

SCOTT'S MARMION

EDITED BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE

MARMION

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

EDITED WITH NOTES BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, LITT. D.

FORMERLY HEAD MASTER OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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P R E F A C E .

THIS edition of *Marmion* has been prepared on the same plan as that of *The Lady of the Lake* which I made two years ago; and, as in that, the illustrations are selected from the publishers' elegant holiday edition of the poem.

In the preface to *The Lady of the Lake* I said that the poem had not been printed correctly for more than fifty years. *Marmion*, so far as I can learn, has *never* been printed correctly. Scott appears to have overlooked sundry bad misprints in the first edition (which I have compared minutely with the fourth and all the more recent editions, English and American, that I could get hold of); and these errors of the type have been perpetuated until now. Lockhart professes to have revised the text carefully, with the aid of the author's interleaved copy of the edition of 1830; and we must give him credit for restoring one line (v. 947) accidentally omitted in the early editions, and for incorporating one or two trifling changes (as *Badenoch-man* for *Highlandman* in vi. 795) made by Scott in 1830; but he has not corrected a single one of the old misprints, while he has overlooked a number of new ones due to his own printers. On the whole, he has marred the text far more than he has mended it.

As a sample of the corruptions that date from the first publication of the poem, see the opening of Canto II., where the printer put a period in place of the comma Scott undoubtedly meant to have at the end of the 5th line. He did not detect the error, and, so far as I am aware, it has been repeated in every edition except this of mine. As the reader will see, it alters the construction, and makes nonsense of the passage. Again, in ii. 617, the first edition has a period instead of a comma at the end of the line, spoiling the grammar and the sense; and the period (or the colon, which is equally bad) has been retained from that day to this.

Of corruptions that appear (so far, at least, as my collation of the texts enables me to decide) for the first time in Lockhart's edition, I may mention ii. 464, where Scott wrote and printed "They knew not how, *and* knew not where," while Lockhart reads "*nor* knew not where." Scott is free in his use of archaic words and constructions, but I recall no instance in which he has indulged in this old "double

negative." Again, in v. 212, Scott's "For royal *were* his garb and mien" is turned by Lockhart, or his printers, into "For royal *was*," etc. In iv. 597, Scott has "peace and wealth . . . *has* blessed;" but, as any schoolboy could explain, that is not a parallel case.

The archaisms to which I have just referred have proved, as in *The Lady of the Lake*, a stumbling-block to editors or their proof-readers. I have seen an edition of Shakespeare in which every instance of the obsolete *vail* (= lower, let fall) is "corrected" to *veil*, the difference being assumed to be one of spelling merely; and in *Marmion*, iii. 234, where the early editions all have *vail*, the recent ones all have *veil*. In vi. 608, where Scott uses the word again (if we may trust the early editions) Lockhart prints *'vails*. Here a question may possibly be raised as to the true reading; but in iii. ind. 194 I have no doubt that Scott's word was *sleights*, as in all the early editions, and not *slights*, as in Lockhart's and all the later ones. Lockhart is also responsible, I believe, for the bad corruption of "*For* me," etc. for "*From* me," etc. in iii. ind. 228.

In iii. ind. 28, the first edition has "Some transient fit of *loftier* rhyme;" but every other edition that I have seen has "*lofty* rhyme." We may be sure that Scott wrote the former, and that he would never have altered it to the latter.

For further examples of the corruptions in former texts, as well as for further comments on those cited here, I must refer the reader to my *Notes*.

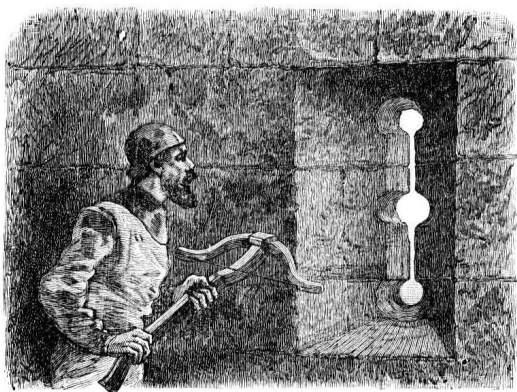
I may add that Lockhart did not collate the early editions with sufficient care while comparing the printed text with the original MS.; for in several instances (see, for example, on iv. 635, 647, etc.), as in *The Lady of the Lake*, he gives readings as found only in the MS. which really occur in the first edition.

I have given most of Scott's own notes in full, and also those of Lockhart. A few have been slightly abridged, or partially rewritten. All the other notes are original, for I have met with no annotated edition of the poem except Scott's and Lockhart's. As I said in the preface to *The Lady of the Lake*, there are of course many notes that many readers will not need, but I think there are none that may not be of service, or at least of interest, to some reader; and I hope that no one will turn to them for help without finding it.

If, as is not unlikely, I have overlooked errors of my own while correcting those of others, I shall be grateful to any reader who will favor me with a memorandum of such as he may detect.

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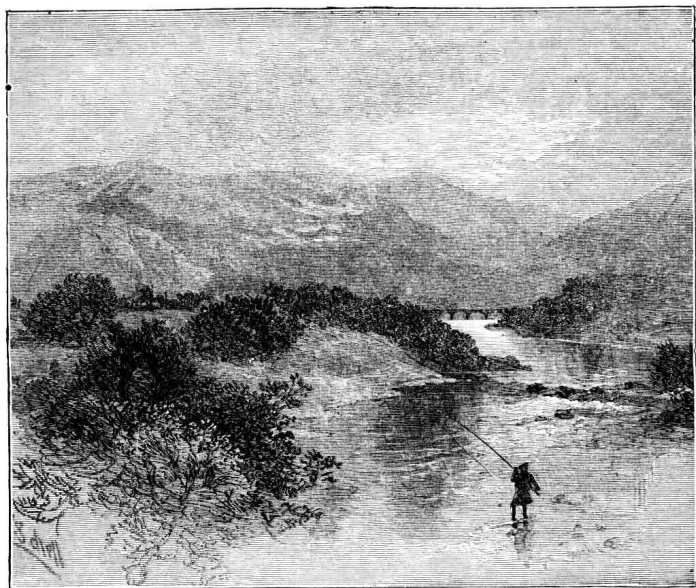


MARMION:
A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

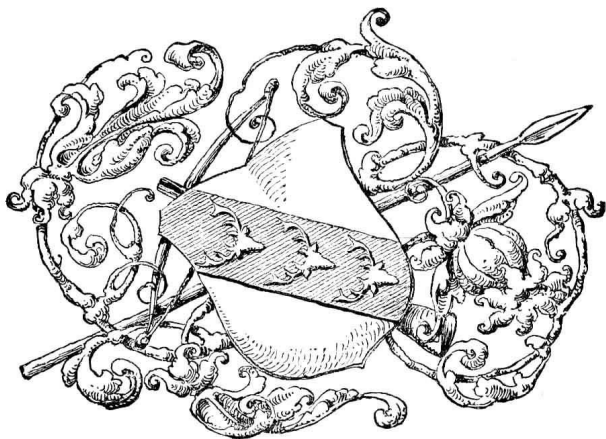


Alas ! that Scottish maid should sing
The combat where her lover fell !
That Scottish Bard should wake the string,
The triumph of our foes to tell !

LEYDEN'S *Ode on Visiting Flodden.*



THE TWEED.



M A R M I O N.



INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST.



TO WILLIAM STEWART ROSE, ESQ.

Ashetiel, Ettrick Forest.

NOVEMBER'S sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear :
Late, gazing down the steepy linn
That hems our little garden in.

Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through ;
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen
Through bush and brier, no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with double speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

10

No longer autumn's glowing red
Upon our Forest hills is shed ;
No more, beneath the evening beam,
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam.
Away hath passed the heather-bell
That bloomed so rich on Needpath-fell ;
Sallow his brow, and russet bare
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,
To sheltered dale and down are driven,
Where yet some faded herbage pines,
And yet a watery sunbeam shines ;
In meek despondency they eye
The withered sward and wintry sky,
And far beneath their summer hill
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill.
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,
And wraps him closer from the cold :
His dogs no merry circles wheel,
But shivering follow at his heel ;
A cowering glance they often cast,
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

20

30

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,
As best befits the mountain child,
Feel the sad influence of the hour,
And wail the daisy's vanished flower,
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,
And anxious ask, — Will spring return,
And birds and lambs again be gay,
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?

40

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower
Again shall paint your summer bower ;
Again the hawthorn shall supply
The garlands you delight to tie ;
The lambs upon the lea shall bound,
The wild birds carol to the round ;
And while you frolic light as they,
Too short shall seem the summer day.

50

To mute and to material things
New life revolving summer brings ;
The genial call dead Nature hears,
And in her glory reappears.
But oh ! my country's wintry state
What second spring shall renovate ?
What powerful call shall bid arise
The buried warlike and the wise,
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,
The hand that grasped the victor steel ?
The vernal sun new life bestows
Even on the meanest flower that blows ;
But vainly, vainly may he shine
Where Glory weeps o'er NELSON's shrine,
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom
That shrouds, O PITT, thy hallowed tomb !

60

Deep graved in every British heart,
Oh, never let those names depart !
Say to your sons, — Lo, here his grave
Who victor died on Gadite wave !
To him, as to the burning levin,
Short, bright, resistless course was given ;
Where'er his country's foes were found,
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,
Rolled, blazed, destroyed, — and was no more.

70

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth
Who bade the conqueror go forth,
And launched that thunderbolt of war
On Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar ;
Who, born to guide such high emprise,
For Britain's weal was early wise ;
Alas ! to whom the Almighty gave,
For Britain's sins, an early grave !
His worth who, in his mightiest hour,
A bauble held the pride of power,
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,
And served his Albion for herself ;
Who, when the frantic crowd amain
Strained at subjection's bursting rein,
O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,
The pride, he would not crush, restrained,
Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,
And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws.

80

90

Hadst thou but lived, though stripped of power,
A watchman on the lonely tower,
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,
When fraud or danger were at hand ;

100

By thee, as by the beacon-light,
Our pilots had kept course aright ;
As some proud column, though alone,
Thy strength had propped the tottering throne.
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill !

Oh, think, how to his latest day,
When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey, 110
With Palinure's unaltered mood,
Firm at his dangerous post he stood,
Each call for needful rest repelled,
With dying hand the rudder held,
Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,
The steerage of the realm gave way !
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains
One unpolluted church remains,
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound, 120
But still, upon the hallowed day,
Convoke the swains to praise and pray ;
While faith and civil peace are dear,
Grace this cold marble with a tear,
He who preserved them, Prrr, lies here.

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh
Because his rival slumbers nigh,
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb ;
For talents mourn, untimely lost, 130
When best employed and wanted most ;
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound ;

And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine ;
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,
They sleep with him who sleeps below :
And, if thou mourn'st they could not save
From error him who owns this grave,
Be every harsher thought suppressed,
And sacred be the last long rest.

140

Here, where the end of earthly things
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings ;
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung ;
Here, where the fretted aisles prolong
The distant notes of holy song,
As if some angel spoke again,
' All peace on earth, good-will to men ;'

150

If ever from an English heart,
Oh, *here* let prejudice depart,
And, partial feeling cast aside,
Record that Fox a Briton died !
When Europe crouched to France's yoke,
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,
And the firm Russian's purpose brave
Was bartered by a timorous slave,
Even then dishonor's peace he spurned,
The sullied olive-branch returned,
Stood for his country's glory fast,
And nailed her colors to the mast !
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave
A portion in this honored grave,
And ne'er held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.

160

With more than mortal powers endowed,
How high they soared above the crowd !