass, etc.*—Scott says: "This incident, like some other passages in the poem, illustrative of the character of the ancient Gael, is not imaginary, but borrowed from fact. The Highlanders, with the inconsistency of most nations in the same state, were alternately capable of great exhibitions of generosity and of cruel revenge and perfidy."

264. *Which the daughter, etc.*—These lakes were Katrine, Achray and Vennachar.

266. *Bochastle.*—"The torrent which discharges itself from Loch Vennachar, the lowest and eastmost of the three lakes which form the scenery adjoining the Trosachs, sweeps through a flat and extensive moor called Bochastle. Upon a small eminence called the Dun of Bochastle and indeed on the plain itself are some intrenchments which have been thought Roman."—Scott.

269. *Eagle wings, etc.*—This is a reference to the standard of the Roman army, which was an eagle. The Romans occupied the island of Great Britain from 55 B.C. until early in the fifth century.

281. *All vantageless I stand.*—"The duelists of former times did not always stand upon those fine points respecting the equality of arms, which are now judged essential to fair combat. It is true that in former combats in the lists (public duels) the parties were by the judges of the field put as nearly as possible on the same circumstances. But in a private duel it was often otherwise."—Scott.

297. *Who spills, etc.*—See introduction to Canto IV.

322. *Carpet knight.*—One who frequents the court and castle, and does not win his honors on the field of battle.

330. *Ruth.*—Pity. The present form is ruthless, which means pitiless.

346. *Targe.*—"A round target of light wood (covered with strong leather and studded with brass or iron was a necessary part of the Highlander's equipment. In charging regular troops they received the thrust of the bayonet in this buckler, twisted it aside and used the broadsword against the encumbered soldier."—Scott.
Trained abroad.—Fitz James had received his training in France, where he learned to use the rapier, a pointed sword, instead of the much heavier and more unwieldy broadsword used by the Highlanders. Fitz James was as skilful in parrying the blows of his antagonist as he was in his attack, and although Roderick was the stronger the difference in weapons placed him at a disadvantage.

In Roderick’s gore.—See Canto IV, lines 385-395.

Palfrey.—A small saddle-horse used by ladies. This was the horse upon which Fitz James expected to take Ellen to the castle, had he succeeded in prevailing upon her to accompany him.

Saint Serle.—One of the least important of the saints. The name is evidently here used for the sake of the rhyme.

Cambus-kenneth.—See Canto IV, line 82.

Ye towers.—This and the following lines refer to Stirling Castle, one of the strongest fortresses of Scotland and the residence of James V. It was within this castle that William, eighth earl of Douglas, was stabbed by James II.

O sad and fatal mound.—“An eminence on the northeast of Stirling Castle where state criminals were executed. Stirling was often polluted with noble blood.” —Scott.

Franciscan steeple.—The Franciscans are an order in the Roman Catholic church, established by Saint Francis. The early members were distinguished by their vows of poverty and their renunciation of the world.

Morrice dancers.—Those who performed Moorish or Spanish dances, in which the actors impersonated prominent characters.

Jennet.—A small Spanish horse.

Commons King.—James V favored the common people instead of the nobles, and was therefore known as the Commons King.

Behind the King, etc.—This was the burghers’ feast day, and is described by Scott as follows:

“Every burgh of Scotland of the least note, but more especially the considerable towns, had their solemn play, or festival, when feats of archery were exhibited, and prizes distributed to those who excelled in wrestling, hurling the bar, and the other gymnastic
exercises of the period. Stirling, a usual place of royal residence, was not likely to be deficient in pomp upon such occasions, especially since James V was very partial to them. His ready participation in these popular amusements was one cause of his acquiring the title of the King of the Commons, or Rex Plebeiorum, as Lesley has latinized it. The usual prize to the best shooter was a silver arrow."

532. Hostage for their clan.—James compelled some of the most powerful Highland chieftains to reside at the castle, as a guaranty of good behavior of their clans. An uprising by one of these clans would cause their chief to be put to death at once, therefore so long as the chieftains were in the King's power there was little danger from their clans. This forced service was very aggravating to the chieftains, but they were powerless to change their condition.

536. Feudal power.—The Highland chieftains had absolute command over the services of their clansmen during war. The case of Clan Alpine was no exception to the general rule.

544. Robin Hood.—A celebrated outlaw who lived about 1190. He is fully described by Scott in Ivanhoe. The exhibition of this band of outlaws was common at such gatherings. Friar Tuck, Scathelocke, Maid Marian, Scarlet, Mutch and Little John were Robin Hood's most noted followers.

551. The Douglas bent a bow.—Concerning this and the following incidents Scott says:

"The Douglas of the poem is an imaginary person, a supposed uncle of Angus. But the King's behavior during an unexpected interview with the Laird of Kilspindie, one of the banished Douglases, under circumstances similar to those in the text, is imitated from the real story told by Hume of Goldscroft."

591. Ladies' Rock.—The chief point for viewing the games, which were held in a valley or rather a slight depression in the hill upon which the castle stood.

627. Bordeaux wine.—A celebrated wine named from the city of Bordeaux, France, where it was first made.

639. Leash.—A long line, usually of leather, with which the hunter holds his dog.

655. Needs but a buffet.—A single blow from Douglas' hand was all that was necessary to strike the hunter senseless.
The Lady of the Lake

671. Misprudent.—Unwisely or mistakenly proud. The word is not common.
678. Fitting ward.—That is, see that Douglas is safely confined under guard.
697. The common rise.—The common people were disposed to take Douglas' part; they were also angry at being dispersed before the sports were finished, therefore they resisted the King's horsemen.
699. Hyndford.—A small village near Lanark.
700. That knighthood, etc.—Knighthood was conferred by touching the recipient upon the shoulder with a sword.
715. Yonder tower.—Stirling Castle. Here the castle is used for the king.
725. Ward such ill.—Guard such ill.
744. And at the castle's battered verge.—The wall around the top of the castle, with openings through which garrisons could annoy an attacking party.

CANTO SIXTH

5. Narrow loop.—A loop-hole in the wall.
6. Court of Guard.—A court within the castle walls used by the soldiers.
11. Faces deformed, etc.—"The Scottish armies consisted chiefly of the nobility and barons, with their vassals, who held lands under them for military service by themselves and their tenants. James V seems first to have introduced, in addition to the militia furnished from these sources, the services of a small number of mercenaries, who formed a body-guard called the foot-band."—Scott.
23. Harness.—Armor.
24. Bloody fray.—This was the battle fought between the followers of Roderick Dhu and the King's forces under the Earl of Mar. The King's messenger was unable to reach the scene of the conflict until the battle was well advanced.
37. Trent.—A river of England, which in the lower part of its course forms the Humber.
48. Warder's challenge.—The warder was the keeper of the castle gate, and none could enter without his permission.
54. Fleming.—A native of Flanders, a country occupying what is now a portion of Belgium, Netherlands and France. Ghent was its capital.
The Lady of the Lake

71. Juggler band.—The jugglers were traveling entertainers, and they were usually accompanied by several assistants, among whom the glee-maiden always attracted most attention. It was her duty to tumble and dance for the amusement of the spectators.

110. Needwood.—A king's forest in England. Killing game in a royal forest subjected the offender to severe punishment. Brent doubtless fled the country to escape the penalty of breaking this law.

123. Tulibardine's house.—An important residence about twenty miles north of Stirling Castle. It was one of the seats of the Murray family, who were noted for their pride.

139. Errant damosel.—A wandering maiden.

147. A ring.—See Canto IV, line 215.

161. Hest.—Request or wish.

Array.—Dress.

167. Guerdon.—Reward or gift.

182. To see my master's face.—Allan wished to see Douglas, but the soldier thought that he desired to see Roderick Dhu, hence conducted him to the chieftain's cell.

235. Leech.—A physician. This name was long applied to physicians because of their custom of using leeches to draw blood from their patients.

247. Prore.—The prow or forward part of a ship. The term comes from the Latin word prora and is used only in poetry.

287. That stirring air.—Concerning the tune here mentioned Scott says: "There are several instances, at least in tradition, of prisoners so attached to particular tunes as to request to hear them on their death bed."

The battle to which reference is here made was a skirmish which took place at the pass of Beal' an Duine, in the Trosachs, at a much later date than the reign of James V.

323. Storied pane.—The windows were ornamented with paintings representing scenes from Scottish history.

330. Tapestried wall.—The walls were decorated with tapestry, a figured cloth woven from wool or silk.

331. Menial train.—A group of servants assigned to attend Ellen.

397. Morning prime.—Early morning.
430. **Snowdoun's knight.**—"James V, of whom we are treating, was a monarch whose good and benevolent intentions often rendered his romantic freaks venial, if not respectable, since, from his anxious attention to the interests of the lower and most oppressed class of his subjects, he was, as we have seen, popularly termed the *Commons King.* For the purpose of seeing that justice was regularly administered, and frequently from the less justifiable motive of gallantry, he used to travel the vicinage of his several palaces in various disguises."—Scott.

It is claimed that two popular songs, *The Gaberlunzie Man* and *We'll Gae Nae Mair a Roving,* are founded upon some of James' adventures when traveling his kingdom in disguise.

447. **Yester even.**—Yesterday evening
Lady of the Lake
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