

**THE COURT**  
**BY**  
**SIR WALTER SCOTT**

## ***The Court by Sir Walter Scott***

### ***The Court***

#### ***I***

*The train has left the hills of Braid;  
The barrier guard have open made  
(So Lindesay bade) the palisade,  
That closed the tented ground;  
Their men the warders backward drew,  
And carried pikes as they rode through,  
Into its ample bound.  
Fast ran the Scottish warriors there,  
Upon the Southern band to stare.  
And envy with their wonder rose,  
To see such well-appointed foes;  
Such length of shafts, such mighty bows,  
So huge, that many simply thought,  
But for a vaunt such weapons wrought;  
And little deem'd their force to feel,  
Through links of mail, and plates of steel,  
When rattling upon Flodden vale,  
The cloth-yard arrows flew like hail.*

## II

*Nor less did Marmion's skilful view  
Glance every line and squadron through;  
And much he marvell'd one small land  
Could marshal forth such various band;  
For men-at-arms were here,  
Heavily sheathed in mail and plate,  
Like iron towers for strength and weight,  
On Flemish steeds of bone and height,  
With battle-axe and spear.*

*Young knights and squires, a lighter train,  
Practised their chargers on the plain,  
By aid of leg, of hand, and rein,  
Each warlike feat to show,  
To pass, to wheel, the croupe to gain,  
And high curvett, that not in vain  
The sword sway might descend amain  
On foeman's casque below.*

*He saw the hardy burghers there  
March arm'd, on foot, with faces bare,  
For vizor they wore none,  
Nor waving plume, nor crest of knight;*

*But burnish'd were their corslets bright,  
Their brigantines, and gorgets light,  
Like very silver shone.  
Long pikes they had for standing fight,  
Two-handed swords they wore,  
And many wielded mace of weight,  
And bucklers bright they bore.*

### **III**

*On foot the yeoman too, but dress'd  
In his steel-jack, a swarthy vest,  
With iron quilted well;  
Each at his back (a slender store)  
His forty days' provision bore,  
As feudal statutes tell.  
His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,  
A crossbow there, a hagbut here,  
A dagger-knife, and brand.  
Sober he seem'd, and sad of cheer,  
As loath to leave his cottage dear,  
And march to foreign strand;  
Or musing, who would guide his steer,  
To till the fallow land.*

*Yet deem not in his thoughtful eye  
Did aught of dastard terror lie;  
More dreadful far his ire,  
Than theirs, who, scorning danger's name,  
In eager mood to battle came,  
Their valour like light straw on name,  
A fierce but fading fire.*

#### **IV**

*Not so the Borderer:-bred to war,  
He knew the battle's din afar,  
And joy'd to hear it swell.  
His peaceful day was slothful ease;  
Nor harp, nor pipe, his ear could please,  
Like the loud slogan yell.  
On active steed, with lance and blade,  
The light-arm'd pricker plied his trade,-  
Let nobles fight for fame;  
Let vassals follow where they lead,  
Burghers, to guard their townships, bleed,  
But war's the Borderer's game.  
Their gain, their glory, their delight,  
To sleep the day, maraud the night,*

*O'er mountain, moss, and moor;  
Joyful to fight they took their way,  
Scarce caring who might win the day,  
Their booty was secure.*

*These, as Lord Marmion's train pass'd by,  
Look'd on at first with careless eye,  
Nor marvell'd aught, well taught to know  
The form and force of English bow.*

*But when they saw the Lord array'd  
In splendid arms, and rich brocade,  
Each Borderer to his kinsman said,-*

*'Hist, Ringan! seest thou there!*

*Canst guess which road they'll homeward ride?-*

*O! could we but on Border side,  
By Eusedale glen, or Liddell's tide,*

*Beset a prize so fair!*

*That fangless Lion, too, their guide,  
Might chance to lose his glistering hide;  
Brown Maudlin, of that doublet pied,  
Could make a kirtle rare.'*

## V

*Next, Marmion marked the Celtic race,  
Of different language, form, and face,  
A various race of man;  
Just then the Chiefs their tribes array'd,  
And wild and garish semblance made,  
The chequer'd trews, and belted plaid,  
And varying notes the war-pipes bray'd,  
To every varying clan,  
Wild through their red or sable hair  
Look'd out their eyes with savage stare,  
On Marmion as he pass'd;  
Their legs above the knee were bare;  
Their frame was sinewy, short, and spare,  
And harden'd to the blast;  
Of taller race, the chiefs they own  
Were by the eagle's plumage known.  
The hunted red-deer's undress'd hide  
Their hairy buskins well supplied;  
The graceful bonnet deck'd their head:  
Back from their shoulders hung the plaid;  
A broadsword of unwieldy length,*

*A dagger proved for edge and strength,  
A studded targe they wore,  
And quivers, bows, and shafts,-but, O!  
Short was the shaft, and weak the bow,  
To that which England bore.  
The Isles-men carried at their backs  
The ancient Danish battle-axe.  
They raised a wild and wondering cry,  
As with his guide rode Marmion by.  
Loud were their clamouring tongues, as when  
The clanging sea-fowl leave the fen,  
And, with their cries discordant mix'd,  
Grumbled and yell'd the pipes betwixt.*

## **VI**

*Thus through the Scottish camp they pass'd,  
And reach'd the City gate at last,  
Where all around, a wakeful guard,  
Arm'd burghers kept their watch and ward.  
Well had they cause of jealous fear,  
When lay encamp'd, in field so near,  
The Borderer and the Mountaineer.  
As through the bustling streets they go,*



*All was alive with martial show:  
At every turn, with dinning clang,  
The armourer's anvil clash'd and rang;  
Or toil'd the swarthy smith, to wheel  
The bar that arms the charger's heel;  
Or axe, or falchion, to the side  
Of jarring grindstone was applied.  
Page, groom, and squire, with hurrying pace  
Through street, and lane, and market-place,  
Bore lance, or casque, or sword;  
While burghers, with important face,  
Described each new-come lord,  
Discuss'd his lineage, told his name,  
His following, and his warlike fame.  
The Lion led to lodging meet,  
Which high o'erlook'd the crowded street;  
There must the Baron rest,  
Till past the hour of vesper tide,  
And then to Holy-Rood must ride,-  
Such was the King's behest.  
Meanwhile the Lion's care assigns  
A banquet rich, and costly wines,  
To Marmion and his train;  
And when the appointed hour succeeds,  
The Baron dons his peaceful weeds,*

*And following Lindesay as he leads,  
The palace-halls they gain.*

## **VII**

*Old Holy-Rood rung merrily,  
That night, with wassell, mirth, and glee:  
King James within her princely bower  
Feasted the Chiefs of Scotland's power,  
Summon'd to spend the parting hour;  
For he had charged, that his array  
Should southward march by break of day.  
Well loved that splendid monarch aye  
The banquet and the song,  
By day the tourney, and by night  
The merry dance, traced fast and light,  
The maskers quaint, the pageant bright,  
The revel loud and long.  
This feast outshone his banquets past;  
It was his blithest,-and his last.  
The dazzling lamps, from gallery gay,  
Cast on the Court a dancing ray;  
Here to the harp did minstrels sing;  
There ladies touched a softer string;  
With long-ear'd cap, and motley vest,  
The licensed fool retail'd his jest;*

*His magic tricks the juggler plied;  
At dice and draughts the gallants vied;  
While some, in close recess apart,  
Court the ladies of their heart,  
Nor courted them in vain;  
For often, in the parting hour,  
Victorious Love asserts his power  
O'er coldness and disdain;  
And flinty is her heart, can view  
To battle march a lover true-  
Can hear, perchance, his last adieu,  
Nor own her share of pain.*

## VIII

*Through this mix'd crowd of glee and game,  
The King to greet Lord Marmion came,  
While, reverent, all made room.  
An easy task it was, I trow,  
King James's manly form to know,  
Although, his courtesy to show,  
He doff'd, to Marmion bending low,  
His broider'd cap and plume.  
For royal was his garb and mien,  
His cloak, of crimson velvet piled,  
Trimm'd with the fur of marten wild;  
His vest of changeful satin sheen,  
The dazzled eye beguiled;  
His gorgeous collar hung adown,  
Wrought with the badge of Scotland's crown,  
The thistle brave, of old renown:  
His trusty blade, Toledo right,  
Descended from a baldric bright;  
White were his buskins, on the heel  
His spurs inlaid of gold and steel;  
His bonnet, all of crimson fair,  
Was button'd with a ruby rare:*

*And Marmion deem'd he ne'er had seen  
A prince of such a noble mien.*

### **IX**

*The Monarch's form was middle size;  
For feat of strength, or exercise,  
Shaped in proportion fair;  
And hazel was his eagle eye,  
And auburn of the darkest dye,  
His short curl'd beard and hair.  
Light was his footstep in the dance,  
And firm his stirrup in the lists;  
And, oh! he had that merry glance,  
That seldom lady's heart resists.  
Lightly from fair to fair he flew,  
And loved to plead, lament, and sue;-  
Suit lightly won, and short-lived pain,  
For monarchs seldom sigh in vain.  
I said he joy'd in banquet bower;  
But, 'mid his mirth, 'twas often strange,  
How suddenly his cheer would change,  
His look o'ercast and lower,  
If, in a sudden turn, he felt  
The pressure of his iron belt,  
That bound his breast in penance pain,*

*In memory of his father slain.  
Even so 'twas strange how, evermore,  
Soon as the passing pang was o'er,  
Forward he rush'd, with double glee,  
Into the stream of revelry:  
Thus, dim-seen object of affright  
Startles the courser in his flight,  
And half he halts, half springs aside;  
But feels the quickening spur applied,  
And, straining on the tighten'd rein,  
Scours doubly swift o'er hill and plain.*

**X.**

*O'er James's heart, the courtiers say,  
Sir Hugh the Heron's wife held sway:  
To Scotland's Court she came,  
To be a hostage for her lord,  
Who Cessford's gallant heart had gored,  
And with the King to make accord,  
Had sent his lovely dame.  
Nor to that lady free alone  
Did the gay King allegiance own;  
For the fair Queen of France  
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,*

*And charged him, as her knight and love,  
For her to break a lance;  
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,  
And march three miles on Southron land,  
And bid the banners of his band  
In English breezes dance.  
And thus, for France's Queen he drest  
His manly limbs in mailed vest;  
And thus admitted English fair  
His inmost counsels still to share;  
And thus, for both, he madly plann'd  
The ruin of himself and land!  
And yet, the sooth to tell,  
Nor England's fair, nor France's Queen,  
Were worth one pearl-drop, bright and sheen,  
From Margaret's eyes that fell,-  
His own Queen Margaret, who, in Lithgow's bower,  
All lonely sat, and wept the weary hour.*

## **XI**

*The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,  
And weeps the weary day,  
The war against her native soil,*

*Her monarch's risk in battle broil:-  
And in gay Holy-Rood, the while,  
Dame Heron rises with a smile  
Upon the harp to play.  
Fair was her rounded arm, as o'er  
The strings her fingers flew;  
And as she touch'd and tuned them all,  
Ever her bosom's rise and fall  
Was plainer given to view;  
For, all for heat, was laid aside  
Her wimple, and her hood untied.  
And first she pitch'd her voice to sing,  
Then glanced her dark eye on the King,  
And then around the silent ring;  
And laugh'd, and blush'd, and oft did say  
Her pretty oath, by Yea, and Nay,  
She could not, would not, durst not play!  
At length, upon the harp, with glee,  
Mingled with arch simplicity,  
A soft, yet lively, air she rung,  
While thus the wily lady sung:-*



## **XII.**

### **LOCHINVAR**

#### *Lady Heron's Song*

*O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,  
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;  
And save his good broadsword, he weapons had none,  
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.  
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,  
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.*

*He staid not for brake, and he stopp'd not for stone,  
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;  
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate,  
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:  
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,  
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.*

*So boldly he enter'd the Netherby Hall,  
Among bride's-men, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:  
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,*

*(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,)*

*'O come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,  
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'*

*'I long woo'd your daughter, my suit you denied;-  
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide-  
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,  
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.  
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,  
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.'*

*The bride kiss'd the goblet: the knight took it up,  
He quaff'd off the wine, and he threw down the cup.  
She look'd down to blush, and she look'd up to sigh,  
With a smile on her lips, and a tear in her eye.  
He took her soft hand, ere her mother could bar,-  
'Now tread we a measure!' said young Lochinvar.*

*So stately his form, and so lovely her face,  
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;  
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,  
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;  
And the bride-maidens whisper'd, "Twere better by far,  
To have match'd our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'*

*One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,  
When they reach'd the hall-door, and the charger stood near;  
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,  
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!  
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;  
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.*

*There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;  
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:  
There was racing and chasing, on Cannobie Lee,  
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.  
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,  
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?*

### **XIII.**

*The Monarch o'er the siren hung,  
And beat the measure as she sung;  
And, pressing closer, and more near,  
He whisper'd praises in her ear.  
In loud applause the courtiers vied;  
And ladies wink'd, and spoke aside.  
The witching dame to Marmion threw  
A glance, where seem'd to reign*

*The pride that claims applauses due,  
And of her royal conquest too,  
A real or feign'd disdain:  
Familiar was the look, and told,  
Marmion and she were friends of old.  
The King observed their meeting eyes,  
With something like displeas'd surprise;  
For monarchs ill can rivals brook,  
Even in a word, or smile, or look.  
Straight took he forth the parchment broad,  
Which Marmion's high commission show'd:  
'Our Borders sack'd by many a raid,  
Our peaceful liege-men robb'd,' he said;  
'On day of truce our Warden slain,  
Stout Barton kill'd, his vessels ta'en-  
Unworthy were we here to reign,  
Should these for vengeance cry in vain;  
Our full defiance, hate, and scorn,  
Our herald has to Henry borne.'*

#### **XIV.**

*He paused, and led where Douglas stood,  
And with stern eye the pageant view'd:*

*I mean that Douglas, sixth of yore,  
Who coronet of Angus bore,  
And, when his blood and heart were high,  
Did the third James in camp defy,  
And all his minions led to die  
On Lauder's dreary flat:  
Princes and favourites long grew tame,  
And trembled at the homely name  
Of Archibald Bell-the-Cat;  
The same who left the dusky vale  
Of Hermitage in Liddisdale,  
Its dungeons, and its towers,  
Where Bothwell's turrets brave the air,  
And Bothwell bank is blooming fair,  
To fix his princely bowers.  
Though now, in age, he had laid down  
His armour for the peaceful gown,  
And for a staff his brand,  
Yet often would flash forth the fire,  
That could, in youth, a monarch's ire  
And minion's pride withstand;  
And even that day, at council board,  
Unapt to soothe his sovereign's mood,  
Against the war had Angus stood,  
And chafed his royal Lord.*

## XV

*His giant-form, like ruin'd tower,  
Though fall'n its muscles' brawny vaunt,  
Huge-boned, and tall, and grim, and gaunt,  
Seem'd o'er the gaudy scene to lower:  
His locks and beard in silver grew;  
His eyebrows kept their sable hue.  
Near Douglas when the Monarch stood,  
His bitter speech he thus pursued :  
'Lord Marmion, since these letters say  
That in the North you needs must stay,  
While slightest hopes of peace remain,  
Uncourteous speech it were, and stern,  
To say-Return to Lindisfarne,  
Until my herald come again.-  
Then rest you in Tantallon Hold;  
Your host shall be the Douglas bold,-  
A chief unlike his sires of old.  
He wears their motto on his blade,  
Their blazon o'er his towers display'd;  
Yet loves his sovereign to oppose,  
More than to face his country's foes.*

*And, I bethink me, by Saint Stephen,  
But e'en this morn to me was given  
A prize, the first fruits of the war,  
Ta'en by a galley from Dunbar,  
A bevy of the maids of Heaven.  
Under your guard, these holy maids  
Shall safe return to cloister shades,  
And, while they at Tantallon stay,  
Requiem for Cochran's soul may say.'*  
*And, with the slaughter'd favourite's name,  
Across the Monarch's brow there came  
A cloud of ire, remorse, and shame.*

## **XVI**

*In answer nought could Angus speak;  
His proud heart swell'd wellnigh to break:  
He turn'd aside, and down his cheek  
A burning tear there stole.  
His hand the Monarch sudden took,  
That sight his kind heart could not brook:  
'Now, by the Bruce's soul,  
Angus, my hasty speech forgive!  
For sure as doth his spirit live,*

*As he said of the Douglas old,  
I well may say of you,-  
That never King did subject hold,  
In speech more free, in war more bold,  
More tender and more true:  
Forgive me, Douglas, once again.'-  
And, while the King his hand did strain,  
The old man's tears fell down like rain.  
To seize the moment Marmion tried,  
And whisper'd to the King aside:  
'Oh! let such tears unwonted plead  
For respite short from dubious deed!  
A child will weep a bramble's smart,  
A maid to see her sparrow part,  
A stripling for a woman's heart:  
But woe awaits a country, when  
She sees the tears of bearded men.  
Then, oh! what omen, dark and high,  
When Douglas wets his manly eye!'*

### **XVII.**

*Displeased was James, that stranger view'd  
And tamper'd with his changing mood.  
'Laugh those that can, weep those that may,'*



*Thus did the fiery Monarch say,  
'Southward I march by break of day;  
And if within Tantallon strong,  
The good Lord Marmion tarries long,  
Perchance our meeting next may fall  
At Tamworth, in his castle-hall.'*-

*The haughty Marmion felt the taunt,  
And answer'd, grave, the royal vaunt:  
'Much honour'd were my humble home,  
If in its halls King James should come;  
But Nottingham has archers good,  
And Yorkshire men are stem of mood;  
Northumbrian prickers wild and rude.  
On Derby Hills the paths are steep;  
In Ouse and Tyne the fords are deep;  
And many a banner will be torn,  
And many a knight to earth be borne,  
And many a sheaf of arrows spent,  
Ere Scotland's King shall cross the Trent:  
Yet pause, brave Prince, while yet you may!'-*

*The Monarch lightly turn'd away,  
And to his nobles loud did call,-  
'Lords, to the dance,-a hall! a hall!  
Himself his cloak and sword flung by,  
And led Dame Heron gallantly;*

*And Minstrels, at the royal order,  
Rung out-‘Blue Bonnets o’er the Border.’*

### **XVIII**

*Leave we these revels now, to tell  
What to Saint Hilda’s maids befell,  
Whose galley, as they sail’d again  
To Whitby, by a Scot was ta’en.  
Now at Dun-Edin did they bide,  
Till James should of their fate decide;  
And soon, by his command,  
Were gently summon’d to prepare  
To journey under Marmion’s care,  
As escort honour’d, safe, and fair,  
Again to English land.  
The Abbess told her chaplet o’er,  
Nor knew which Saint she should implore;  
For, when she thought of Constance, sore  
She fear’d Lord Marmion’s mood.  
And judge what Clara must have felt!  
The sword, that hung in Marmion’s belt,  
Had drunk De Wilton’s blood.  
Unwittingly, King James had given,  
As guard to Whitby’s shades,  
The man most dreaded under heaven*

*By these defenceless maids:  
Yet what petition could avail,  
Or who would listen to the tale  
Of woman, prisoner, and nun,  
Mid bustle of a war begun?  
They deem'd it hopeless to avoid  
The convoy of their dangerous guide.*

## **XIX**

*Their lodging, so the King assign'd,  
To Marmion's, as their guardian, join'd;  
And thus it fell, that, passing nigh,  
The Palmer caught the Abbess' eye,  
Who warn'd him by a scroll,  
She had a secret to reveal,  
That much concern'd the Church's weal,  
And health of sinner's soul;  
And, with deep charge of secrecy,  
She named a place to meet,  
Within an open balcony,  
That hung from dizzy pitch, and high,  
Above the stately street;  
To which, as common to each home,*

*At night they might in secret come.*

**XX**

*At night, in secret, there they came,  
The Palmer and the holy dame.  
The moon among the clouds rose high,  
And all the city hum was by.  
Upon the street, where late before  
Did din of war and warriors roar,  
You might have heard a pebble fall,  
A beetle hum, a cricket sing,  
An owlet flap his boding wing  
On Giles's steeple tall.  
The antique buildings, climbing high,  
Whose Gothic frontlets sought the sky,  
Were here wrapt deep in shade;  
There on their brows the moon-beam broke,  
Through the faint wreaths of silvery smoke,  
And on the casements play'd.  
And other light was none to see,  
Save torches gliding far,  
Before some chieftain of degree,  
Who left the royal revelry  
To bowne him for the war.-*

*A solemn scene the Abbess chose;  
A solemn hour, her secret to disclose.*

**XXI**

*'O, holy Palmer!' she began,-  
'For sure he must be sainted man,  
Whose blessed feet have trod the ground  
Where the Redeemer's tomb is found,-  
For His dear Church's sake, my tale  
Attend, nor deem of light avail,  
Though I must speak of worldly love,-  
How vain to those who wed above!-  
De Wilton and Lord Marmion woo'd  
Clara de Clare, of Gloster's blood;  
(Idle it were of Whitby's dame,  
To say of that same blood I came;)  
And once, when jealous rage was high,  
Lord Marmion said despiteously,  
Wilton was traitor in his heart,  
And had made league with Martin Swart,  
When he came here on Simnel's part;  
And only cowardice did restrain  
His rebel aid on Stokefield's plain,-  
And down he threw his glove:-the thing  
Was tried, as wont, before the King;*

*Where frankly did De Wilton own,  
That Swart in Guelders he had known;  
And that between them then there went  
Some scroll of courteous compliment.*

*For this he to his castle sent;  
But when his messenger return'd,  
Judge how De Wilton's fury burn'd!  
For in his packet there were laid  
Letters that claim'd disloyal aid,  
And proved King Henry's cause betray'd.*

*His fame, thus blighted, in the field  
He strove to clear, by spear and shield;-  
To clear his fame in vain he strove,  
For wondrous are His ways above!  
Perchance some form was unobserved;  
Perchance in prayer, or faith, he swerved;  
Else how could guiltless champion quail,  
Or how the blessed ordeal fail?*

## XXII

*'His squire, who now De Wilton saw  
As recreant doom'd to suffer law,  
Repentant, own'd in vain,  
That, while he had the scrolls in care,  
A stranger maiden, passing fair,  
Had drench'd him with a beverage rare;  
His words no faith could gain.  
With Clare alone he credence won,  
Who, rather than wed Marmion,  
Did to Saint Hilda's shrine repair,  
To give our house her livings fair,  
And die a vestal vot'ress there.  
The impulse from the earth was given,  
But bent her to the paths of heaven.  
A purer heart, a lovelier maid,  
Ne'er shelter'd her in Whitby's shade,  
No, not since Saxon Edelfled;  
Only one trace of earthly strain,  
That for her lover's loss  
She cherishes a sorrow vain,  
And murmurs at the cross.*

*And then her heritage;-it goes  
Along the banks of Tame;  
Deep fields of grain the reaper mows,  
In meadows rich the heifer lows,  
The falconer and huntsman knows  
Its woodlands for the game.  
Shame were it to Saint Hilda dear,  
And I, her humble vot'ress here,  
Should do a deadly sin,  
Her temple spoil'd before mine eyes,  
If this false Marmion such a prize  
By my consent should win;  
Yet hath our boisterous monarch sworn,  
That Clare shall from our house be torn;  
And grievous cause have I to fear,  
Such mandate doth Lord Marmion bear.*

### **XXIII**

*'Now, prisoner, helpless, and betray'd  
To evil power, I claim thine aid,  
By every step that thou hast trod  
To holy shrine and grotto dim,  
By every martyr's tortured limb,*



*By angel, saint, and seraphim,  
And by the Church of God!  
For mark:-When Wilton was betray'd,  
And with his squire forged letters laid,  
She was, alas! that sinful maid,  
By whom the deed was done,-  
Oh! shame and horror to be said!  
She was a perjured nun!  
No clerk in all the land, like her,  
Traced quaint and varying character.  
Perchance you may a marvel deem,  
That Marmion's paramour  
(For such vile thing she was) should scheme  
Her lover's nuptial hour;  
But o'er him thus she hoped to gain,  
As privy to his honour's stain,  
Illimitable power:  
For this she secretly retain'd  
Each proof that might the plot reveal,  
Instructions with his hand and seal;  
And thus Saint Hilda deign'd,  
Through sinners' perfidy impure,  
Her house's glory to secure,  
And Clare's immortal weal.*

## XXIV

*'Twere long, and needless, here to tell,  
How to my hand these papers fell;  
With me they must not stay.  
Saint Hilda keep her Abbess true!  
Who knows what outrage he might do,  
While journeying by the way?—  
O, blessed Saint, if e'er again  
I venturous leave thy calm domain,  
To travel or by land or main,  
Deep penance may I pay!—  
Now, saintly Palmer, mark my prayer:  
I give this packet to thy care,  
For thee to stop they will not dare;  
And O! with cautious speed,  
To Wolsey's hand the papers 'bring,  
That he may show them to the King:  
And, for thy well-earn'd meed,  
Thou holy man, at Whitby's shrine  
A weekly mass shall still be thine,  
While priests can sing and read.  
What ail'st thou?—Speak!—For as he took*

*The charge, a strong emotion shook  
His frame; and, ere reply,  
They heard a faint, yet shrilly tone,  
Like distant clarion feebly blown,  
That on the breeze did die;  
And loud the Abbess shriek'd in fear,  
'Saint Withold, save us!-What is here!  
Look at yon City Cross!  
See on its battled tower appear  
Phantoms, that scutcheons seem to rear,  
And blazon'd banners toss!'-*

## **XXV**

*Dun-Edin's Cross, a pillar'd stone,  
Rose on a turret octagon;  
(But now is razed that monument,  
Whence royal edict rang,  
And voice of Scotland's law was sent  
In glorious trumpet-clang.  
O! be his tomb as lead to lead,  
Upon its dull destroyer's head!-  
A minstrel's malison is said.)-  
Then on its battlements they saw*

*A vision, passing Nature's law,  
Strange, wild, and dimly seen;  
Figures that seem'd to rise and die,  
Gibber and sign, advance and fly,  
While nought confirm'd could ear or eye  
Discern of sound or mien.  
Yet darkly did it seem, as there  
Heralds and Pursuivants prepare,  
With trumpet sound, and blazon fair,  
A summons to proclaim;  
But indistinct the pageant proud,  
As fancy forms of midnight cloud,  
When flings the moon upon her shroud  
A wavering tinge of flame;  
It flits, expands, and shifts, till loud,  
From midmost of the spectre crowd,  
This awful summons came:-*

## **XXVI**

*'Prince, prelate, potentate, and peer,  
Whose names I now shall call,  
Scottish, or foreigner, give ear!  
Subjects of him who sent me here,*

*At his tribunal to appear,  
I summon one and all:  
I cite you by each deadly sin,  
That e'er hath soil'd your hearts within;  
I cite you by each brutal lust,  
That e'er defiled your earthly dust,-  
By wrath, by pride, by fear,  
By each o'er-mastering passion's tone,  
By the dark grave, and dying groan!  
When forty days are pass'd and gone,  
I cite you at your Monarch's throne,  
To answer and appear.'-  
Then thundered forth a roll of names:-  
The first was thine, unhappy James!  
Then all thy nobles came;  
Crawford, Glencairn, Montrose, Argyle,  
Ross, Bothwell, Forbes, Lennox, Lyle,  
Why should I tell their separate style?  
Each chief of birth and fame,  
Of Lowland, Highland, Border, Isle,  
Fore-doom'd to Flodden's carnage pile,  
Was cited there by name;  
And Marmion, Lord of Fontenaye,  
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye;  
De Wilton, erst of Aberley,*

*The self-same thundering voice did say.-*

*But then another spoke:*

*'Thy fatal summons I deny,  
And thine infernal Lord defy,  
Appealing me to Him on high,  
Who burst the sinner's yoke.'*

*At that dread accent, with a scream,  
Parted the pageant like a dream,  
The summoner was gone.*

*Prone on her face the Abbess fell,  
And fast, and fast, her beads did tell;  
Her nuns came, startled by the yell,  
And found her there alone.*

*She mark'd not, at the scene aghast,  
What time, or how, the Palmer pass'd.*

## **XXVII**

*Shift we the scene.-The camp doth move,  
Dun-Edin's streets are empty now,  
Save when, for weal of those they love,  
To pray the prayer, and vow the vow,  
The tottering child, the anxious fair,  
The grey-hair'd sire, with pious care,*

*To chapels and to shrines repair-  
Where is the Palmer now? and where  
The Abbess, Marmion, and Clare?-  
Bold Douglas! to Tantallon fair  
They journey in thy charge:  
Lord Marmion rode on his right hand,  
The Palmer still was with the band;  
Angus, like Lindesay, did command,  
That none should roam at large.  
But in that Palmer's altered mien  
A wondrous change might now be seen;  
Freely he spoke of war,  
Of marvels wrought by single hand,  
When lifted for a native land;  
And still look'd high, as if he plann'd  
Some desperate deed afar.  
His courser would he feed and stroke,  
And, tucking up his sable frocke,  
Would first his mettle bold provoke,  
Then soothe or quell his pride.  
Old Hubert said, that never one  
He saw, except Lord Marmion,  
A steed so fairly ride.*

## XXVIII

*Some half-hour's march behind, there came,*

*By Eustace govern'd fair,*

*A troop escorting Hilda's Dame,*

*With all her nuns, and Clare.*

*No audience had Lord Marmion sought;*

*Ever he fear'd to aggravate*

*Clara de Clare's suspicious hate;*

*And safer 'twas, he thought,*

*To wait till, from the nuns removed,*

*The influence of kinsmen loved,*

*And suit by Henry's self approved,*

*Her slow consent had wrought.*

*His was no flickering flame, that dies*

*Unless when fann'd by looks and sighs,*

*And lighted oft at lady's eyes;*

*He long'd to stretch his wide command*

*O'er luckless Clara's ample land:*

*Besides, when Wilton with him vied,*

*Although the pang of humbled pride*

*The place of jealousy supplied,*

*Yet conquest, by that meanness won*



*He almost loath'd to think upon,  
Led him, at times, to hate the cause,  
Which made him burst through honour's laws.  
If e'er he loved, 'twas her alone,  
Who died within that vault of stone.*

## **XXIX**

*And now, when close at hand they saw  
North Berwick's town, and lofty Law,  
Fitz-Eustace bade them pause a while,  
Before a venerable pile,  
Whose turrets view'd, afar,  
The lofty Bass, the Lambie Isle,  
The ocean's peace or war.  
At tolling of a bell, forth came  
The convent's venerable Dame,  
And pray'd Saint Hilda's Abbess rest  
With her, a loved and honour'd guest,  
Till Douglas should a bark prepare  
To wait her back to Whitby fair.  
Glad was the Abbess, you may guess,  
And thank'd the Scottish Prioress;  
And tedious were to tell, I ween,*

*The courteous speech that pass'd between.  
O'erjoy'd the nuns their palfreys leave;  
But when fair Clara did intend,  
Like them, from horseback to descend,  
Fitz-Eustace said, -'I grieve,  
Fair lady, grieve e'en from my heart,  
Such gentle company to part;-  
Think not discourtesy,  
But lords' commands must be obey'd;  
And Marmion and the Douglas said,  
That you must wend with me.  
Lord Marmion hath a letter broad,  
Which to the Scottish Earl he show'd,  
Commanding, that, beneath his care,  
Without delay, you shall repair  
To your good kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.'*

**XXX**

*The startled Abbess loud exclaim'd;  
But she, at whom the blow was aim'd,  
Grew pale as death, and cold as lead,-  
She deem'd she heard her death-doom read.  
'Cheer thee, my child!' the Abbess said,*

*'They dare not tear thee from my hand,  
To ride alone with armed band.'*

*'Nay, holy mother, nay,'*

*Fitz-Eustace said, 'the lovely Clare*

*Will be in Lady Angus' care,*

*In Scotland while we stay;*

*And, when we move, an easy ride*

*Will bring us to the English side,*

*Female attendance to provide*

*Befitting Gloster's heir;*

*Nor thinks, nor dreams, my noble lord,*

*By slightest look, or act, or word,*

*To harass Lady Clare.*

*Her faithful guardian he will be,*

*Nor sue for slightest courtesy*

*That e'en to stranger falls,*

*Till he shall place her, safe and free,*

*Within her kinsman's halls.'*

*He spoke, and blush'd with earnest grace;*

*His faith was painted on his face,*

*And Clare's worst fear relieved.*

*The Lady Abbess loud exclaim'd*

*On Henry, and the Douglas blamed,*

*Entreated, threaten'd, grieved;*

*To martyr, saint, and prophet pray'd,*

*Against Lord Marmion inveigh'd,  
And call'd the Prioress to aid,  
To curse with candle, bell, and book.  
Her head the grave Cistertian shook:  
'The Douglas, and the King,' she said,  
'In their commands will be obey'd;  
Grieve not, nor dream that harm can fall  
The maiden in Tantallon hall.'*

### **XXXI**

*The Abbess, seeing strife was vain,  
Assumed her wonted state again,  
For much of state she had,-  
Composed her veil, and raised her head,  
And-'Bid,' in solemn voice she said,  
'Thy master, bold and bad,  
The records of his house turn o'er,  
And, when he shall there written see,  
That one of his own ancestry  
Drove the monks forth of Coventry,  
Bid him his fate explore!  
Prancing in pride of earthly trust,  
His charger hurl'd him to the dust,*

*And, by a base plebeian thrust,  
He died his band before.  
God judge 'twixt Marmion and me;  
He is a Chief of high degree,  
And I a poor recluse;  
Yet oft, in holy writ, we see  
Even such weak minister as me  
May the oppressor bruise:  
For thus, inspired, did Judith slay  
The mighty in his sin,  
And Jael thus, and Deborah'-  
Here hasty Blount broke in:  
'Fitz-Eustace, we must march our band;  
Saint Anton' fire thee! wilt thou stand  
All day, with bonnet in thy hand,  
To hear the Lady preach?  
By this good light! if thus we stay,  
Lord Marmion, for our fond delay,  
Will sharper sermon teach.  
Come, don thy cap, and mount thy horse;  
The Dame must patience take perforce.'*

## XXXII

*'Submit we then to force,' said Clare,  
'But let this barbarous lord despair  
His purposed aim to win;  
Let him take living, land, and life;  
But to be Marmion's wedded wife  
In me were deadly sin:  
And if it be the King's decree,  
That I must find no sanctuary,  
In that inviolable dome,  
Where even a homicide might come,  
And safely rest his head,  
Though at its open portals stood,  
Thirsting to pour forth blood for blood,  
The kinsmen of the dead;  
Yet one asylum is my own  
Against the dreaded hour;  
A low, a silent, and a lone,  
Where kings have little power.  
One victim is before me there.-  
Mother, your blessing, and in prayer  
Remember your unhappy Clare!'*

*Loud weeps the Abbess, and bestows  
Kind blessings many a one:  
Weeping and wailing loud arose,  
Round patient Clare, the clamorous woes  
Of every simple nun.  
His eyes the gentle Eustace dried,  
And scarce rude Blount the sight could bide.  
Then took the squire her rein,  
And gently led away her steed,  
And, by each courteous word and deed,  
To cheer her strove in vain.*

### **XXXIII.**

*But scant three miles the band had rode,  
When o'er a height they pass'd,  
And, sudden, close before them show'd  
His towers, Tantallon vast;  
Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,  
And held impregnable in war.  
On a projecting rock they rose,  
And round three sides the ocean flows,  
The fourth did battled walls enclose,  
And double mound and fosse.*

*By narrow drawbridge, outworks strong,  
Through studded gates, an entrance long,  
To the main court they cross.  
It was a wide and stately square:  
Around were lodgings, fit and fair,  
And towers of various form,  
Which on the court projected far,  
And broke its lines quadrangular.  
Here was square keep, there turret high,  
Or pinnacle that sought the sky,  
Whence oft the Warder could descry  
The gathering ocean-storm.*

#### **XXXIV**

*Here did they rest.-The princely care  
Of Douglas, why should I declare,  
Or say they met reception fair?  
Or why the tidings say,  
Which, varying, to Tantallon came,  
By hurrying posts, or fleeter fame,  
With every varying day?  
And, first, they heard King James had won  
Etall, and Wark, and Ford; and then,*



*That Norham Castle strong was ta'en.  
At that sore marvell'd Marmion;-  
And Douglas hoped his Monarch's hand  
Would soon subdue Northumberland:  
But whisper'd news there came,  
That, while his host inactive lay,  
And melted by degrees away,  
King James was dallying off the day  
With Heron's wily dame.-  
Such acts to chronicles I yield;  
Go seek them there, and see:  
Mine is a tale of Flodden Field,  
And not a history.-  
At length they heard the Scottish host  
On that high ridge had made their post,  
Which frowns o'er Millfield Plain;  
And that brave Surrey many a band  
Had gather'd in the Southern land,  
And march'd into Northumberland,  
And camp at Wooler ta'en.  
Marmion, like charger in the stall,  
That hears, without, the trumpet-call,  
Began to chafe, and swear:-  
'A sorry thing to hide my head  
In castle, like a fearful maid,*

*When such a field is near!  
Needs must I see this battle-day:  
Death to my fame if such a fray  
Were fought, and Marmion away!  
The Douglas, too, I wot not why,  
Hath 'bated of his courtesy:  
No longer in his halls I'll stay.'  
Then bade his band they should array  
For march against the dawning day.*

## **Mertoun-House, Christmas**

*Heap on more wood!-the wind is chill;  
But let it whistle as it will,  
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.  
Each age has deem'd the new-born year  
The fittest time for festal cheer:  
Even, heathen yet, the savage Dane  
At Iol more deep the mead did drain;  
High on the beach his galleys drew,  
And feasted all his pirate crew;  
Then in his low and pine-built hall,  
Where shields and axes deck'd the wall,  
They gorged upon the half-dress'd steer;  
Caroused in seas of sable beer;  
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown  
The half-gnaw'd rib, and marrow-bone,  
Or listen'd all, in grim delight,  
While scalds yell'd out the joys of fight.  
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,  
While wildly-loose their red locks fly,  
And dancing round the blazing pile,  
They make such barbarous mirth the while,*

*As best might to the mind recall  
The boisterous joys of Odin's hall.  
And well our Christian sires of old  
Loved when the year its course had roll'd,  
And brought blithe Christmas back again,  
With all his hospitable train.  
Domestic and religious rite  
Gave honour to the holy night;  
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;  
On Christmas eve the mass was sung:  
That only night in all the year,  
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.  
The damsel donn'd her kirtle sheen;  
The hall was dress'd with holly green;  
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,  
To gather in the mistletoe.  
Then open'd wide the Baron's hall  
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;  
Power laid his rod of rule aside,  
And Ceremony doff'd his pride.  
The heir, with roses in his shoes,  
That night might village partner choose;  
The Lord, underogating, share  
The vulgar game of 'post and pair.'  
All hail'd, with uncontroll'd delight,*

*And general voice, the happy night,  
That to the cottage, as the crown,  
Brought tidings of salvation down.*

*The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,  
Went roaring up the chimney wide:  
The huge hall-table's oaken face,  
Scrub'd till it shone, the day to grace,  
Bore then upon its massive board  
No mark to part the squire and lord.  
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,  
By old blue-coated serving-man;  
Then the grim boar's head frown'd on high,  
Crested with bays and rosemary.  
Well can the green-garb'd ranger tell,  
How, when, and where, the monster fell;  
What dogs before his death he tore,  
And all the baiting of the boar.  
The wassel round, in good brown bowls,  
Garnish'd with ribbons, blithely trowls.  
There the huge sirloin reek'd; hard by  
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie:  
Nor fail'd old Scotland to produce,  
At such high tide, her savoury goose.  
Then came the merry maskers in,*

*And carols roar'd with blithesome din;  
If unmelodious was the song,  
It was a hearty note, and strong.  
Who lists may in their mumming see  
Traces of ancient mystery;  
White shirts supplied the masquerade,  
And smutted cheeks the visors made;  
But, O! what maskers, richly dight,  
Can boast of bosoms half so light!  
England was merry England, when  
Old Christmas brought his sports again.  
'Twas Christmas broach'd the mightiest ale;  
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;  
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer  
The poor man's heart through half the year.*

*Still linger, in our northern clime,  
Some remnants of the good old time;  
And still, within our valleys here,  
We hold the kindred title dear,  
Even when, perchance, its far-fetch'd claim  
To Southron ear sounds empty name;  
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,  
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.  
And thus, my Christmas still I hold*

*Where my great-grandsire came of old,  
With amber beard, and flaxen hair,  
And reverend apostolic air-  
The feast and holy-tide to share,  
And mix sobriety with wine,  
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:  
Small thought was his, in after time  
E'er to be hitch'd into a rhyme.  
The simple sire could only boast,  
That he was loyal to his cost;  
The banish'd race of kings revered,  
And lost his land,-but kept his beard.*

*In these dear halls, where welcome kind  
Is with fair liberty combined;  
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,  
And flies constraint the magic wand  
Of the fair dame that rules the land.  
Little we heed the tempest drear,  
While music, mirth, and social cheer,  
Speed on their wings the passing year.  
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,  
When not a leaf is on the bough.  
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,  
As loth to leave the sweet domain,*

*And holds his mirror to her face,  
And clips her with a close embrace:-  
Gladly as he, we seek the dome,  
And as reluctant turn us home.*

*How just that, at this time of glee,  
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee!  
For many a merry hour we've known,  
And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.  
Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,  
And leave these classic tomes in peace!  
Of Roman and of Grecian lore,  
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.  
These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,  
'Were pretty fellows in their day;'  
But time and tide o'er all prevail-  
On Christmas eve a Christmas tale-  
Of wonder and of war-'Profane!  
What! leave the lofty Latian strain,  
Her stately prose, her verse's charms,  
To hear the clash of rusty arms:  
In Fairy Land or Limbo lost,  
To jostle conjurer and ghost,  
Goblin and witch!'-Nay, Heber dear,  
Before you touch my charter, hear;*



*Though Leyden aids, alas! no more,  
My cause with many-languaged lore,  
This may I say:-in realms of death  
Ulysses meets Alcides' wraith;  
Aeneas, upon Thracia's shore,  
The ghost of murder'd Polydore;  
For omens, we in Livy cross,  
At every turn, locutus Bos.  
As grave and duly speaks that ox,  
As if he told the price of stocks;  
Or held, in Rome republican,  
The place of Common-councilman.*

*All nations have their omens drear,  
Their legends wild of woe and fear.  
To Cambria look-the peasant see,  
Bethink him of Glendowerdy,  
And shun 'the Spirit's Blasted Tree.'  
The Highlander, whose red claymore  
The battle turn'd on Maida's shore,  
Will, on a Friday morn, look pale,  
If ask'd to tell a fairy tale:  
He fears the vengeful Elfin King,  
Who leaves that day his grassy ring:  
Invisible to human ken,*

*He walks among the sons of men.*

*Did'st e'er, dear Heber, pass along  
Beneath the towers of Franchemont,  
Which, like an eagle's nest in air,  
Hang o'er the stream and hamlet fair?  
Deep in their vaults, the peasants say,  
A mighty treasure buried lay,  
Amass'd through rapine and through wrong  
By the last Lord of Franchemont.  
The iron chest is bolted hard,  
A Huntsman sits, its constant guard;  
Around his neck his horn is hung,  
His hanger in his belt is slung;  
Before his feet his blood-hounds lie:  
An 'twere not for his gloomy eye,  
Whose withering glance no heart can brook,  
As true a huntsman doth he look,  
As bugle e'er in brake did sound,  
Or ever hollow'd to a hound.  
To chase the fiend, and win the prize,  
In that same dungeon ever tries  
An aged Necromantic Priest;  
It is an hundred years at least,  
Since 'twixt them first the strife begun,*

*And neither yet has lost nor won.  
And oft the Conjuror's words will make  
The stubborn Demon groan and quake;  
And oft the bands of iron break,  
Or bursts one lock, that still amain,  
Fast as 'tis open'd, shuts again.  
That magic strife within the tomb  
May last until the day of doom,  
Unless the Adept shall learn to tell  
The very word that clench'd the spell,  
When Franch'mont lock'd the treasure cell.  
An hundred years are pass'd and gone,  
And scarce three letters has he won.*

*Such general superstition may  
Excuse for old Pitscottie say;  
Whose gossip history has given  
My song the messenger from Heaven,  
That warn'd, in Lithgow, Scotland's King,  
Nor less the infernal summoning;  
May pass the Monk of Durham's tale,  
Whose Demon fought in Gothic mail;  
May pardon plead for Fordun grave,  
Who told of Gifford's Goblin-Cave.  
But why such instances to you,*

*Who, in an instant, can renew  
Your treasured hoards of various lore,  
And furnish twenty thousand more?  
Hoard, not like theirs whose volumes rest  
Like treasures in the Franch'mont chest,  
While gripple owners still refuse  
To others what they cannot use;  
Give them the priest's whole century,  
They shall not spell you letters three;  
Their pleasure in the books the same  
The magpie takes in pilfer'd gem.  
Thy volumes, open as thy heart,  
Delight, amusement, science, art,  
To every ear and eye impart;  
Yet who, of all who thus employ them,  
Can like the owner's self enjoy them?-  
But, hark! I hear the distant drum!  
The day of Flodden Field is come.-  
Adieu, dear Heber! life and health,  
And store of literary wealth.*

***Free***editorial 