The Bride of Lammermoor

The BRIDE of LAMMERMOOR

by Sir WALTER SCOTT Bart

EVERY MAN I WILL GO WITH THEE BE THY GVIDE

IN THY MOST NEED TO GO BY THY SIDE

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FICTION

THE BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR

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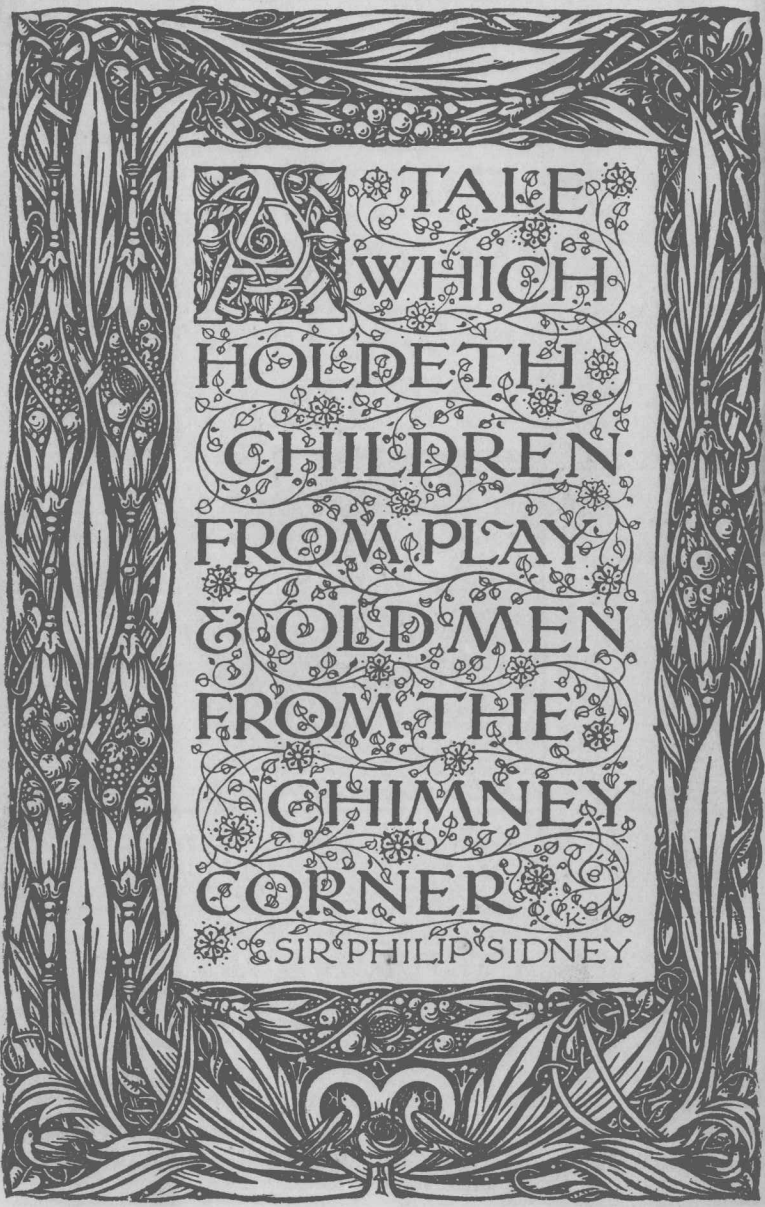

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

SCOTT'S malady, that same painful form of cramp which had troubled him in 1817, caused him great suffering all through the time when "The Bride of Lammermoor" was being written. It was not written accordingly by his own hand, but, like "Ivanhoe," dictated; and the brief account of this characteristic process, given in the introduction to that novel, may be amplified here.

Lockhart writes (1819):—"The accounts of Scott's condition circulated in Edinburgh in the course of this April were so alarming, that I should not have thought of accepting his invitation to re-visit Abbotsford, unless John Ballantyne had given me better tidings about the end of the month. He informed me that his 'illustrious friend' (for so both the Ballantynes usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. I have now before me a letter of the 8th April, in which Scott says to Constable—'Yesterday I began to dictate, and did it easily and with comfort. This is a great point—but I must proceed by little and little; last night I had a slight return of the enemy—but baffled him';—and he again writes to the bookseller on the 11th —'John Ballantyne is here, and returns with copy, which my increasing strength permits me to hope I may now furnish regularly.'"

His two amanuenses at this time were John Ballantyne and Will Laidlaw; and it seems that of the two, the first was the better scribe. Laidlaw, less accustomed to the business, was also too openly sympathetic both as regards Scott's ailment and incidental pangs, and the development of the plot and characters. He entered, we are told, with such zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'!—the like o'

that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. "I have often," says Lockhart, "heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, 'Nay, Willie,' he answered, 'only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen.' John Ballantyne told me that after the first day he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts."

When the third series of "Tales of my Landlord," containing "The Bride of Lammermoor" and "The Legend of Montrose" appeared in four volumes in June 1819, Scott was in bed; and very grave rumours of his collapse were in vogue. One curious result of the abnormal circumstances of its invention and dictation was that Scott assured Ballantyne when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, "he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained! He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. These remained rooted where they had ever been; or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected just as he did before he took to his bed; but he literally recollected nothing else—not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the

many scenes and points of humour, nor anything with which he was connected as the writer of the work. 'For a long time,' he said, 'I felt myself very uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting something altogether glaring and fantastic.'" Far, however, from the story's showing any weakness of conception, or any slackening of the dramatic life with which Scott infused his romance, we may agree with its contemporary critics that it showed no sign at all of his malady. And since this is in effect a Lockhart edition of the Waverley Novels, illustrated by the glimpses which his vivid chronicle affords of their successive relationship to Scott's personal and literary history, his tribute may again be reproduced here, as among appreciative criticisms, the classical one. He refers to the "Legend of Montrose," as well as to "The Bride of Lammermoor," and notes that no taint of the sick-chamber is upon either. He turns then to Dugald Dalgetty, a piece of character-painting which (he says) was placed by acclamation in the same rank with Baillie Jarvie—a conception equally new, just, and humorous, and worked out in all the details, as if it had formed the luxurious entertainment of a chair as easy as was ever shaken by Rabelais; and though the character of Montrose himself seemed hardly to have been treated so fully as the subject merited, the accustomed rapidity of the novelist's execution would have been enough to account for any such defect. Of Caleb Balderstone—(the hero of one of the many ludicrous delineations which he owed to the late Lord Haddington, a man of rare pleasantry, and one of the best tellers of old Scotch stories that I ever heard)—I cannot say that the general opinion was then, nor do I believe it ever since has been, very favourable. It was pronounced at the time by more than one critic a mere caricature; and though Scott himself would never in after days admit this censure to be just, he allowed that 'he might have sprinkled rather too much parsley over his chicken.' But even that blemish, for I grant that I think it a serious one, could not disturb the profound interest and pathos of "The Bride of Lammermoor"—to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that Scott ever penned.

The following is a list of the works of Sir Walter Scott, 1771–1832.

"Disputatio Juridica," etc., 1792 (Exercise on being called to the Bar); The Chase, and William and Helen (from German of Bürger), 1796; Goetz of Berlichingen (translation of Goethe's Tragedy); Apology for Tales of Terror (includes some of Author's ballads), privately printed, 1799; The Eve of St. John: a Border Ballad, 1800; Ballads in Lewis's "Tales of Wonder," 1801; Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, 1802, 1803; Lay of the Last Minstrel, 1805; Ballads and Lyrical Pieces, 1806; Marmion: a Tale of Flodden Field, 1808; Life of Dryden, The Lady of the Lake, 1810; Vision of Don Roderick, 1811; Rokeby, 1913; The Bridal of Triermain, 1813; Abstract of Eyrbiggia Saga (in Jamieson's "Northern Antiquities"), 1814; Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since, 1814; Life of Swift (prefixed to works), 1814; The Lord of the Isles, 1815; Guy Mannering, 1815; The Field of Waterloo, 1815; Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk, 1815; The Antiquary, 1816; Black Dwarf, Old Mortality (Tales of my Landlord, first series), 1817 (1816); Harold the Dauntless, 1817; The Search after Happiness, or the Quest of Sultan Solimaun, 1817; Rob Roy, 1818; Heart of Midlothian (Tales of my Landlord, second series), 1818; The Bride of Lammermoor, The Legend of Montrose (Tales of my Landlord, third series), 1819; Description of the Regalia of Scotland, 1819; Ivanhoe, 1820; The Monastery, 1820; The Abbot, 1820; Kenilworth, 1821; Biographies in Ballantyne's "Novelists," 1821; Account of the Coronation of George IV., 1821; The Pirate, 1822; Halidon Hill, 1822; Macduff's Cross (Joanna Baillie's Poetical Miscellanies), 1822; The Fortunes of Nigel, 1822; Peveril of the Peak, 1822; Quentin Durward, 1823; St. Ronan's Well, 1824; Redgauntlet, 1824; The Betrothed, The Talisman (Tales of the Crusaders), 1825; Woodstock, or the Cavaliers: a tale of 1651, 1826; Life of Napoleon Buonaparte, 1827; The Two Drovers, The Highland Widow, The Surgeon's Daughter (Chronicles of the Canongate, first series), 1827; Tales of a Grandfather, first series, 1828; second series, 1829; third series, 1830; fourth series, 1830; St. Valentine's Day, or the Fair Maid of Perth (Chronicles of the Canongate, second series), 1828; My Aunt Margaret's Mirror, The Tapestried Chamber, The Laird's Jock (Keepsake, 1828); Religious Discourses, by a Layman, 1828; Anne of Geierstein, 1829; History of Scotland (Lardner's "Cabinet Cyclopædia"), 1830; Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft, 1830; House of Aspen (Keepsake, 1830); Doom of Devorgoil; Auchindrane, or the Ayrshire Tragedy, 1830; Essays on Ballad Poetry, 1830; Count Robert of Paris, Castle Dangerous (Tales of my Landlord, fourth series), 1832.

Letters and articles were contributed to Encyclopædia Britannica, 1814 (Chivalry; Drama); "Provincial Antiquities of Scotland," 1819–1826; "Edinburgh Weekly Journal," 1820, 1826; as well as frequent articles to the "Edinburgh" and "Quarterly" Reviews, and "Edinburgh Annual Register."

Collected Poems: 1820, 1821, 1823, 1830 (with Author's Prefaces); 1834 (Lockhart).

Collected Novels: 1820 (Novels and Tales); 1822 (Historical Romances); 1824 (Historical Romances), 26 vols. With Author's Notes, 1829–33, 48 vols. People's Edition, 1844–8; Abbotsford, 1842–7; Roxburghe, 1859–61; Dryburgh, 1892–4; Border (A. Lang), 1892–4; The Temple Edition (C. K. Shorter) 1897–9.

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THE
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INTRODUCTION

THE author, on a former occasion,[1] declined giving the real source from which he drew the tragic subject of this history, because, though occurring at a distant period, it might possibly be unpleasing to the feelings of the descendants of the parties. But as he finds an account of the circumstances given in the Notes to Law's *Memorials*,[2] by his ingenious friend Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., and also indicated in his reprint of the Rev. Mr Symson's poems, appended to the *Description of Galloway*, as the original of the Bride of Lammermoor, the author feels himself now at liberty to tell the tale as he had it from connections of his own, who lived very near the period, and were closely related to the family of the Bride.

It is well known that the family of Dalrymple, which has produced, within the space of two centuries, as many men of talent, civil and military, and of literary, political, and professional eminence, as any house in Scotland, first rose into distinction in the person of James Dalrymple, one of the most eminent lawyers that ever lived, though the labours of his powerful mind were unhappily exercised on a subject so limited as Scottish Jurisprudence, on which he has composed an admirable work.

He married Margaret, daughter to Ross of Balniel, with whom he obtained a considerable estate. She was an able, politic, and high-minded woman, so successful in what she undertook, that the vulgar, no way partial to her husband or her family, imputed her success to necromancy. According to the popular belief, this Dame Margaret purchased the temporal prosperity of her family from the Master whom she served, under a singular condition, which is thus

[1] *See* Introduction to the *Chronicles of the Canongate*.
[2] Law's *Memorials*, p. 226.

narrated by the historian of her grandson, the great Earl of Stair. "She lived to a great age, and at her death desired that she might not be put under ground, but that her coffin should be placed upright on one end of it, promising that while she remained in that situation, the Dalrymples should continue in prosperity. What was the old lady's motive for such a request, or whether she really made such a promise, I cannot take upon me to determine; but it is certain her coffin stands upright in the aisle of the church of Kirkliston, the burial place of the family."[1] The talents of this accomplished race were sufficient to have accounted for the dignities which many members of the family attained, without any supernatural assistance. But their extraordinary prosperity was attended by some equally singular family misfortunes, of which that which befell their eldest daughter was at once unaccountable and melancholy.

Miss Janet Dalrymple, daughter of the first Lord Stair, and Dame Margaret Ross, had engaged herself without the knowledge of her parents to the Lord Rutherford, who was not acceptable to them either on account of his political principles, or his want of fortune. The young couple broke a piece of gold together, and pledged their troth in the most solemn manner; and it is said the young lady imprecated dreadful evils on herself should she break her plighted faith. Shortly after, a suitor who was favoured by Lord Stair, and still more so by his lady, paid his addresses to Miss Dalrymple. The young lady refused the proposal, and being pressed on the subject, confessed her secret engagement. Lady Stair, a woman accustomed to universal submission (for even her husband did not dare to contradict her), treated this objection as a trifle, and insisted upon her daughter yielding her consent to marry the new suitor, David Dunbar, son and heir to David Dunbar of Baldoon, in Wigtownshire. The first lover, a man of very high spirit, then interfered by letter, and insisted on the right he had acquired by his troth plighted with the young lady. Lady Stair sent him for answer, that her daughter, sensible of her undutiful behaviour in entering into a contract unsanctioned by her parents, had retracted her unlawful vow, and now refused to fulfil her engagement with him.

[1] *Memoirs of John Earl of Stair*, by an Impartial Hand. London, printed for C. Cobbet, p. 7.

The lover, in return, declined positively to receive such an answer from any one but his mistress in person; and as she had to deal with a man who was both of a most determined character, and of too high condition to be trifled with, Lady Stair was obliged to consent to an interview between Lord Rutherford and her daughter. But she took care to be present in person, and argued the point with the disappointed and incensed lover with pertinacity equal to his own. She particularly insisted on the Levitical law, which declares, that a woman shall be free of a vow which her parents dissent from. This is the passage of Scripture she founded on:—

"If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

"If a woman also vow a vow unto the Lord, and bind herself by a bond, being in her father's house in her youth;

"And her father hear her vow, and her bond wherewith she hath bound her soul, and her father shall hold his peace at her: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she hath bound her soul shall stand.

"But if her father disallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her."—Numbers, xxx. 2, 3, 4, 5.

While the mother insisted on these topics, the lover in vain conjured the daughter to declare her own opinion and feelings. She remained totally overwhelmed, as it seemed, —mute, pale, and motionless as a statue. Only at her mother's command, sternly uttered, she summoned strength enough to restore to her plighted suitor the piece of broken gold, which was the emblem of her troth. On this he burst forth into a tremendous passion, took leave of the mother with maledictions, and as he left the apartment, turned back to say to his weak, if not fickle mistress, "For you, madam, you will be a world's wonder"; a phrase by which some remarkable degree of calamity is usually implied. He went abroad, and returned not again. If the last Lord Rutherford was the unfortunate party, he must have been the third who bore that title, and who died in 1685.

The marriage betwixt Janet Dalrymple and David Dunbar of Baldoon now went forward, the bride showing no repugnance, but being absolutely passive in every thing her mother commanded or advised. On the day of the marriage, which, as was then usual, was celebrated by a great assemblage of friends and relations, she was the same—sad, silent, and resigned, as it seemed, to her destiny. A lady, very nearly connected with the family, told the author that she had conversed on the subject with one of the brothers of the bride, a mere lad at the time, who had ridden before his sister to church. He said her hand, which lay on his as she held her arm round his waist, was as cold and damp as marble. But, full of his new dress, and the part he acted in the procession, the circumstance, which he long afterwards remembered with bitter sorrow and compunction, made no impression on him at the time.

The bridal feast was followed by dancing; the bride and bridegroom retired as usual, when of a sudden the most wild and piercing cries were heard from the nuptial chamber. It was then the custom, to prevent any coarse pleasantry which old times perhaps admitted, that the key of the nuptial chamber should be intrusted to the brideman. He was called upon, but refused at first to give it up, till the shrieks became so hideous that he was compelled to hasten with others to learn the cause. On opening the door, they found the bridegroom lying across the threshold, dreadfully wounded, and streaming with blood. The bride was then sought for: She was found in the corner of the large chimney, having no covering save her shift, and that dabbled in gore. There she sat grinning at them, mopping and mowing, as I heard the expression used; in a word, absolutely insane. The only words she spoke were, "Tak up your bonny bridegroom." She survived this horrible scene little more than a fortnight, having been married on the 24th of August, and dying on the 12th of September 1669.

The unfortunate Baldoon recovered from his wounds, but sternly prohibited all enquiries respecting the manner in which he had received them. If a lady, he said, asked him any question upon the subject, he would neither answer her nor speak to her again while he lived; if a gentleman, he would consider it as a mortal affront, and demand satis-

faction as having received such. He did not very long survive the dreadful catastrophe, having met with a fatal injury by a fall from his horse, as he rode between Leith and Holyrood-house, of which he died the next day, 28th March 1682. Thus a few years removed all the principal actors in this frightful tragedy.

Various reports went abroad on this mysterious affair, many of them very inaccurate, though they could hardly be said to be exaggerated. It was difficult at that time to become acquainted with the history of a Scottish family above the lower rank; and strange things sometimes took place there, into which even the law did not scrupulously enquire.

The credulous Mr Law says, generally, that the Lord President Stair had a daughter, who "being married, the night she was *bride in* [that is, bedded bride], was taken from her bridegroom and *harled* [dragged] through the house (by spirits, we are given to understand), and soon afterwards died. Another daughter," he says, "was possessed by an evil spirit."

My friend, Mr Sharpe, gives another edition of the tale. According to his information, it was the bridegroom who wounded the bride. The marriage, according to this account, had been against her mother's inclination, who had given her consent in these ominous words: "You may marry him, but soon shall you repent it."

I find still another account darkly insinuated in some highly scurrilous and abusive verses, of which I have an original copy. They are docketed as being written "Upon the late Viscount Stair and his family, by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw. The marginals by William Dunlop, writer in Edinburgh, a son of the Laird of Househill, and nephew to the said Sir William Hamilton." There was a bitter and personal quarrel and rivalry betwixt the author of this libel, a name which it richly deserves, and Lord President Stair; and the lampoon, which is written with much more malice than art, bears the following motto:—

"Stair's neck, mind, wife, sons, grandson, and the rest,
Are wry, false, witch, pests, parricide, possessed."

This malignant satirist, who calls up all the misfortunes of the family, does not forget the fatal bridal of Baldoon.

He seems, though his verses are as obscure as unpoetical, to intimate, that the violence done to the bridegroom was by the intervention of the foul fiend to whom the young lady had resigned herself, in case she should break her contract with her first lover. His hypothesis is inconsistent with the account given in the note upon Law's *Memorials*, but easily reconcilable to the family tradition.

"In al Stair's offspring we no difference know,
They doe the females as the males bestow;
So he of's daughter's marriage gave the ward,
Like a true vassal, to Glenluce's Laird;
He knew what she did to her suitor plight,
If she her faith to Rutherfurd should slight,
Which, like his own, for greed he broke outright.
Nick did Baldoon's posterior right deride,
And, as first substitute, did seize the bride;
Whate'er he to his mistress did or said,
He threw the bridegroom from the nuptial bed,
Into the chimney did so his rival maul,
His bruised bones ne'er were cured but by the fall."[1]

One of the marginal notes ascribed to William Dunlop, applies to the above lines. "She had betrothed herself to Lord Rutherfoord under horrid imprecations, and afterwards married Baldoon, his nevoy, and her mother was the cause of her breach of faith."

The same tragedy is alluded to in the following couplet and note:—

"What train of curses that base brood pursues,
When the young nephew weds old uncle's spouse.

The note on the word *uncle* explains it as meaning "Rutherfoord, who should have married the Lady Baldoon, was Baldoon's uncle." The poetry of this satire on Lord Stair and his family was, as already noticed, written by Sir William Hamilton of Whitelaw, a rival of Lord Stair for the situation of President of the Court of Session; a person much inferior to that great lawyer in talents, and equally ill-treated by the calumny or just satire of his contemporaries, as an unjust and partial judge. Some of the notes are by that curious and laborious antiquary, Robert Milne,

[1] The fall from his horse, by which he was killed.

who, as a virulent Jacobite, willingly lent a hand to blacken the family of Stair.[1]

Another poet of the period, with a very different purpose, has left an elegy, in which he darkly hints at and bemoans the fate of the ill-starred young person, whose very uncommon calamity Whitelaw, Dunlop, and Milne, thought a fitting subject for buffoonery and ribaldry. This bard of milder mood was Andrew Symson, before the Revolution minister of Kirkinner, in Galloway, and after his expulsion as an Episcopalian, following the humble occupation of a printer in Edinburgh. He furnished the family of Baldoon, with which he appears to have been intimate, with an elegy on the tragic event in their family. In this piece he treats the mournful occasion of the bride's death with mysterious solemnity.

The verses bear this title—"On the unexpected death of the virtuous Lady Mrs Janet Dalrymple, Lady Baldoon, younger," and afford us the precise dates of the catastrophe, which could not otherwise have been easily ascertained. "Nupta August 12. Domum Ducta August 24. Obiit September 12. Sepult. September 30, 1669." The form of the elegy is a dialogue betwixt a passenger and a domestic servant. The first, recollecting that he had passed that way lately, and seen all around enlivened by the appearances of mirth and festivity, is desirous to know what had changed so gay a scene into mourning. We preserve the reply of the servant as a specimen of Mr Symson's verses which are not of the first quality :—

> ———"Sir, 'tis truth, you've told,
> We did enjoy great mirth ; but now, ah me!
> Our joyful song's turn'd to an elegie.
> A virtuous lady, not long since a bride,
> Was to a hopeful plant by marriage tied,
> And brought home hither. We did all rejoice,
> Even for her sake. But presently our voice
> Was turn'd to mourning for that little time
> That she'd enjoy : She waned in her prime,

[1] I have compared the satire, which occurs in the first volume of the curious little collection called a *Book of Scottish Pasquils*, 1827, with that which has a more full text, and more extended notes, and which is in my own possession, by gift of Thomas Thomson, Esq., Register-Depute. In the second *Book of Pasquils*, p. 72, is a most abusive epitaph on Sir James Hamilton of Whitelaw.