

*C. H. Macmillan*  
*1875*

SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL,

A DRAMATIC POEM;

THE MERMAID OF GALLOWAY;

THE LEGEND OF RICHARD FAULDER;

AND TWENTY SCOTTISH SONGS.

BY

ALLAN CUNNINGHAM.

---

The native legends of thy land rehearse;  
To such adapt thy lyre. *Collins.*

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SECOND EDITION.

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# P R E F A C E

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

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THE scene of the following Dramatic Poem is laid in the beautiful but ruinous Castle of Caerlaverock, on the Scottish side of the sea of Solway; and the time of the story is the close of the Commonwealth under the second Cromwell. It is partly traditional and partly imaginary; and the manners, feelings, and superstitions, are those common to the Scottish peasantry.

The composition of a Drama on a classic model, and in pure and scholastic language, has not, and

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could not be aspired at; but sympathy is not solicited for the circumstances under which public notice is courted. We care not to know of the impediments which are in the way of those who seek to give us delight; the vulgar wonder of a peasant writing verse has no share in the spell which is felt by the admirers of Burns.

I pretend not to have courted very assiduously the unities of time, place, and action; nor to have wholly disregarded them. The nature of a dramatic work requires some such limitation; criticism, neglecting to define it, has left it too exclusively perhaps at the will of the poet; but an ordinary fancy will not, I hope, refuse to stretch itself over three days and nights; nor let the little interest the story claims be dissolved like a witch's spell, because my native Nith sometimes interposes its waters between the persons of the Drama.

The day when dramatic literature threw a

charm over the multitude is, perhaps, gone past. Those who frequent our theatres go less to wonder and express delight, than to criticize and find fault; and the magnitude of our principal play-houses, meeting probably the popular taste for spectacle,—requires a play to the eye rather than to the heart. Knowledge has had its share in this downfall—superstitious beliefs and supernatural influences have vanished before instruction, and a limit has been assigned to the regions of invention. We do not feel like our ancestors the full force of that unearthly impulse which swayed Macbeth; the call from the other world which gave resolution to Hamlet: we believe not in the divining-rod of Prospero—nor expect to see the shadowy succession of Banquo's royal progeny arising at the call of an old woman on the heath of Fores.

Though this Dramatic Poem is not, perhaps, unfitted for representation, yet I did not write it

altogether with that view; my chief wish has been to excite interest in the reader by a natural and national presentation of action and character. That the ludicrous stands sometimes nigh the serious, and idle and capricious fancies mingle with matters of importance and gravity, is a charge which may be made, but it seems more the fault of the world than mine; such has human nature ever appeared to me.

Of the Ballads and Songs which close the volume, it is unnecessary to say much. They are taken almost at random from a mass of verse, which the leisure or idleness of many winter evenings accumulated. Several have already been printed in various lyrical publications, others appear now for the first time. If I have allowed the former to retain all the original remissness of melody and homely simplicity of manner and expression in which they found their way to the world it was not without consideration. I owe to

them some of the best friendships of my life ; and I am not certain but in their somewhat antique rudeness of manner which associates them with the elder lyrics of Scotland, lies the chief charm which they possess.

I cannot resist this opportunity of saying, that the Mermaid of Galloway has obtained some celebrity, from a painting by Mr. Hilton, R.A. in the gallery of Sir John Leicester.

*London, March, 1822.*

# P R E F A C E

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

---

FOR the public indulgence which my somewhat rude and imperfect labours have experienced, I have to express my thanks. The admonition, or the praise, of equitable and candid men, I have heard with respect and submission, and I shall endeavour to profit by their advice. To have failed in equalling the expectations of others must be a matter of sorrow to myself; and I am not the first who has not altogether succeeded in telling a native story in a dramatic way.

If it is proper to be silent, concerning words of encouragement and kindness, uttered to me in private by some of our most eminent literary characters, it is a less necessary, and less easy matter, to be silent at the generous notice of my name by the author of *Waverley*, in the introduction to the *Fortunes of Nigel*. To have my name and my labours associated with one of those brilliant and lasting productions, is an honour which I feel pleasure in saying I am proud of.—I have no other way of acknowledging it; the kindness has been done in secret, and the hand which wrote it has been ever as invisible to me as to the rest of mankind. The enchanter has continued unseen amid the circle where he performed his enchantments; and of his person the wisest can only speak with the limited knowledge of the noble knights of Branksome of the mighty wizard of old,

Some saw an arm, some saw a hand,

And some the waving of a gown.



Men might misinterpret me were I to say all that I feel; and were I to remain altogether silent it might be presumed I am insensible of a kindness which gives my name to posterity.

*London, 1822.*

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SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL.

Adieu ! Dumfries, my proper place,  
But and Caerlaverock fair !  
Adieu ! my castle of the Thieve,  
Wi' a' my buildings there :  
Adieu ! Lochmaben's gates sae fair,  
The Langholm-holme where birks there be :  
Adieu ! my Ladye and only joy,  
For trust me I may not stay with thee.

*Lord Maxwell's Goodnight.*

PERSONS IN THE DRAMA.

LORD WALTER MAXWELL, of Caerlaverock.

SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL, his son.

HALBERT COMYNE, cousin to Lord Maxwell.

SIR JOHN GOURLAY,

HUBERT DOUGAN,

EDWARD NEAL,

JOHN DINGWALL,

CLAUD HOGAN,

SIMON GRAEME,

MARK MACGEE,

AULD PENPONT.

} followers of Halbert Comyne.

} friends of Sir Marmaduke Maxwell.

Captains, Royalists, Soldiers, Shepherds, Mariners, and  
Servants.

LADY MAXWELL.

MARY DOUGLAS, of Cumlongan.

MAY MORISON, her maid.

MABEL MORAN.

Maidens.

Spirits.



I see him shoot through green Arbigland bay ;  
 The smiling sea-waves sing around his prow,  
 Wooed by the melody, flung sweet and far,  
 From merry flute and cymbal. Lo ! he comes ;  
 Say, shall he go unchasten'd through our floods ?

RIVER SPIRIT.

His helmet plume shall drink my mirkest surge.  
 I have no lack of waters, such as smack  
 Of the world's corruption. I have secret floods,  
 Embrown'd with cut-throats' dust ; waves tumbling red  
 With the gore of one whose hands were never wash'd  
 From the blood of strangled babes.

SEA SPIRIT.

Of every crime

That cries from earth to heaven, I have a stain ;  
 So rise, ye surges. Are ye slow to rise  
 Against the homeward sea-boy, when he sees  
 Lights in his mother's dwelling by the foot  
 Of lonely Criffel ? Rise, ye surges, rise !  
 Leap from your oozy bottom, where the bones  
 Of murderers fester—from the deepest den,  
 Where he who perish'd, plotting murder, lies ;  
 Come from the creek where, when the sun goes down,  
 The haunted vessel sends her phantom troops  
 Of fiery apparitions. Come, as I call ;  
 And come, too, heaven's wild wind. Pour the deep sea  
 Prone on yon ship that bears five unblest'd mortals—  
 Spirit, let us work.

SCENE II. *Entrance of the Solway. A Ship with*  
HALBERT COMYNE, DOUGAN, NEAL, HOGAN,  
DINGWALL *and* MARINERS.

FIRST MARINER.

The wind sleeps like a porpoise, and the sea  
Lies smooth as glass—so wake, my gentle wind;  
Come, breathing from the green and dewy west;  
Awake, my ancient and most pleasant friend;  
Thou God o' the mariners, come and swell my sail—  
Come blow, my bonnie breeze—come furrow deep  
That marble sea, so motionless and mute.  
Lo! see my mainsail's glew'd i' the air—the down  
Stirs not, now parted from the cormorant's wing—  
Awake—plague on thee for a slumbering servant,  
That wakes not when I want thee—I have seen  
Thee toss me on thy high and hollow wave,  
The chafed brine leaping through my starting seams,  
While I cried, hooly! and fleech'd down thy mood  
As a mother soothes a baby. Wake now, wake.

SECOND MARINER.

Hush—now he wakens tyrannous and strong—  
Lo! even now the sea begins to shake,  
The blast comes sweeping with an angry gust,  
The caverns moan—O man, but ye spake rudely.

THIRD MARINER.

Come, trim the mainsail of our gallant ship—



Now through the sea-brine she goes starting ; see,  
 How graceful is her shadow on the flood,  
 Milk-white her canvas is, and streamer'd gay ;  
 And lovely is she, as a bride, when bright  
 The bridegroom's gold glows on her finger, while  
 The torches lead her bedward.

FIRST MARINER *sings.*

1.

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,  
 A wind that follows fast,  
 And fills the white and rustling sail,  
 And bends the gallant mast ;  
 And bends the gallant mast, my boys,  
 While, like the eagle free,  
 Away the good ship flies, and leaves  
 Old England on the lee.

2.

O for a soft and gentle wind !  
 I heard a fair one cry ;  
 But give to me the snoring breeze,  
 And white waves heaving high ;  
 And white waves heaving high, my boys,  
 The good ship tight and free—  
 The world of waters is our home,  
 And merry men are we.

3.

There's tempest in yon horned moon,  
 And lightning in yon cloud ;  
 And hark the music, mariners,  
 The wind is piping loud ;  
 The wind is piping loud, my boys,  
 The lightning flashing free—  
 While the hollow oak our palace is,  
 Our heritage the sea.

## SECOND MARINER.

Hush—hush—plague choke that cavern of a throat,  
That roars like the troughs of Tongeland—Look i' the lee,  
The ocean furrows her dark waters—down  
The cloudy heaven drops in a sevenfold gloom,  
And all the lights of Man's green isle are quench'd,—  
The candles gleaming through the chamber glass  
Of Maryport's buxom daughters. Hark, my mates,  
That running sound along the cavern'd shore  
Of old Kirkcudbright—see the stormy cap  
On merry Criffel, and the sullen hood  
On stately Skiddaw. Mariners, no more  
Put trust in nine-inch cable, if we lack  
Lap-fulls of storm for this. It's yarely, yare,  
My merry mates—pluck in our canvas wings,  
Else they will have a pulling.

## THIRD MARINER.

As a river,

Plump comes the spouting rain—pours black as pitch  
From out yon cauldron of a cloud; the sea  
Turns up its sablest curls, and starts, and leaps  
Aneath the tempest, like a stirr'd up steed.  
Softly, my lovely Nancy, my sweet ship—  
Breast these rough billows softly, else thy keel  
Will rot perchance in a quicksand.

## DOUGAN.

What wild shore

Is this, now stretching dark along our lee?

## FIRST MARINER.

A shore where many a sailor's corse lies stretch'd,  
At no expense of linen—Here, boys, here—



SCENE III. *Solway Shore.*

*Enter* MARK MACGEE.

MACGEE.

Even now the moon rode bright in heaven, the stars  
Glean'd numerous, and in the cold blue north  
The lights went starting; nor a breath of wind  
Disturb'd the gentle waters. Grim as the pit,  
Glooms now the space between the heaven and earth;  
The stars are blotted out; and the mute surge,  
That wooed so sweet the pebbles on the beach,  
Gives its wreathed foam to dark Caerlaverock pines,  
And to the darkness seems, as if a tongue  
To speak of woe were given.

*(Storm—thunder and fire.)*

Dread heaven, I bow  
To thy behest. Comes this storm but to fright  
The desert air of midnight? or hast thou  
Some fearful purpose in it? Hark! a cry!

*Storm continues—Cries of distress from the sea; and enter from the surge HALBERT COMYNE, DOUGAN, NEAL, HOGAN, and DINGWALL.*

COMYNE.

Now, Solway, let thy rudest billows dash

Upon the shore five fathom deep abreast.

Lo! here I am, safe on the green grass sod.

DOUGAN.

One foot length of this good rough ground is worth  
A world of waters when the wind is loosed.

NEAL.

This cold and cursed water chills my blood :  
Confound thee, ravenous ocean, thou hast drank  
My precious liquor up.

DOUGAN.

Be wise and mute !

Didst thou not hear wild voices talk i' the blast ?  
Didst thou not see dread sights ? see horrible shapes  
Shake gleaming daggers at us ? All the sails  
Seem'd changed to shrouds ; uncoffin'd corpses stalk'd  
Visibly on the deck.

COMYNE.

Hush, Hubert Dougan : fear,

Like fancy, fashion'd forth those godless shapes ;  
And our eyes, so imagination will'd,  
Fill'd the ship with shapes terrific, and a tongue  
Fearful and ominous lent the sounding surge.

MACGEE.

Lo! has the storm spared these? or have the fiends  
Forged them i' the war of elements, and sent  
Their spectral progeny to fright the world  
With ghastly faces? Speak! May a poor man  
Call you God's mortal workmanship, or forms  
Sent here to stir the dead with doomsday looks?

NEAL. E'en reeking from the nethermost abyss

Of darkness, I assure you. Man, hast thou  
Got any drink for devils? Spare one drop.

MAGGEE.

'Faith, thou mayst pass with holier men than me  
For a fierce whelp of Satan's rudest brood.  
The roughest fiend that wallows in the lake  
Would start at these wild features, and would yell  
And boggle at thy shadow.

DOUGAN.

Peasant, peace:

Nor let the terrors of a rough rude heart  
Thus wrong an honest eye.

MAGGEE.

Has that deep sea

Not raised its voice against you? But I will speak.—  
The Solway is a gentle sea, good Sir,  
To men of gentle mood; but, oh! 'tis rough,  
And stern, and dark, and dangerous, to those  
Who cherish thoughts unjust or murderous.

COMYNE.

How sweet the west wind courts this clover bank,  
And breathes on one as with a maiden's lips.

DOUGAN.

My lord talks courtship to this pleasant land;  
And it indeed looks lovely. Now thy helm,  
Dinted with sabre strokes, must be unplumed,  
And made a milkmaid's bowl: thy sword, so famed  
For cleaving steel caps as the trumpet sang,  
Will make a damsel's distaff: and we'll hang  
Our pennon, soil'd in the grim surge of war,  
To scare the crows from corn.

COMYNE. Hush; keep thy blade  
 With a good edge on't. We may yet find work  
 Worth keeping a dirk to do.

HOGAN. Now, by the print  
 O' the blessed foot of St. Patrick, I do swear  
 Peace is a pleasant thing: I quit acquaintance  
 With six inches of cold steel. Now I'll go seek  
 A special oak staff, and a good friend's head  
 To try its merits on. Friend, were this land  
 Nigh the green hills of Lurgan, it would have  
 A name worth asking after.

MACGEE. This land has  
 An ancient name—a proverb'd one for sweets  
 Of every hue: here, at the brightening morn,  
 A thousand homes all fill'd with happy ones  
 Send up their smoke to heaven. A thousand hinds  
 Furrow the fallow land. A thousand maids,  
 Fresh as unripen'd roses, comb white flax,  
 Press the warm snowy curd, or blythely turn  
 The fragrant hay-swathe to the western wind.  
 Here too ascends at morn, or dewy eve,  
 The melody of psalm and saintly prayer;  
 Nor lack we here song of impassion'd bard,  
 And saws of sacred sages. When thou paintest  
 A place where angels might repose their plumes  
 From heavenly journeyings, call it Caerlaverock,  
 So then the world may credit what thou sayest.

COMYNE. Ah, Hubert! well I know this ancient shore;



Barefooted 'mongst its shells and pebbles, far  
I've chaced the lapwing. Fast too have I flown,  
Nor fear'd the quicksand quivering 'neath my foot,  
To match the rushing pellock with my speed:  
No stone uplifts its mossy crown but brings  
Of me some story with it; every hawthorn  
Has got a tale to tell; and that pine grove  
Could gossip things would glad the envious ear  
Of wrinkled dames demure. Now twenty summers  
Of burning suns, 'mid warfare's rough caress,  
Have brown'd my temples since that soft breeze blew  
That belly'd my parting sail.

NEAL. Look here, my lord;  
Lo! here I stand, all dripping wet, and drench'd  
In this same land of loveliness, and shed  
The sea brine from me, like a tree on which  
Rain has been newly shower'd.

DOUGAN. Now, peasant, say,  
Is there some rushy cot, or cavern, near—  
Some hermitage, or vaulted castle old,  
To whose hoar sides flame would strange lustre lend,  
And save us from being frozen 'neath the moon  
To winter icicles.

MACGEE. Yes, gentle Sir!  
I know an old house—but it lacks the roof;  
I know a cavern—but its mouth is shut  
By an earthquake-loosen'd stone; a castle's near,  
With vaults and arches vast, and grated walls—



But this rude river, by a sudden rush,  
 Has given a current to its marble floor  
 Where thou may'st float a barge. I know a cot,  
 A trim and neat one, with a fire that gilds  
 The polish'd roof-tree; flagons too are there,  
 With precious aquavitæ: that cot is mine:  
 But, by yon moon, I see no aspect here  
 That's made to grace an honest man's abode.  
 To him who sent you, I commend you; a grim one;  
 Even him who hides his cloven foot i' the storm.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV. *Caerlaverock Wood.*

*Enter* HALBERT COMYNE, DOUGAN, NEAL, HOGAN,  
*and* DINGWALL.

DOUGAN.

This seems some tower o' the fancy—its foundation  
 Flits 'fore us like a shadow.

*Enter* MABEL MORAN.

NEAL.

Who comes here?

A rude gray beldame come in cantraip time  
 To mount her ragwort chariot, and to quaff  
 Good wine with the pole star?

DINGWALL.

Now, my hoary dame,  
 I do beseech thee, keep thy foot on the sod;

There's forms to night i' the air, raging unloosed  
 From the flaming glen thou wot'st of, who might jolt  
 Thee from thine airy saddle, and would singe  
 Thy pike staff to a cinder.

MABEL. Reaver Rob!

The wind that blows thee here's from a black airt;  
 Among my hen-roosts, thy two hands are worse  
 Than the teeth of twenty fougarts. Saul to gude!  
 His presence too be near us! Who art thou?

COMYNE.

My good and reverend dame, we hapless ones  
 Have come from a far nook of foreign earth—  
 No midnight reavers we, but men whose swords  
 Were bared in God's high quarrel; we have felt  
 Rough weather on the deep, and seek i' the gloom  
 Lord Walter Maxwell's mansion. Wouldst thou trust  
 Thy foot i' the dew to show the path that winds,  
 Through planting, park, and woodland, to the gate  
 Of thy lord's dwelling; I'll requite each drop  
 That gems thy hair, with a fair piece of silver.

*(Offers money.)*

MABEL.

Put up your gold, man—for the dark deep sea's  
 Too dread a place wherein to gather gold,  
 To scatter it in moonlight. So ye swam  
 For your sweet lives? And, by my sooth, that's true;  
 Ye're dripping like the wing o' the water hen.  
 The Solway is a sinful flood, sweet Sir;

On many a fair face has it feasted : it  
Has muckle dool to answer for.

DOUGAN. I've heard  
In foreign lands men call 't the bloody water.  
Is yon Lord Maxwell's castle, 'mongst the groves  
On which the moon is gleaming?

MABEL. Three lang miles,  
Weary and dark, through mire, and moss, and wood,  
Have you to wend, and find no bigged wall  
Save this poor sheal. But in the Solway flow  
Ye'd better be to the neck, with Will-o'-the-wisp  
Shining aside you, than at my hearth stone  
Sit till the morning. Ye'll have heard from the Turks  
How Mabel's house is haunted. There came once  
A gifted man—a soul's well wisher—one  
Whom men call'd Shadrach Peden. In he came,  
With "Peace be here;" and, "Dame, thou'rt sore beset  
With sprites of the sinful and permitted fiends."  
"Aye, well I wot that's true," quoth I. He drew  
A circle and a cross, and syne began  
Stark controversy for a stricken hour.  
But, Sirs, the fiends wax'd strong and fearful, and  
The saint grew faint and frail. "Mabel," quoth he,  
"There's no perfection in flesh."

DOUGAN. Truce, holy dame :  
Lift thy door latch, and let us have one hour  
Of fellowship with thy fiends—feel the warm glow  
So ruddy at thy window · I dread more



We leave thy gleaming hearth to trooping spectres ;  
 We love not to carouse with such companions,  
 Nor to shake hands with visionary fingers.  
 So this is the way, thou sayest ?

MABEL. Yes, gentle Sir.

Now look on yon bright star, and mark my words.  
 The tryster tree pass, where the pedlar lad  
 Got his neck broke, and by the yellow hair  
 Was hung among the branches. Then pass too  
 The dead man's loup, where our town tailor drown'd  
 Himself, for fair Peg Primrose. Pass the moss,  
 The bogle-moss, still haunted by the ghost  
 Of poor Tam Watson—an whom I kenn'd weel :  
 He wooed the gypsy's daughter, and forgot  
 Caerlaverock had fair faces. He was found  
 One summer morning ; but the cauld sharp airn  
 Had cross'd his weazon, and his ghost aye goes  
 With its right hand at its throat. Pass that, and syne  
 Ye'll see a belted huntsman cut in stone,  
 A bugle at his belt, which ye maun blow,  
 If ye would have swift tidings. I have said  
 My say, and so God prosper good intents.

*(Exeunt Halbert Comyne, &c.)*

MABEL MORAN, *alone.*

Thank heaven and hamely wit for this good riddance !  
 Now woe unto me, had I raised the latch  
 Of my warm shealing to such unbless'd loons,

They'd ta'en my gold, and made a ghost of me.  
God ward Lord Maxwell, and his bonnie lady ;  
I'll through the wood, and warn them. Good red  
gold,  
And decent folk, will soon grow scarce, if knaves  
Like these may carry swords. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V. *Caerlaverock Wood. Night.*

*Enter* SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Thou fair tall tree, may the sharp axe ne'er smite  
Thy shapely stem ; may birds of sweetest song  
Among thy branches build : here first I met  
My gentle love. Lo ! now she comes. How bless'd  
The greensward is that carpets her white foot.  
Bless thee, fair lingerer, I have number'd nigh  
The crowded stars that stud yon western heaven.

*Enter* MARY DOUGLAS.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Say, am I come to hear some curious tale  
Of fairy raid and revel, quaintly mix'd  
With antique tales of love ? Come, thou wilt tell me  
Some soft and gentle story : thou wilt lay  
Thy cheek to mine, and whisper thus, lest stars  
Should hear thee, and turn tell-tales. Have I guess'd ?

SIR MARMADUKE.      I have a tale to tell,

I've got a quaint and curious tale to tell,  
Of one who loved a maid dear as the hope  
Of heaven to human soul ; but heaven smiled not  
Upon their loves : there came a parting hour ;  
And with that hour came bitter dread, lest they  
Should meet no more again.

MARY DOUGLAS.      Thine eyes are grave.  
Has some new woe come o'er them as a cloud ?  
Tell me what moves thee ; lest I rashly deem  
Some blessed star my rival, and go forth  
And rail against its radiance.

SIR MARMADUKE.      My true love,  
The ancient glory has gone from our house ;  
And we like beadsmen sit and quote sage saws,  
While weeds have grown, and topp'd the noble cedars.  
The clouted shoe has kick'd the golden round  
From the bright brow of majesty ; the axe  
Supplants the sceptre ; and the awful law  
Devours, as an unheeded fire, even those  
It was but meant to warm. Some noble spirits  
Are ripe for loyal deeds—so farewell, love ;  
Thou'lt make for me a garland or a shroud.

MARY DOUGLAS.      I have a tale to tell,  
Is this the close then of the truest love ?  
It was too tender and too kind to last—  
Alas ! I dream'd not of ungentle war :  
It is a fearful thing—war, where the odds



Will make gods of the winners, is a game  
That charms the noble, but makes poor maids' eyes  
Moist with perpetual tears. Go, my love, go—  
Yet all my thoughts were still on gentle themes ;  
On twilight walks aside the shaded brooks ;  
Of songs by moonlight on the castle top ;  
Of merry-makings when the corn was ripe ;  
Of building sunny homes for hoary men ;  
And thou wert ever there with thy grave smile :  
But thou wilt find some higher love, when fame  
Has deck'd thy helmet, and the laughing eyes  
Of noble dames are on thee.

SIR MARMADUKE.            I shall be  
True as these stars are to the cold clear sky ;  
True as that streamlet to its pebbly bed ;  
True as green Criffel to her stance ; and true  
As birds to song in summer. Smile, my love,  
For I may yet return 'mid many a shout  
And song of welcome.

MARY DOUGLAS.            I'll go with thee, love—  
'Tis sweet, even in hot battle, to be by  
The side of one we love—to hear his voice,  
Big as the martial trumpet, call " come on ;"  
To see his raised arm wither strong men's strength  
Into the might of babes—see 'neath his steed  
The helms of chieftains lie, and his course be  
Where steeds soon lack their riders.





That seem so ripe for pressing. Let me try.

MARY DOUGLAS.

I'm a poor dweller in this woodland, Sir,  
And all uncustom'd to such fair free words,  
And more to such frank action.

SIR MARMADUKE. Sir! free Sir;

They who seek fruit on a forbidden tree  
May break their neck i' the climbing.

COMYNE. This a churl?

This is no peasant trimm'd for the tryste hour. (*Aside.*)  
Now pardon, fair one—and for thee, proud youth,  
If my free speech had an ungentle sound,  
Forget it for the sake of those dark eyes  
That made a soldier err.

DOUGAN. Away—avaunt—

Thou painted mischief—for such sweet and trim  
And rose and lily limmers, the bright swords  
Of soldiers blush—for such a one as thee  
I've seen sworn brothers ruby their sharp blades,  
While the fair she-fiend plaited her long locks,  
And smiled, and smiled. Come on now, gentle youth;  
Come, grace us with thy guidance. (*Exeunt Dougan, &c.*)

HALBERT COMYNE, *alone.*

COMYNE.

This is a lady I should love alone  
Aneath the summer moon—some such sweet time  
May yet o'ertake me; I'm not one that woos

With harp in hand, and ballad on my tongue,  
 'Neath winter casements—nor love much to measure  
 Dark moors at midnight, nor cross drowning streams  
 On ice an inch thick, for a cold maid's smile :  
 No damsel doats on these romantic youths ;  
 All their talk is o' the perilous attempt  
 Of dizzy casements—then they sit and tell  
 What shooting stars they saw—how the pale moon  
 Caught one large star between her crooked horns,  
 And they stood marvelling for a stricken hour ;—  
 How many moor flames burn'd upon the hills ;  
 How frequent o'er their heads the night bird sang :  
 How many times their shadow seem'd a goblin,  
 And set their hair on end. Then they sigh deep,  
 And ask what time o' the night 'tis, and pray heaven  
 May warm the morning dew. (Exit.)

SCENE VI. *Caerlaverock Castle.*

*Enter* MARK MACGEE, PENPONT, *and* SERVANTS.

PENPONT.

Say'st thou, I love red wine better than water ?  
 A rosy lass in hawslock gray, before  
 A hoary dame in satin and soft silk ?  
 Thou skilful man in tarry fleeces—rot—  
 Murrain—leaping-illness, and red-water ;  
 Comrade to Tweed, to Yarrow, Ringwood, Whitefoot ;

What canst thou say against the pastime sweet  
 Of lasses' lips.—Thou supperer on sorrow,  
 And diner on mortification—Scatterer  
 O' the bleeding members torn from scripture parable,  
 What sayest thou to wine, and maidens' lips ?

MACGEE.

Now I must measure this fool-man his corn  
 With his own bushel (*aside*)—I have much to say :  
 Thou turn'st thy back on the milk and honey vale,  
 For the flesh-pots o' the heathen. Thou dost sleep  
 Where Satan spreads thy pillow ;—thy salvation  
 Is in the larder and the vintage press,  
 And thy redemption in warm drink. Fear not ;  
 The day will come when thou shalt have hot drink,  
 Hotter than lips can cool't ; companions too,  
 Grim ones ; rosie dames thou'lt lack not, nor  
 The fauns with cloven heel. There thou'lt carouse  
 With the plump and willing lady, who doth sit  
 O' the top of the seven hills.

PENPONT.

Thou gifted lecturer

On the discipline of flesh, far hast thou chased  
 Mirth from the land ; the twang of a harp-string  
 Has not been heard, since holy Ramoth Gilead  
 Lift up his voice against the burning shame  
 Of satin slippers, and the soot-black sin  
 Of silken snoods. Now Mark, the wiseman, what  
 Sayest thou to this ?

MACGEE.

Aye, aye ! thou lovest the pride

And vanity of flesh, and proud apparel,  
Perfumed locks, bared bosoms, and the hour  
For climbing to maids' casements, chambering,  
And wantonness. All have not mired them so  
In the lusts of life. Aye, aye ! I mind her well ;  
Jane Proudfoot was her name ; proud by the name  
Indeed was she, and proud by nature, and  
Own'd a rich voice that made a psalm note sound  
Sweet as a sinful song. Aye, sore she tried  
To catch me in the meshes of the flesh :  
'Twas at a Quarrelwood-preaching, many a glance  
Threw she on me ; shook all her fine apparel ;  
Like a proud steed rein'd up both neck and eye ;  
Spread forth her painted plumage, and swam past  
With her beauty and her bravery. I sigh'd,  
And read my Bible.

PENPONT.                    Seest thou this pikestaff?  
Some thirty years ago it grew i' the wood,  
A braw brown hazel, and has borne my weight  
Since then to kirk and market—I would dibble it  
Deep in the earth, and water it, with the hope  
Of cracking its brown nuts, had this fair dame,  
Jane Proudfoot, thaw'd an icicle like thee.

*Enter MABEL MORAN.*

MABEL.

Now, peace be here ; Saint Allan be your watch ;  
Say, where is Walter Maxwell ?

PENPONT.

Conscience, carlin !

Hast thou been casting cantraips and witch-pranks  
Neath the cold moon, till a water-spout fell on thee ?  
Or hast thou sought the black-bear's dugs, beyond  
The polar star, to lythe thy cauldron sauce ?  
Or pluck'd a drowned sailor from the bottom  
Of Solway, for the tar beneath his nail ?

MABEL.

Take thou this good brass bodle ; hold thy tongue ; .  
Did e'er thy wisdom bring thee so much gain ?  
Wilt thou prate still ? do, if thy weazon's steel,  
And cares for no sharp knife. For *they* are near  
Whose hands would choke thee, teaching men the charm,  
To save the world from sinking. Let me go ;  
Else I shall freeze thee to a drop of ice,  
And hang thee 'neath the moon.

PENPONT.

Lo ! woman, woman,

I care not for thee ; in my bonnet stem  
I wear a plant can make thy cauldron sauce  
As harmless as new milk. For it was thou  
Who sank the boat, with many a precious soul,  
Crossing the river for a cast of grace  
At godly Quarrelwood. I know thee well.  
Thou in the form of a fair youth beset  
That saintly damsel, May Macrone, among  
The green broom of Dalswinton, and made tight  
The string of her apron. And thou shook'st he Kirk  
O' Kirkmabreck aboon sweet Shadrach Peden,

When, to the Galloway heathen, he cried, "Clap  
The fire of hell to their tails."

MABEL. Peace—hold thy peace—  
And hold my staff till I seek Walter Maxwell.

PENPONT.  
Thy staff! I'd sooner touch the brazen serpent  
That drew the saints to sin. Go cast it down  
Into that hot pit o'er which thou'lt be hung  
Till the buckles melt in thy shoon.

MABEL. Hold my witch staff,  
Else I shall turn it to a fisher rod,  
And thee into a fiend, and make thee angle  
Till doom i' the dub o' darkness. (*Exit.*)

PENPONT. Fearful woman!  
This staff of hers was cut what time the moon  
Was in the wane, and she works cantraips with it.  
There's devilish virtue in it, that from the wisest  
Can win their best resolves; can make gray hairs  
Grow wanton; make a peasant beldame, clad  
In hodan, seem a lady robed in silk  
With a sark of sneap-white holland. It should burn,  
But tis no earthly fire that may consume it;  
And it might turn me, by some cursed prank,  
Into a wonder for the world to gaze at.

(*Exeunt.*)



SCENE VII. *Caerlaverock-hall.*

*Enter LORD WALTER MAXWELL, and LADY MAXWELL.*

LADY MAXWELL.

Thou must not stand on earth, like a carved saint  
Which men do bow to, but which ne'er returns  
Their gratulation.

LORD MAXWELL. Love, there is a voice  
Still whispering, that all we love or hate—  
All we admire, exalt, or hope to compass,  
Till the stars wax dim amid our meditation,  
Is but as words graved on the ocean sands,  
Which the returning tide blots out for ever.  
For I'm grown sick of the world's companionship,  
Of camp and city, and life's pomp—the song  
Of bards impassion'd, who rank earth's gross dust  
With things immortal—of the gladsome sound  
Of dulcimer and flute—the corrupt tongue  
O' the shrewd politician. O! for a rude den  
In some vast desert—there I'd deem each star,  
That lumined me in loneliness, was framed  
To coronet my brows—that the bloom'd bough  
On which the wild bees cluster'd, when its scent  
Fill'd all the summer air, graced my hand more  
Than a dread sceptre : and the little birds  
Would know us, love ; the gray and pleasant wren



Would hang her mansion for her golden young  
Even in our woodland porch.

LADY MAXWELL. Thy country's woes  
Have robb'd thee of thy peace—have pluck'd thy spirit  
Down from its heaven, and made sweet sleep to thee  
The bitterest bliss of life.

LORD MAXWELL. Is there a bosom  
Full of a loyal heart?—Is there a knee  
That seeks the dust at eve?—a holy tongue,  
Whose orisons find heaven? a noble mind,  
Whose pure blood has flow'd down through the pure veins  
Of a thousand noble bosoms?—a brave man  
Who loves his country's ancient name and law,  
And the famed line of her anointed kings?  
Oh heaven! give him swift wings: the sword, the rack,  
The halter, and whet axe hold him in chace,  
And make a den of Scotland, for the fiends  
To howl and revel in.

LADY MAXWELL. But shall we sit,  
Even as the dove does on the doom'd tree-top,  
Until the axe strews to the weazel's tooth  
Her young ones in their down?—shall we go cast  
Life's heavenly jewel to the pit? and page,  
With cap and cringing knee, him, match'd with whom  
A murderer's hand is milkwhite, and the brow  
Of a gross peasant, smutch'd with hovel soot,  
The brow of an archangel?

LORD MAXWELL. Say no more:—

My Scotland, whilst one stone of thine is left  
 Unturn'd by ruin's plowshare—while one tree  
 Grows green, untouch'd by the destroyer's axe—  
 While one foundation stone of palace or church,  
 Or shepherd's hovel, stands unmoved by  
 The rocking of artillery—while one stream,  
 Though curdling with warm life's blood, can frequent  
 Its natural track—while thou hold'st holy dust  
 Of princes, heroes, sages, though their graves  
 Flood ankle-deep in gore—O, I will love thee,  
 And weep for thee ;—and fight for thee, while heaven  
 Lends life, and thy worst foes are but of flesh,  
 And can feel temper'd steel.

LADY MAXWELL.                    Oh! had we here  
 Him thou so lovest, thy fiery cousin, he  
 Who would have heir'd thee had I not been blest  
 Above all hope in winning thee!—he was  
 One bold in thought, and sudden in resolve ;  
 In execution swifter :—Halbert Comyne,  
 Of thee our peasants love to talk, and draw  
 Thy martial aspect and thy merry glance  
 Among the maids at milking time. Yet they  
 Pause mid their rustic charactering, and cough,  
 And with a piece of proverb or old song  
 They close the tale, look grave, and shake the head,  
 And hope thou may'st be blest and bide abroad.—



Men through the wood—five stately men, who told  
 Of perils great they scaped from, and enquired  
 The footpath to thy hall. Now, Walter Maxwell,  
 Gird to thy side thy sword, and clasp the hand  
 Of those thou welcomest—with a glove of steel ;  
 For two of these five mortals wore the looks  
 Of those dread ones i' the vision. Admonition  
 Comes as a dose i' the death-pang, if thou deem'st  
 I either dream or dote.

LORD MAXWELL. My sage good dame,  
 A cot I'll build thee neath my castle wall ;  
 For that wild glen thou livest in yields ripe things  
 About the full of the moon. (*A horn is blown.*)

MABEL. There sounds thy doom—  
 Woe to thy house ! And now, let the hoar head  
 Of him whose tongue was revered for sage saws  
 When I was but a baby,—the green youth—  
 Like corn i' the shot-blade, when the staff of life  
 Is yet as milk i' the ear—on whose soft chin  
 The beard's unbudded,—the matron in whose ear  
 Grandmother has been music,—the sweet babe,  
 Whose tender lips hold yet the mother's milk  
 Uncurdled—haste ! All fly this doomed house—  
 I hear the death groans—lo ! I see the dirks  
 Reek warm with murder's work—see ! the blood drops  
 Thick dappling all thy walls—along the floor  
 Men stride in blood to the buckles, and grim throngs  
 Of fiery spectres welcome those whose veins  
 Are yet unsluiced with steel. I'll see no more,

But fly thy dwelling, though my footsteps lay  
 O'er acres of dead men—and I were paged  
 By all the fiends o' the pit. *(Exit.)*  
*(Horn blows louder.)*

*Servants enter.*

LORD MAXWELL. Now hasten thou,  
 And see who summons thus our doors, and what  
 This visitation means. *(Exit Servant.)*

Perhaps some one  
 From a far land, who hopes to find his home  
 Smiling with kindred faces.—In the grave  
 Lie those who loved him—in the battle field  
 With glorious Grahame they died! on Marston Moor  
 Perchance they sleep! by private guile fell they—  
 By the swift carbine, or the whetted axe,  
 And all the cruel and the crafty ways  
 In which rebellion works.

*Enter SERVANT.*

SERVANT. My lord, a chief,  
 Of martial mien, with followers four, scarce scaped  
 The raging Solway, seeks to be thy guest.

LORD MAXWELL.  
 Give them my castle's welcome; bring them hither.  
*(Exit Servant.)*

PENPONT. *(Aside.)*  
 Where's the dame flown to, whom the foul fiend loves?  
 Far famed is she for giving a rough guess

How the world will wag. Lord Maxwell speaks her fair,  
 'Tis well his part—the boy-lord ne'er had come  
 With a scream to the world, except for her two hands—  
 She loosed five witch knots, and the sweet bairn came.  
 Aye, by my sooth, we'll see what comes of this ;  
 Who deals with hags may dread a kittle cast.

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE and his Companions.*

LORD MAXWELL.

Stranger, I give thee welcome, though thy visit  
 Should strike my castle's cope-stone to the moat.

COMYNE.

'Tis spoke with noble heart. Could I cast off  
 The marks of many years of warfare rough  
 On persecutor's crests, the scars i' the front,  
 Won in the edge of peril—bid the sun  
 Wooe off' his burning courtship from my cheek,—  
 Then wouldst thou clasp me, though my linked mail  
 Were wreath'd with crested snakes. Not know me yet ?  
 Look on this good sword, 'twas a good man's gift ;  
 I've proved its edge on plates of Milan steel.

LORD MAXWELL.

My Halbert Comyne ! mine own gallant cousin !  
 And this is thou ! thrice bless thee, my brave Halbert.  
 And thou art safe ? wounds on the cheek and brow,  
 No more !—they say they were found in glory's walk.  
 Not know thee ! thee I dream about ! even thee  
 Whom I have borne so often on my back.



Through the mirk pools of Nith!—thou’rt changed indeed  
 From May’s sweet blossom to September’s brown;  
 And hast a voice, for that of soft nineteen,  
 Like to the martial trumpet. Welcome him,  
 My fair one; forth with the white hand that made  
 Me blessed. Call my son; bring him, though he  
 Had won the love of some particular star  
 To his harp and poet song.

LADY MAXWELL. Welcome, thrice welcome:  
 The tongue of the land’s familiar with thy fame.  
 Thy name I might have learn’d to love, though it  
 Had ne’er pass’d waking lips. In deepest sleep  
 On thee my lord oft calls; and, with a tongue  
 That warns mid commendation, urges thee  
 From the chace of desperate steel—But now, more meet  
 Soft couch and cheer, than welcoming of lips.

COMYNE. (*Aside.*)  
 A wife and son! these are new sounds to me;  
 They choke my proud hopes in life’s porch, and fill  
 My hand with my keen sword. I hoped to come  
 To heir this Nithsdale pryncedom; and have brought  
 Some chosen spirits from the wars, to share  
 My fortune, and the fortune of the times.—  
 Fair lady, I have urged remembrance far,  
(*To Lady Maxwell.*)  
 Yet nought so fair or noble can I charm  
 As thee from my mute memory. I sail’d,  
 Forsaking some proud beauties; but none fill’d

Like thee men's bosoms brimful of sweet love,  
Nor charm'd the lads who wear gold on their brows,  
To sue with cap in hand.

LORD MAXWELL.           She was the pride,  
The grace of Galloway; and she is mine.  
But, gentle cousin, now refresh, repose thee;  
And I will wooe thine ear to all the woes  
That press now on poor Scotland.           (*Exeunt.*)



## ACT II.

SCENE I. *Caerlaverock Castle.**Enter HALBERT COMYNE.*

COMYNE.

'Tis said there is an hour in the darkness, when  
Man's brain is wondrous fertile, if nought holy  
Mix with his musings. Now, whilst seeking this,  
I've worn some hours away; yet my brain's dull,  
As if a thing call'd grace stuck to my heart,  
And sicken'd resolution. Is my soul tamed  
And baby-rid with the thought that flood or field  
Can render back, to scare men and the moon,  
The airy shapes of the corses they enwomb?—  
And what if it is so? Shall I lose the crown  
Of my most golden hope, because its circle  
Is haunted by a shadow? Shall I go wear  
Five summers of fair looks,—sigh shreds of psalms,—  
Pray in the desert till I fright the fox,—  
Gaze on the cold moon and the cluster'd stars,  
And quote some old man's saws 'bout crowns above,—  
Watch with wet eyes at death-beds, dandle the child,  
And cut out elder whistles for him who knocks  
Red earth from clouted shoon? Thus may I buy

Scant praise from tardy lips ; and when I die,  
Some ancient hind will scratch, to scare the owl,  
A death's head on my grave-stone. If I live so,  
May the spectres dog my heels of those I slew  
I' the gulph of battle ; wise men cease their faith  
In the sun's rising ; soldiers no more trust  
The truth of temper'd steel. I never loved him.—  
He topt me as a tree that kept the dew  
And balmy south wind from me : fair maids smiled ;  
Glad minstrels sang ; and he went lauded forth,  
Like a thing dropt from the stars. At every step  
Stoop'd hoary heads unbonneted ; white caps  
Hung in the air ; there was clapping of hard palms,  
And shouting of the dames. All this to him  
Was as the dropping honey ; but to me  
'Twas as the bitter gourd. Thus did I hang,  
As his robe's tassel, kissing the dust, and flung  
Behind him for boy's shouts,—for cotman's dogs  
To bay and bark at. Now from a far land,  
From fields of blood, and extreme peril I come,  
Like an eagle to his rock, who finds his nest  
Fill'd with an owlet's young.—For he had seen  
One summer's eve a milkmaid with her pail,  
And, 'cause her foot was white, and her green gown  
Was spun by her white hand, he fell in love :  
Then did he sit and pen an amorous ballad ;  
Then did he carve her name in plum-tree bark ;  
And, with a heart e'en soft as new press'd curd,

Away he walk'd to wooe. He swore he loved her :  
 She said, cream curds were sweeter than lord's love :  
 He vow'd 'twas pretty wit, and he would wed her :  
 She laid her white arm round the fond lord's neck,  
 And said his pet sheep ate her cottage kale,  
 And they were naughty beasts. And so they talk'd ;  
 And then they made their bridal bed i' the grass,  
 No witness but the moon. So this must pluck  
 Things from my heart I've hugg'd since I could count  
 What horns the moon had. There has been with me  
 A time of tenderer heart, when soft love hung  
 Around this beadsman's neck such a fair string  
 Of what the world calls virtues, that I stood  
 Even as the wilder'd man who dropp'd his staff,  
 And walk'd the way it fell to. I am now  
 More fiery of resolve. This night I've wiped  
 The milk of kindred mercy from my lips ;  
 I shall be kin to nought but my good blade,  
 And that when the blood gilds it that flows between  
 Me and my cousin's land.—Who's there ?

*Enter DOUGAN and HOGAN.*

DOUGAN. 'Tis I,  
 Come from the green-wood bough, where I have dug  
 A den for stricken deer. 'Tis in a spot  
 Where moonshine is a marvel ; and the sun  
 May look from the mid heaven, and find it not.  
 An owl sat high, and whoop'd : a raven croak'd ;

A huge black grim one visible on a tree :  
Good Ned Neal's heart beat audible with fear,  
And thrice he swore the hole was deep enough.

HOGAN.

I have walk'd forth on the side o' the salt sea ;  
The fisher's nets are stretch'd upon the beach,  
Nor is there foot of living thing abroad,  
Nor sound in the wide world. By the sheer cliff  
I've moor'd the boat ; three willing strokes of oars  
May launch it far beyond the plummet's depth.

COMYNE.

'Tis done, like men well skill'd in the good deeds  
That from their foreheads wipe the world's hot sweat.  
And now, this night, let every look be mirth ;  
Let none cry havoc as he draws the sword,  
But leap up, when I give the signal—thus,—  
With ready swords, and all as mute as shadows.  
When good Lord Walter's to the greenwood gone,  
And when his dame, and her young ballad maker,  
Have tasted Solway's saltest surge ; we'll raise  
The cry of men at whose throats, when asleep,  
Murder made bare his knife ; and we'll awake  
The castle with a wild and clamorous outcry ;  
And we'll paint thick our cheeks with seeming terror ;  
Then, all at once, tell of a fearful 'sault  
Made on the tower by arm'd and desperate men.

DOUGAN.

We'll do it, and do it quick as a thunder clap.

*(Exeunt Dougan and Hogan.)*

COMYNE.

To night a joyous husbandman has call'd  
 Lord Maxwell's menials to a merry-making ;  
 There, too, goes Marmaduke, and with him goes  
 That bonnie maiden whose dark glance has given me  
 Something to sigh for. Now will I go look  
 Upon their mirth as one who noteth nought,  
 And then I'll court my fortunes with my sword. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II. *Caerlaverock Wood.*

*Enter SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL.*

SIR MARMADUKE.

How sweet is this night's stillness :—soft and bright  
 Heaven casts its radiance on the streams, and they  
 Lie all asleep, and tell the vaulted heaven  
 The number of her stars. I see the doves  
 Roosting in pairs on the green pine tree tops ;  
 The distant ocean 'mid the moonlight heaves,  
 All cluster'd white with sleeping water fowl.—  
 Now where the moon her light spills on yon towers,  
 I turn my sight, but not that I may try  
 If her chaste circle holds a world more worth  
 Man's worshipping than this. See—see—oh see  
 Lights at her window !—blessed is the air  
 Her blooming cheek that kisses :—looks she forth,  
 To see if earth hold aught that's worth her love ?  
 O let me steal one look at her sweet face—

For she doth still turn her dark eyes from me ;  
 And she is silent as yon silver star  
 That shows her dwelling place. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III. *A Farm House.*

*Enter* SIMON GRAEME, MARK MACGEE, PENPONT,  
*Hinds, Maidens, and Musicians.*

GRAEME.

Come, bound all to the floor—from the sweet maid  
 I' the middle of her teens, to the staid dame  
 Who was young men's delight i' the green year  
 Afore mirk-Monday. Haste ; leap shoulder high,  
 Ye gladsome lads ; here is no standing corn ;  
 Nought harder than white fingers for your touch.  
 What ! must the maidens wooe ye ? I have seen,  
 And that's no old tale, when I've made them spring  
 And pant in dancing like the hunted hart.  
 Come, screw your pegs, man—make the mole, that digs  
 Five fathom from your heels, run back in his hole,  
 Scared by the gladsome clamour :—now begin.

MUSICIAN.

I'll play a tune, a serious one and sweet. (*Plays.*)

FIRST HIND.

Cease, cease thou saintly kittler o' catgut ;  
 I'd liefer shake my legs to the moan of a storm  
 Than to such dolorous music. Faith, I'd make

Music far sweeter with a wooden bowl,  
 And two horn spoons ; or may I kiss nae mair  
 The lips o' Jenny Jop—here where she stands.

SECOND HIND.

Preserve us ! let him play what tune he likes :  
 I'd dance as gaily to the “babes i' the wood,”  
 As to “green sleeves”—so let's have the douce tune ;  
 We'll make it soon a wanton ane, I warrant thee.

*Enter PENPONT, singing.*

And saw ye aught of my bonnie moorhen ?  
 And saw ye aught of my bonnie moorhen ?  
 First she flew but, and syne she flew ben,  
 Then away to the hills flew my bonnie moorhen.

PENPONT.

Here's steaming punch, and haggis reeking rich ;  
 Sound of tight fiddle strings, and smacking, too,  
 Of maiden's lips. Now, if their lips in kissing  
 Gave crowns and kingdoms, such like dainty sweets  
 Are not for Auld Penpont—keep, woeful man,  
 Thy grey hairs from temptation. (Sings)

For I'm but a silly auld man,  
 Gaun hirpling over a tree ;  
 And for wooing a lass i' the dark,  
 The kirk came haunting me.

GRAEME.

Thou'rt welcome as the May-flower—though thy locks  
 Have a Decemberish look.

PENPONT. How's Simon Graeme  
 Of Kittlenaket?—e'en going leaping round



Amang the dames, and wi' a touch o' the hand  
 And word i' the ear making their cheeks the hue  
 O' the rose in July. That's a gallant trade,  
 And of old standing. I maun look and sigh— (*Sings*)

Though I be auld and doited now,  
 And though my pow be bell'd aboon :  
 Yet I hae been, upon a day,  
 The pride of a' the parishen.

GRAEME.

Come, cast aside thy bonnet and thy staff,  
 And throw to care complaint about gray locks ;  
 There's mirth in thee might win a widow's heart :  
 Faith, late I saw thee leaping rafter high,  
 And calling loud, “ Maids, look at sixty-eight.”

PENPONT.

Thou'rt one o' the choice spirits o' the earth ;  
 Lend me thy nief—thou keepest mirth and humour  
 Alive amang us ;—but for Simon Graeme,  
 Our converse would be controversy ;—and mirth  
 Would have an end. Gude keep the blythe good man  
 Of Kittlenaket from the hapless gift  
 Of preaching and expounding—and keep too (*To Mark*)  
 Sic gifts from Mark Macgee : I've seen the day  
 Thou wert a sinful smiler, and a singer  
 Of sappy sangs, such as make merry maids  
 Look through their lily fingers, and cry “ fye.”

MACGEE.

So thou art laughing yet : could I but catch thee



Singing a psalm tune seriously—'twere mirth  
Might serve for seven year.

PENPONT. 'Faith, men grow lean  
On prayer alone : I never knew but one  
Who wax'd the lustier for't ; Sue Sighaway,  
Of Cummertrees, who pray'd—See ! Simon, see !  
Well done, my merry masters—'faith, ye set  
My frozen blood a moving, and I think (Sings)

If a' my duds were off,  
And nought but hale claes on ;  
O, I could wooe a young lass  
As well as a wiser man.

#### SCENE IV. *Farm House continued.*

*Enter SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL and MARY  
DOUGLAS, the latter in a rustic disguise.*

SIR MARMADUKE.

My love, thou'rt lovelier in thy russet dress,  
Thy trim busk'd bodice, thy corn braided locks,  
Than in thy garments shower'd with gold and pearl.  
Once every year when this sweet hour comes round,  
Thou'lt pluck the diamonds from thy inky locks—  
Cast off thy robes with riches in their hem  
Might buy a baron's land—array thee in  
This modest russet, and with him thou lovest  
Thus enter to the dance.





FIRST HIND.

Dew-drops and diamonds! Comes she o' the blood  
That wore the sinful leaf? then sinful man  
May speak to corrupt woman.

SIR MARMADUKE.                      What is this?

What crimsons thus thy temple lilies?

MARY DOUGLAS.                      Come,

O come away, for something evil haunts us. (*Exeunt.*)

COMYNE.

Away, thou rose-lipp'd temptress! thou hast made  
My steel'd heart softer than the sweet maid's eyes  
When her love leaves her. Thou hast fled from me  
As ring-doves fly when the dark eagle's wings  
Are hung in heaven; but I shall suck thee down,  
As the serpent sucks the song lark when he sings  
Aneath the morning-star. That thou art lovely,  
I have not seldom sworn; that I love thee,  
I have some such suspicion. Cursed fool!  
Has thy heart grown into white curd, that maids'  
Soft hands can mould it thus? Away, away,  
Thou painted piece of loveliness, away!  
I go to win a noble game to-night,  
Where coronets are play'd for.—  
Now he who wears the bauble which I covet,  
Wears too my mother's image; and the blood  
That reddens in his veins and mine is mix'd  
Past my sword's separation. These are times  
When kindred blood is like cold water. Men

Ask God to guide their weapons, ere they bore  
 The breasts that warm'd them. With a few smooth words  
 O' the saints they soothe their consciences, and let  
 Their swords be bound or loosen'd by the tongue  
 Of some shrewd sly enthusiast; one who makes  
 The words of men slay far more bodies, than  
 The Scripture saves of souls. I do not league  
 With men who use my strength and sword, and wear  
 The glories which I toil'd for; who give me  
 The bloody ambush, and the dubious field,  
 And keep themselves power, gold, and pastures green;  
 I'll share with none my doom or my redemption. (*Exit.*)

MACGEE.

Now, Simon Graeme, I'll put my bonnet on;  
 My heart is sadly out of sorts; I'll home,  
 While the young maids are laughing.

GRAEME.

Mark Macgee,

Thou hast a look that stays entreaty's tongue,  
 Else I should tempt thee with some rare device  
 Of rustic wit. We lack not here a hind,  
 Who wraps a soul of humour in a grave  
 And curious aspect. Soon shall he come in,  
 Palsied with seeming age; his hoar locks hung  
 Thin on his temples; crooked will he seem,  
 And tottering on a crutch. Straight will he look,  
 As some fiend chased him; and he'll sorely wail  
 The wilfulness of flesh. The kirk's rebuke,  
 Will be his theme; and he will sing, or say,

How the preacher rail'd against hot blood, and he  
Promised amendment in such merry sort,  
That the incensed and ancient dames leap'd up  
And shower'd their psalm-books at him. Yet thou'lt go ?  
Then I'll take brand and bonnet straight, and see thee  
Safe through Caerlaverock wood. (*Exeunt.*)

PENPONT.

Now rise, my young men : faith we're blythely rid  
O' these wise saws and reliques of morality ;  
They rode like the night-mare on the neck of mirth.  
Come, make thy thairms cheep merrier, man, and merrier :  
What look'st thou sour for, man ? thou gnarled staff  
Of Cameronian crab-tree ; thou betrayer  
O' the godly psalm tune to the graceless legs  
O' the wag and wanton. Thou makest the tup-thairm  
Moan as if 't lay aneath the knife, and bringest  
Sounds from the tomb, and dread of rotten bones :  
I'd rather hear a peel'd skull preaching with  
A shank-bone 'tween its teeth. Thy bread-winner  
Sheds tears, positive tears, and wails like wind  
'Mongst gibbeted bones. Now give him elbow-room,  
My rosie quean, or me a kiss. Here, man,  
Taste thou this tass o' sinful spirit ; 'twill put  
A living tongue atween a dead man's lips.  
Come, turn the bottom of the cup to the moon ;  
Astride 'twill set thee on her highest horn.  
It simmers 'mang the dry dust o' thy throat :  
Thou drinkest most devoutly. Up, maids, up !



Here is a fiddler with inspired strings.

MUSICIAN.

What tune wilt have? Shall I play, "Kiss me fast,  
My mother's coming;" or, "Sweet Nelly Wemyss;"  
Or, "Oh to be married, if this be the way?"  
I'll make my tight strings speak o' thy old tricks,  
As plain as Mess John did i' the Session book.

(*Scene changes.*)

SCENE V. *Caerlaverock Wood.*

*Enter SIMON GRAEME and MARK MACGEE.*

GRAEME.

Put hot haste from thy footsteps; there's no lack  
Of my stiff joints upon my hall floor. Hark!  
The abounding din of merry feet, the loud  
And rising note o' the fiddle! Let us have  
An hour of moon-light converse, and our path  
Shall be where few frequent.

MACGEE.

Let's have grave talk;  
'Tis night's sedatest hour, even drowsy twelve.  
Forsake this footpath for the soft greensward:  
I love the greenwood better than the road,  
Where knights show golden spurs.

GRAEME.

We'll seek the grove,  
Where cushats love to breed in summer time;  
The way is sweet as that to a maid's window.





And he did pray thy fair one, for the sake  
 Of ancient blood and gentle kin, to leave  
 The rough rude rustics to their snooded dames.  
 How thou didst fume ! and with a slender wand,  
 Of two years' growth, didst chase him, sword and all,  
 Even till he pray'd and panted.

GRAEME.

What is this ?

Mercy in heaven ! a new-made grave gapes wide  
 Unto the stars, and from some murderer's hand  
 Craves for its morsel.

MACGEE.

A deep grave, new dug !

Dread God, but this is strange ! The earth's fresh turn'd,  
 And here are footsteps large.

GRAEME.

My friend, my friend,

This is hell's right-hand labour. Draw thy sword,  
 For God has sent us here.

MACGEE.

Staunch by thy side,

Even as I've done through life I'll do ; as one —

GRAEME.

Soft ! soft ! I hearken coming footsteps ; see,  
 A faint light glimmering underneath the boughs !  
 Come, let us stand beneath this holly. Some  
 Shall find a corner in that grave themselves,  
 Who seek to fill it without leave of me.

(*Exeunt under the holly-tree.*)

SCENE VI. *Caerlaverock Wood.*

*Enter DOUGAN and NEAL; the latter bearing the murdered body of Lord Maxwell, the former with a lantern.*

NEAL.

Hist! hear'st thou nought! or was't the dead-man's hand  
That shook the hazel bough? 'Tis a dreary place.

*(Chaunts.)* Yestreen I saw the new moon  
Wi' the dead moon in her arm.

O for one drop of most unrighteous brandy!  
I'm all as cold as a corse.

DOUGAN. I wish thou wert one.  
Can'st thou not rather sigh some scrap of prayer?  
Thou'lt waken all the ravens. Some sad hind,  
Whose lass a pedlar from his arms seduced  
With a remnant of red ribbon, here perchance  
Talks to the owl.

NEAL. Prayer! I can mind no prayer,  
Not even a shred, though I were doom'd for lack  
To slumber with my back-load.—Curse thy haste;  
I've spilt a mouthful of the rarest spirit  
E'er charm'd the tooth-ache.

*(Chaunts.)* One night our captain he did dream  
There came a voice, which said to him,  
Prepare you and your companie;  
To-morrow night you must lodge with me.



DOUGAN.

And what o' that ? a mouse may chirp like a man ;  
 A dead lord's hand lives when the green bough waves it.  
 Fear is a bogglish follower. Here's the grave ;  
 Measure it, lord ; feel if it's cut to fit thee.  
 Hab Comyne swore thou wert but a sad lord,  
 And a most sorry beadsman. From his hands  
 Thou hadst a passage to heaven, bloody and brief.  
 And yet thou braved us nobly. When thou saw  
 The rude steel near thee, I see yet thine eye  
 Lighten as thou smote the foremost. Oh thy look !  
 As thy shrieking lady saw thee ; it might make  
 The stars burn down from heaven, and the clear moon  
 Descend from the sky, that men might see to hunt  
 Us to destruction.

NEAL.                      Thou wilt preach about it,  
 Uttering fine words and sayings, sugar smooth,  
 Till the wild birds will learn to sing the tale ;  
 The stupid owl to whoop it in day-light ;  
 And the chased hart will couch upon the grave,  
 That men may find out murder.

DOUGAN.                      Coward priest,  
 Why didst thou leave the pulpit ? Thou didst drown  
 Thy fears in foaming flagons ; didst awake  
 With lewd song and wild riot the bright sun,  
 That rose, nor shamed thee ; thou didst find thy love  
 Among the dames whom even seafaring men  
 Shunn'd like the whirlpool ; and thou didst blaspheme

Till the profane grew sick. Fly from my sight,  
 Nor stay where brave men are. To thee I speak not ;  
 But with my heart I commune, where I find  
 What sickens contemplation. Curdling blood  
 Will smell i' the nose of justice, smother'd 'neath  
 All the Siberian snow. To mine eyes come,  
 From the earth's centre, arm'd and fiery shapes ;  
 Cherubim's blades are bared. Beneath my feet  
 The grass seems growing daggers. Now no more  
 I'll look that way—no more.

GRAEME. Look this way then,  
 Damn'd murderer ; 'tis the last time thou wilt look  
 An honest man i' the face.

DOUGAN. What devil art thou ?  
 If thou'rt not framed of sterner stuff than man,  
 Thou'lt howl beneath this steel. (*Draws his sword.*)

GRAEME. Now, Hubert Dougan,  
 Stand from that noble corse : I will not mix  
 The holy blood that dyes his garments through  
 And stains the grass, with the rank gore that makes  
 The fires of hell so grim. So thus I greet thee. (*Fight.*)

MACGEE.  
 I know thee well ; and all who see thy face  
 Shrink back, and say, a villain. Curse the sea  
 That spared thee for such havoc ! Now go howl  
 I' the fiery vault. Thy gentle master soon  
 Shall wail and quaff the liquid fire with thee.  
 (*Fight. Neal falls.*)

GRAEME.

Thy look is noble. I war not on souls.  
Wilt thou not yield thee? Then say one brief prayer,  
Or have at thy heart, for sin has sore subdued thee.

DOUGAN.

I yield not till steel makes me; prayer, to me,  
More terrible is than thou. My life has been  
Spent in war's stormy surge, and peace and prayer  
Are matters of strange name. Come, do thy best.

*(Fight. Dougan falls.)*

My curse now, Halbert Comyne, on thy name;  
O! I shall meet and beard thee, in the den  
We're doom'd to dwell in, and our strife shall be  
Eternal as our torments. *(Dies.)*

GRAEME.

Mark Macgee,

Now may this night o' the year be mark'd and cursed  
With earth and ocean storm; be the sick air  
Thick of blue plague; the dew be curdled blood;  
May cities quake, and the foundation stones  
Of holy temples shake like leaves on waters;  
May unblest'd bones of murderers walk the earth;  
The fiery shapes of those too hot i' the pit,  
Troop to and fro, visible to men's eyes.  
Here is a proud star cast from the high heaven,  
And no lights left behind. *(Looking on Lord Maxwell.)*

MACGEE.

As a fair tree,

There liest thou, smote and stricken in the bud.  
Thou wert to me the star to the mariner,

The soft sweet rind unto the tender tree.  
We've dyed our lips with wild berries together.  
Thou satest a worshipp'd thing i' the world; and thou  
Didst wind all hearts about thee. May he rot  
Till he infect the moon, he who has laid  
Thy blessed head so low!

GRAEME. My friend, leal friend,  
Heaven has some fearful purpose in all this;  
So let us not our swords draw rash, and shout,  
Ho! Comyne, thou'rt a murderer; thou hast slain  
Thy cousin, and his wife, and gentle son,  
Usurping their inheritance; and thou  
Unworthy art to live. God has his time,  
Even as the seasons have; and some dread sign  
Seen by all men, and read by us alone—  
Some sign on earth, dread, fearful, manifest—  
Shall surely warn us, when that his revenge  
Is ripe for innocent blood. So sheath thy sword,  
And wear not thou thy purpose on thy brow.—  
Now let us lay mute earth to earth, and go  
In silence home,—stir with the lark, and seek  
The castle-gate, and hear what ears may hear.

*(They bury the bodies, and exeunt.)*



## ACT III.

SCENE I. *A Cavern on the Galloway Coast.*

*Enter MABEL MORAN, and Outlawed Royalists.*

MABEL.

Hast thou look'd seaward? hast thou landward look'd?  
And look'd to heaven? then say what thou hast seen.

FIRST ROYALIST.

There is a strange commotion on the earth,  
And trouble on the waters; heaven's whole stars  
Stream seven-fold bright; a ruddy red one dropt  
Down on Caerlaverock castle; lo! it changed  
From its bright starry shape to a flaming shroud:  
I heard a loud sob, and a funeral wail—  
Flights of blood-ravens darken'd all the pines,  
And clapt their wings, and seem'd to smell out prey:  
I read the hour upon the chapel clock,  
And I dared look no longer.

MABEL.

Thou hast done

Wisely and well. Now, William Seaton, say  
Didst thou sit on Barnhourie cliff, and watch  
Sea-shore and heaven? Then say what didst thou note.

SECOND ROYALIST.

A fearful cry came from the flood, a cry,





Of one smote down in battle. Now, my friends,  
 There is a bright day coming for poor Scotland :  
 'T will brighten first in Nithsdale, at the hour  
 Foretold by our prophetic martyr, when  
 The slayers' swords were on him. Now be men :  
 Gird to your sides your swords ; rush to the flood ;  
 To the good work of redemption. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II. *Coast of Galloway.*

*Enter* SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL, LADY MAXWELL,  
*and Outlawed Royalists.*

SIR MARMADUKE.

Kind, gallant strangers, thanks ; you found us out  
 In a most perilous moment.

FIRST ROYALIST. Thy best friends  
 Were God and thy good sword ; thou hadst made us  
 But idle lookers on.

SECOND ROYALIST. I tell thee, youth,  
 I have seen gallant knights unhorsed, and I  
 Have crack'd my spear upon a prince's mail :  
 And I've seen tried men start, when the foe's sword  
 Came like a thing loved blood. But, by St. Andrew,  
 Thou'rt made of peerless stuff. I ne'er saw one  
 That leap'd so dauntless in the fearful gap

Which gapes 'tween life and death. Thou'rt forged  
for war,

For thou art fashion'd of a thunder-bolt,  
And thy sword's living fire. What's thy name?

SIR MARMADUKE.

He that has nothing in this wide bad world,  
No roof to put his desolate head beneath,  
No sheltering place from the pursuer's sword,  
Nothing he loves he evermore shall see,  
Nothing but his weak sword and hapless self,  
Has no use for a name.

FIRST ROYALIST. By Charles's blood,  
(Dost thou start youth!) I love thee for that speech;  
And I will seek a noble name for thee.

These seven long summers have I lived in strife:  
At times arm'd, watching on the mountain tops;  
Sometimes asleep in caverns, with mail'd brow,  
And bared blade in my hand; and oftentimes,  
Even glad of such diversity, I've rode  
Where steeds were rushing on the splintering spears,  
And lofty crests were stooping, gaining gashes  
O'er which bright eyes have wept. But only one  
Of all men I have led to fight or follow'd—  
But only one seem'd born to be obey'd;  
But one alone could like a god mould hearts  
In valour's heavenly warmth. Thou art his son;  
Welcome, Sir Marmaduke Maxwell.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Noble Sir,

If thy right hand hold charity with wretchedness ;  
 If thou dost reverence noble birth, or lend'st  
 Thy hand to the oppressed one, and turn'st  
 Thy sword on the oppressor ; O ! if thou  
 Hast ever knelt to beauty—e'er gazed back,  
 As thou didst spur thy courser on the spears,  
 To the land where dwelt thy loved one, pity us :  
 For I have lost a noble father, and lost  
 Him by a villain's hand.

SECOND ROYALIST. What ! Halbert Comyne's ?

I know him well ; we've breasted steeds together  
 On a field far from this : and well I know him  
 For one as brave as ever spurr'd to battle ;  
 And I know too I would not choose to wear  
 The head he dream'd to cleave——

FIRST ROYALIST.

There are some fearful tidings in the wind ;  
 There are hot coursers spurring to and fro ;  
 Musters of armed men ; and summon'd chiefs  
 Begin to wear blank looks. I tell ye, friends,  
 I dream'd yestreen that crafty Cromwell lay  
 Even in the death-pang : see now, here comes one,  
 To tie my faith to dreams.

*Enter Page.*

PAGE.

Sir William Seaton !

My Lord Protector's gone upon a journey,  
Where, the elect know not.

THIRD ROYALIST.                    Northward belike,  
For here sits Monk as crafty as a spider  
I' the middle of his mesh.

PAGE.                                    Some hotter clime  
'Tis thought he seeks; he has had cold fits of late.

FIRST ROYALIST.  
Come, cease thy riddling; he *is* dead; I knew  
This gladsome tale some hours since: I know too  
Our monarch's navy, thick with shining helms,  
Will soon stand for the coast. Come, draw your swords,  
Soldiers of good King Charles, and shout and kneel,  
And let us vow a vow.

SECOND ROYALIST.                    Aye, let us vow  
To strike Caerlaverock cope-stone to the moat,  
And in its place set Halbert Comyne's head.

FIRST ROYALIST.  
We must our steps choose warily. Halbert Comyne  
Appears commission'd to blunt his sharp sword  
On the bosom bones of loyal men, who love  
The ancient line of their anointed kings:—  
The clouds dropt down, the incensed Solway rose  
As she ne'er rose before, but sank him not,  
While to the bottom went the bonnie ship,  
And all her gallant mariners. Now note—  
He seems all lonely in his kinsman's tower,

His good sword all his soldiers. Blow one blast  
 Of this small bugle by his castle gate,  
 Or at his turrets shake your right hand thus—  
 And armed men will leap up to his aid,  
 As if the green lea bore them at his bidding.  
 Now, gentle lady, deep in yon green wood  
 Stands the lone shealing of a dame far famed  
 For cunning skill by shepherds. This shrewd page  
 Shall guide thy footsteps at the day-dawn, lady ;  
 She is a dame, tender, and tried, and true.

SIR MARMADUKE.

We know this sage dame ; she's as true as light  
 Unto the morning. Honour'd lady-mother,  
 An angel has forsook our house, and now  
 The fiend inhabits there.

LADY MAXWELL. My son, my son,  
 When tear-drops fall from heroes, we may look  
 For women's eyes to weep. Bury thy grief  
 Deep in thy bosom, and let maidens' cheeks  
 Wear tears, not thine. Now mark and mind my words :  
 The way of glory narrow is, and straight ;  
 That of ambition, short, and bright, and broad :  
 Touch glory, and thy hands shall seem as snow  
 Ere it hath reach'd the earth. Whoso doth touch  
 Ambition's finger, yea, or kiss the hem  
 Of her far flowing robe, shall smell of blood  
 As far as from the green earth to the moon.

Thou art the last of an illustrious line ;  
And there is spilt blood on thy father's floor.—

*(Exit Lady Maxwell.)*

SIR MARMADUKE.

Yes, there is spilt blood on my father's floor,  
Blood dearer far than flows in my sad heart,  
Dearer than aught that 's dear to me on earth :  
The avengement of that blood shall be a tale  
While Criffel keeps her stance, while gentle Nith  
Flows at her foot. Old men shall hold their hands  
Toward Caerlaverock castle, and relate  
To their grandchildren how it came to pass.

SCENE III. *Caerlaverock Hall.*

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE.*

COMYNE.

Fresh smells the air of morning ; and I see  
Red in the eastern heaven. 'Tis some hours now  
Since I have wash'd my hands, yet none return  
From the good greenwood and the deep wide sea,  
To greet me with good tidings. Hubert ! Hubert !  
Thou that dost errands swift as thunder doth,  
Why lingerest thou ? What ! has the green ground  
gaped  
And swallow'd them up too ? Even the yare sea,  
That ne'er refused the bloodiest offering, keeps



Present and giver both. O! this doth mix  
Perdition in my sugar'd cup. Now, now  
I hear the sound of coming feet—ah, no!  
Cursed wind, this is thy mockery; mayest thou  
Ne'er slumber 'mongst the odorous violets more,  
But sleep on rotten fens. Now I must wear  
The aspect of amazement and strange horror:  
Terror must seem to sway my tongue, and straight  
Must fearful words escape it. I must call  
With the voice of one who sees some fearful shape,  
To which creeds give no credence. Tut—no more;  
I shall wear looks that might seduce the stars  
To shoot down for mere pity.—Ho! awake!  
Awaken! rise! or sleep till the sharp steel  
In murderers' hands invade you. Will you sleep  
Till the blood of slaughter'd bodies flood your  
          couches?  
Awake! or drowse till doomsday. Haste, oh haste!  
Ring the alarm bell! let the trumpet sound  
Till it shakes down the cedars!

*Enter SERVANTS.*

FIRST SERVANT.                   What, oh what  
Means this most fearful summons?

COMYNE.                           Thou blank fool,  
Thou slumbering coward, may perdition seize  
Those that can slumber now! Yet thou couldst sleep  
At the loud thunder's elbow! Haste, now haste!





## SECOND SERVANT.

I'm arm'd ; and, Halbert Comyne, swift as thine  
 My steed shall fly ; as sharp shall smite my sword ;  
 So let us hasten.—Who has done this deed ?  
 Where is my lord, and my thrice honour'd lady,  
 And young Sir Marmaduke ?

COMYNE. All dead and gone !

'Twas at the morn's third hour—Be those slaves  
 arm'd ?

I heard a shriek ; and, ere I rose, a groan  
 Came from a dying man.—I snatch'd my sword,  
 Flew down the stair, and, lo ! the hall was full  
 Of armed men, and they had slain thy lord,  
 Ta'en captive his fair lady and her son.

## SECOND SERVANT.

Oh, words of woe ! who can have done this deed ?

COMYNE.

They were all men of evil mien, all arm'd  
 With brand and dagger, and, in desperate deeds,  
 Skilful they seem'd ; and they were closely swathed  
 In dark gray mantles : o'er their brows were pluck'd  
 Their bonnets in sad wise, while to the moon  
 They held their brands, and mutter'd chosen scraps  
 Of Scripture threatenings, and to bloody meaning  
 Did turn each spotless word. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV. *Cumlongan Castle. Morning.*

*Enter MARY DOUGLAS and MAY MORISON.*

MARY DOUGLAS.

Come hither, maiden;—dost thou know a tree,  
 A high green tree, upon whose leafy top  
 The birds do build in spring? This tree doth grow  
 By the clear fountain, on whose virgin breast  
 The water lily lies. There the pale youth,  
 Sick in his summer beauty, stoops and drinks :  
 Grave matrons say, the waters have strange virtues,  
 Which this green tree drinks through his veins, and  
       wide  
 To the joyous air he spreads his balsam'd bough.  
 Thou know'st it not.

MAY MORISON. Lady, I know it rarely ;  
 Far up the straight stem of this lovely tree  
 The honeysuckle climbs, and from its boughs  
 Flings down its clusters, till the blossoms wreath  
 The passers' foreheads. 'Tis the self-same tree  
 True lovers swear by. I have three of its leaves  
 Sew'd i' the hem o' my kirtle. 'Neath its bough  
 Thou left'st thy snood, to greet Lord Walter Maxwell,  
 When his fair son off-capp'd thee like a goddess.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Cease, cease, thou know'st it ; now be swift, and haste  
 Unto this tree. Fly like a bird that leaves

No stamp of its wing upon the yielding air.  
Its centre stem shoots as 't would say, Ye stars,  
I'll stop when I'm among you.—See if this  
Be shorn in twain by fire ; and if two names,  
Carved curious i' the bark, are razed out  
By the lightning's fiery bolt.

MAY MORISON.                      Lady, I'll go,  
And come as the Scripture-dove did, when she bore  
Tidings of happy sort.                      (*Exit.*)

MARY DOUGLAS.                      Can there be truth  
In the dreams of night ? To the airy semblances  
Of possible things can I glew on belief  
Firm as my creed ? for the night visions oft  
Take their complexion from our troubled thoughts ;  
And yet wise ones have said, to favour'd men  
The future woes are vision'd forth and shaped  
By heavenly hand and gentle. Thus sad things  
Come softly on the mind, as the dove's down  
Drops on the tender grass. Though my mind's not  
Hoodwink'd with rustic marvels, I do think  
There are more things i' the grove, the air, the flood,  
Yea, and the charnel'd earth, than what wise man,  
Who walks so proud as if his form alone  
Fill'd the wide temple of the universe,  
Will let a frail maid say. I'd write i' the creed  
Of the hoariest man alive, that fearful forms,  
Holy or reprobate, do page men's heels ;  
That shapes too horrid for our gaze stand o'er



MAY MORISON.

Since I was sixteen, I have dream'd such dreams,  
'T would take no slender wisdom to expound them.  
I've dream'd of gentle kisses—kisses ne'er  
Have touch'd my lips, except perchance i' the dark,  
A twilight smack or two ; but these none saw,  
And are not worth the counting. I've dream'd too,  
Of trooping 'midst bride-favours, to the sound  
Of dulcimer and flute ; on my head, too,  
I've dream'd the bride's hose fell ; yet, I am here,  
As single as a neighbourless stocking. None  
Ask the kind question which all maidens long for.

MARY DOUGLAS.

I ask for dreams, and thou givest me a history.

MAY MORISON.

The best o' my dreams is coming. Late last night,  
I dream'd I met with the dear lad o' my heart  
By a green bank, where the rich violets blush'd,  
Expecting to be press'd. I woke with joy ; then fell  
In pleasant sleep again, and straight I dream'd  
I heard my name called i' the kirk, and loud  
Rose the crowds' shouting, as I swept along  
Beside my gallant bridegroom. I had on  
Your gown of satin, with the golden flounce,  
The bonnet, too, you promised me, all deck'd  
With pearls, at least ; and proud I look'd ; and so  
The bridal bed was made, and I was laid  
Atween the lily sheets.

MARY DOUGLAS.       Come, come, no more—  
 The gown I'll give thee, and the bonnet too,  
 Sown all with Solway pearl. To these I'll add,  
 When this dream proves no mockery, snowy sheets,  
 As white as those which visited thy sleep.  
 Lo! who come here? men who have urged their way  
 Through flood and forest; at their bosoms hang  
 Leaves, rent from boughs in passing. Simon Graeme,  
 Why all this show of steel?—Haste, fearful haste,  
 Seems in thy steps, and sad news on thy tongue.

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE, SIMON GRAEME, MARK  
 MACGEE, Servants and Shepherds.*

GRAEME.  
 News, gentle lady! news of that sad sort,  
 To turn thy cheek-rose pale, and make the tears  
 Course down the snow o' thy bosom, while it heaves  
 Till it makes the cambric burst.

MARY DOUGLAS.       Tell me, oh, tell me!  
 Ere fancy's hand lays low all that I love—

GRAEME.  
 Ask Halbert Comyne, beauteous lady; he  
 Can picture forth this tragedy in words  
 That may make murder look less hideous, and  
 Blanch it like boulded snow. For he is versed  
 In those soft soothing words, that take the taint  
 From deeds that smell to the moon.

COMYNE.                       Peace, peasant, peace.



Weep, gentle lady, there is done a deed  
 That renders day-light hideous ; makes the mother  
 Her baby dash i' the dust, lest its soft hand  
 Should fumble with a dagger ; that doth call  
 From the creation's centre to high heaven,  
 With a voice more audible than thunder. Our castle  
 Is sack'd. Our good lord, and fair lady, with  
 Their only son, and all that could bear brand,—  
 Yea, even my men, whose nerves were nerves of steel,  
 Are swept from 'neath the sky, and I alone,—  
 Though I sought death, and with my broad sword  
                     bared

Follow'd them to the wood, and strove to smite  
 Some of the boldest,—I alone am left  
 To tell the tale and weep.                      (*Mary Douglas faints.*)

MACGEE.                                      Life's roses fade ;  
 And see, the lily of death grows i' the place.—  
 Water ! bring me water.

GRAEME.                                      Low thou liest,  
 My beauteous fair one ; my keen plowshare ne'er  
 Shared violet half so lovely. Take these drops,  
 Pure from the spring, they are not half so pure  
 As thy most lovely self.

MACGEE.                                      The rose, whose lips  
 The dew hath never tasted—the chaste lily  
 That hid its bashful bosom from the sun,  
 But look'd sedate unto the modest star,  
 Seem'd ne'er to me so beautiful and spotless.



GRAEME.

Now all hear this—if this sweet lady dies,  
Then I wait not for sign of heaven, or word,  
To draw the sword of vengeance. My right hand  
Shall swiftly smite and sure. Oh! gaze again;  
Thou piece of chaste perfection, gaze again.

COMYNE.

Peace, varlet, peace! Deem'st thou this lady is  
Some slippery dame, whose tardy sense swift cups  
Have newly overtaken?

GRAEME.

Halbert Comyne;

An hour of sin, an age of deep repentance—  
If such be heaven's will; but make not now,  
From this maid's sorrow, matter for thy mirth.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Where is my love, that I may stretch myself  
By him, and call for swords of cherubim?  
Oh! is he slain, or lost in the wild sea,  
The ruthless sea, where shrieking Pity's tongue  
May reach not? Stand ye there—and are ye men,  
And nursed at women's breasts, while my true love  
Is torn away by traitors? There's a time—  
So lay it to your hearts, and think of it—  
When for each hair torn from his precious locks,  
For every drop shed from his bleeding body,  
For every sigh he utter'd—for each pang  
That he endured, and for each tear shed for him  
By maids' or matrons' eyes, a strict account

Will be demanded. But I speak to men  
With eyes of marble, and with hearts of flint.

COMYNE.

Of whom speak'st thou, my fair one? In the strife  
I saw Lord Maxwell's life-blood on the floor;  
His son smote sore, and carried swift away,  
Bound, with his weeping mother. They are now  
Beyond the sight of mercy's weeping eyes.

GRAEME.

O'er this dread night a woeful mystery hangs,  
Which God will take away. For we have sought them  
By the wide fathomless sea—by the green wood  
Upon the sea sand, and the lily lea;  
Nor step, nor trace of man may we espy:  
O'er this dread night an awful mystery hangs,  
Which God will in his own time take away.

COMYNE.

Farewell! fair lady; may I hope a time,  
When for my kinsmen I've sung dool—and ta'en  
Some of their state on mine unworthy shoulders—  
To kneel and offer my poor service to thee?  
For tears will dry up like last morning's dew,  
And grief itself grow gentler; and the sobs,  
Which give such awful grace to beauty's woe,  
Will stop no more the current of free speech.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Oh! Halbert Comyne—tarry, Halbert Comyne;  
Now let mine arms come never from thy neck:

Turn me, turn him, into the desolate world !  
 Take, lord, the rich earth from the east to west,  
 And own all that the sun doth look upon ;  
 Take tower and turret, and the sodded sheal ;  
 Take all mine unsumm'd treasures—all that kings  
 Have given in honour of the Douglas name ;  
 And we shall sojourn in the uttermost earth,  
 And never think of thee, save when we pray  
 For thine increase of glory. Halbert Comyne,  
 Give my true love to me.

COMYNE. Thy speech errs much,  
 Thou gentle one. I do forgive thee, lady :  
 Thy brain is rapt and wandering, and thou dream'st  
 Of foes in firmest friends.

GRAEME. (*Aside.*) My sword be swift :  
 For I shall sure hear thunder. God's fierce wrath  
 Might find an object here. In heaven above,  
 In earth beneath—the spacious air—the sea,  
 God gives my sword no signal. Shall I cease  
 My faith in the sign'd promise—things reveal'd ;  
 And smite thee as a heathen smites, nor wait  
 For fire to aid my vengeance ?

COMYNE.  
 Let's home from vain pursuit. None ever found  
 The mark of the eagle's wing on the soft air  
 He soar'd through, when he left the ravish'd dam  
 Running on the hill-top bleating. Lady, adieu !  
 Now let your steeds taste the sharp whip and rowel,

Till the flinty roads yield fire. Tardy rustic !  
By heaven, the boor wears disobedient looks.

GRAEME.

I am a plain blunt man, good sir, and lack  
Those honey'd words which make the sour taste sweet :  
I love not sleeping in the dark, where dirks  
Forget to keep their sheaths ; nor where the feet  
Of the murderer wear strong wings, which waft him o'er  
Moat and portcullis. I'm too small a bird  
To peck with the gore-hawk.

MAGGEE. Can a man sleep safe  
When the very air drops daggers ? or close his lids  
Beneath a roof doom'd to prove heaven's hot fire  
Is an avenger yet ?

COMYNE. Rude churls, remain.  
I lack not such thick-blooded spirits as you :  
Yet lay my words to heart. Do not be found  
Shedding tongue-venom in our peasants' ears ;  
Else yon grim raven, which now croaking flies  
From us toward Caerlaverock, he shall share  
Your quarters with the hounds. (Exit.)

GRAEME. Go ! Halbert Comyne !  
Lord of the gentle deed, and gentle look ;  
Thou hatest blood as yon black raven doth,  
Now croaking after thee.

MARY DOUGLAS. (To Graeme.) Farewell ! farewell !  
I thank you for your pity : you have wound  
Around my heart. I fain would call you friend :



Sir Marmaduke, the peevish stripling—he  
 Play'd on the lute : 'twas deadly sin ! and sang  
 Songs praising black-eyed girls—'twas treasonable !  
 And our good lord—I'll paint no farther :—soon  
 May the Eternal loose my sword, and set  
 Free my right hand. (*Aside.*) This secret, on my soul  
 Sinks like a mill-stone ; my heart says to me,  
 ' Go, shout out the stern truth.'

MACGEE. Farewell, farewell,  
 My well-going plough I sang so oft beside ;  
 My bonnie grays which drew so fair a furrow ;  
 The joy to see the green corn blade arise  
 Which I had sown—the gray lark sang to see it ;—  
 The holy joy that silent Sabbath brings,  
 When nought is heard, save the far-sounding psalm,  
 And sweet bells knelling kirkward. Oh ! my lord.

GRAEME.  
 Let not thy wrath draw an unfated sword—  
 The hour is coming, and the right hand's ready  
 That shall avenge this deed. Make it a warning,  
 Even from Caerlaverock to the uttermost earth.—  
 We'll spill his guilt-cup when it tops the brim,  
 And give him to perdition.

MACGEE. Be it soon !  
 For, Simon Graeme, why should we stand and see  
 The murderer wipe his bloody sword, and smile,  
 Nor smite him to the dust,—in hope that heaven  
 Will call, in thunder, " Strike !" Oh ! Simon Graeme,





And to their swords exposed my tender body,  
And, my voice melting ripe with woe, implored  
Mercy one moment,—it had been in vain.  
You winged ones, who wear the swords which shape  
God's retribution out—you holy spirits,  
Who fly to the uttermost earth to shield good men  
When murder's blade is bare ; Oh ! where were ye ?  
God's wrath burns not 'gainst murder, as the creed  
For some wise purpose words it. The full moon,  
Yea, and the tender stars, look'd on, and smiled,  
While my lord's life-blood cried from earth, above  
The cherubim's abodes.

PAGE. Here come two men ;  
Shepherds they seem ; but let us hear them speak ;  
They may wear steel plates under their gray weeds.  
Men are not what they seem. (*Exeunt.*)

*Enter* SHEPHERDS.

FIRST SHEPHERD. Now, peace be here !  
A floor of scented cedar ! I say, give her  
A floor of clay, and lay green rushes on it.

SECOND SHEPHERD.  
Floors of fine cedar ! give her a tarr'd stick,  
And a teat of tarry wool. She kens far more  
Of smearing sheep, and clipping sheep, than dwelling  
On bonnie boarded floors.

FIRST SHEPHERD. Sad tidings, man !  
Sad tidings, man—the douce dame of the glen,



Douce Mabel Moran lies at the last gasp.  
Lang John Dargavel saw her wraith yestreen  
Come like a gray mist round the hip o' the hill.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

We'll have a sample of sleety weather soon,  
Rots and elf-arrows ; Mabel will be miss'd.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Speak low—speak low—it's barely safe to talk  
O' Mabel's gifts ; gifts did I call them ? Gifts,  
From the foul creature that divides the hoof,  
And yet's not eatable. Dying did I say ?  
None born will brag they carried her feet foremost :  
Many a fair form she's stretch'd on their last cloth,  
And mickle burial wine she's drank—but she  
Lives on, and will. I heard John Cameron say,  
That sinful Mabel would leave this sad world  
With a wild sugh—no coffin, and no shroud.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Prodigious, man ! but that is horrid.

FIRST SHEPHERD. . . . . Now

Last night, our Jean, a fearless lassie, went  
To watch old Mabel through the night. The dame  
Said, Wait not with me, sweet maid, in this desert,  
A fair form from the east will ere day dawn  
Come here, and comfort me.

SECOND SHEPHERD. O fearful be't:

A fair form from the east—prodigious, man !  
But that is horrid. Satan, I dread thy wiles—

Satan, they say, among the maidens, comes  
 Like a fair youth that plays on pipe and tabor,  
 And sings most graceless pleasant ballads—

*Re-enter* LADY MAXWELL *and* Page.

NOW God be near us ; here is the fair form—  
 Come from the east too—wait on her yeresell ;  
 I'm but the new-come shepherd, and shall e'en  
 Climb Criffel like a deer.

FIRST SHEPHERD. Gomerall and gowk !  
 Run, and she'll turn thee to a fox, and turn  
 Herself into a hound, and hunt ye round  
 From Burnswark to Barnhourie. Gracious me !  
 She's cross'd the salt sea in a cockle shell,  
 A cast of slipper, or flown o'er the foam  
 O' the Solway, like a sheldrake.

LADY MAXWELL. Youth, return ;  
 I know one of these shepherds well ; he'll lead me  
 To where the good dame lives. Take thou this token  
 To my fair son. It was his father's gift  
 Upon our bridal day. Say that I spake not ;  
 But press'd it to my breast, as I do now,  
 And rain'd it o'er with tears. (*Exit Page.*)

FIRST SHEPHERD. This is a dame  
 From the Caerlaverock side, far kenn'd and noted ;  
 She sits by Solway, and says “ e'en be 't sae ; ”  
 And straight the waters roar, and duck the ships  
 Like waterfowl. 'Faith, we must speak her fair.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

O! soft and fair; O! Saunders, soft and fair:  
Who would take that sweet lady for a dame  
That deals with devils? Sin has a lovely look.

FIRST SHEPHERD. (*To Lady Maxwell.*)

This is a bonnie morning, but the dew  
Lies thick and cold; and there are kindlier things  
To gaze on than the deep green sea. So come  
With me—even Saunders Wilson, of Witchknowe,  
For I love Mabel like mine own heart's blood;  
Love her and all her cummers. Come and taste  
The warm and kindly heart of corn and milk,  
Which we poor hinds call porridge.

SECOND SHEPHERD. Bide ye there!

Ye might come home with me—but three o' my cows  
Last week were elf-shot, and we've placed witch-tree  
Above our lintel, and my Elspa's famed  
For a looser o' witch-knots—one that can stay  
Shrewd dames from casting cantraips. So belike,  
Douce dame, ye would nae venture to my home,  
And I can scarce advise ye.

LADY MAXWELL. Willie Macbirn,

Thou art a kind and honest-hearted man:  
I know who supper'd on thy curds and cream  
Without thy invitation. They are nigh  
Who scorn'd thy hollow stones and rowan wands,  
And, in thy cow-house, drain'd thy seven cows dry;  
And 'neath the cold moon's eastern horn who coast

A spell as thou camest screaming to the world,  
 To mark what death thou'lt dree. Dost thou hear that?  
 Now shall I rid me of this babbling peasant. (*Aside.*)

SECOND SHEPHERD.

I hope—oh! cannie, kind and fearful woman,  
 I hope ye joke. A stone of good fat cheese,  
 A ham whose fat will gleam to the rannel-tree,  
 I vow but I will send you. Death I'll dree!  
 My conscience! kimmer, I should like to ken.

LADY MAXWELL.

Avoid the salt sea, and a bottomless boat.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Good Lord! now, Saunders Wilson, o' Witchknowe,  
 D'ye hear her? I ne'er dred such things before.

LADY MAXWELL.

Dread growing hemp; but dread it twisted more.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Hemp growing and twisted! De'il! maun I dread that?  
 I have been walking now these seven long years  
 O'er a bottomless pool, on ice a sixpence thick.

LADY MAXWELL.

But, chief beware——What sort of soul art thou?  
 Had I an errand on the wide salt sea,  
 Couldst thou walk on the water?

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Walk on the water!

Were I five ell of wind, or a willie-wagtail,  
 Then might I swim like a sheldrake on the deep:  
 I'll walk on 't when it's paved with solid ice,

Or when the stone is bent from bank to bank,  
 Or when the cunning house of crooked timber,  
 Which men do call a boat, floats in the foam ;  
 But I'm no spirit, or brownie, goblin, or wraith,  
 Nor will-o'-wisp—A de'il would do 't discreetly ;  
 I am a sinful tender of sheep, good dame—

LADY MAXWELL.

Meet me at midnight, when the risen moon  
 Sits on yon hill. I'll teach thy leaden feet  
 To tread o'er curled billows. Now, begone.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Tread on the curled billows ! horrid be 't !  
 And amble stride-legs 'tween the foul fiend's horns !  
 These are sad pranks for Jenny Jink's goodman. (*Exit.*)

LADY MAXWELL.

Shepherd, thou seem'st to know me. I am one——  
 Be wise, and cease to know me ; for my name  
 May bring thee pain and peril.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Noble lady,  
 I am but a poor man ; yet a hair of thy head  
 I'll not see harm'd : some fearful woe, some grief  
 Fit to make dull eyes weep, hath turn'd thee thus.  
 O ! there are awful changes in this world !  
 But I ask nought ; and I can be as mute  
 As that gray stone ; and I can draw too, lady,  
 For thy sake, a sharp sword. Here comes the dame,  
 Even reverend Mabel. Heaven be thy shield.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI. *A Wood on the Sea Coast.*

*Enter* LADY MAXWELL *and* MABEL MORAN.

MABEL.

Said I not soothly? May his murderous soul  
Howl in the mirkest pit. Here have I sought  
Mine old poor refuge. Thou shalt live with me :  
For one kind shepherd brings me ewe-milk cheese ;  
Another comes with the dried flesh of lambs ;  
A third doth give me new baked bread, and begs  
A mild kind winter for his woolly flocks ;  
Another comes with blankets and warm rugs,  
Blesses himself, " Good Mabel, make my sheep,  
Now worth scarce thirty pence, worth fifteen shillings  
By the lamb fair of Lockerby ; the sum to thee  
Is wondrous little, but to me 'tis large."  
So live with me till this cloud passes by ;  
A golden day is coming. Here comes one,  
A man mark'd for the sword ; I know his errand.

*Enter* SIR JOHN GOURLAY.

SIR JOHN.

This Scotch land is one desart ; barren hills  
Succeeding barren valleys, and the hinds  
Look miserably poor. That men live here  
I have some doubt, for what I've seen are ghosts—  
Soft ! here's an ancient dame of other days :

I'd rather cross a culverin's mouth than meet her ;  
 She looks beyond this world. Now in my way  
 She sets herself. There's something in her looks  
 That pierces through me like a sharpen'd sword.

MABEL.

John Gourlay, what wantest thou with Halbert Comyne ?

SIR JOHN.

Thrice reverend dame, I come to greet Lord Comyne ;  
 And I did think myself a stranger here,  
 'Tis my first foot in Scotland.

MABEL.

Thou dost come  
 With golden tidings. Hearken what I say :  
 Seek thou for Halbert Comyne one day hence,  
 And thou wilt find him as that dust which thou  
 Dost carry on thy shoes. All, all his days  
 Are noted, number'd; and the wiles of man,  
 His might, his courage, or his cruelty,  
 Cannot contend with God. Now go thy way.  
 Yonder's Caerlaverock turrets, o'er the pines,  
 And there lives Halbert Comyne.

SIR JOHN.

Ancient dame,  
 I have a reverence for thy hoary locks,  
 And crave thy blessing. Seest thou this gold merk ?

MABEL.

John Gourlay, curse the hour that thou camest here,  
 To feed Caerlaverock ravens—That's thy blessing.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VII. *Caerlaverock Castle.*

*Enter* HALBERT COMYNE.

COMYNE.

Three of these things were men whom nature made  
In an hour of hottest haste, that she might frame  
Her master-minds at leisure. Hubert Dougan,  
Thou art mourn'd much, keen, quick, and fiery Hubert!  
Yet thou wert thoughtful and thick-blooded grown,  
And hadst compunctious fits. 'Tis well he's gone,  
For he had proud stuff in him; his sharp looks  
Had more of equal in them than I wish'd:  
And he was fickle as an April morn;  
As changeable as a maiden in her teens;  
And dangerous as a drawn dagger placed  
In a moody madman's hand.

SERVANT. (*Entering.*) Please you, my lord,  
A messenger all reeking in hot haste,  
A messenger with gold spurs on his heels,  
From plume to spur all soil'd with desperate travel,  
Is come with princely greetings for your ear.

COMYNE.

Go, guide him here. This world, this little world  
Is given me now, to god me, or undo me;  
And I have won it the way makes angels weep.  
Yet I'm no murderer with a marble heart,  
A scorner of grave maxims and sage saws,







A smile that would turn the stern stroke of my sword  
 Into a feather's touch. I smoothed my speech  
 Down from the martial to the shepherd's tone,  
 And stoop'd my basnet to my saddle bow,  
 And ask'd for the castle of my good Lord Comyne ;  
 Her eye glanced ghastly on me—and I saw  
 Beneath its sooty fringe the glimmering fire :  
 " Go seek thou Halbert Comyne one day hence,  
 Thou'lt find him even as the dust which thou  
 Dost carry on thy shoes. His days and hours  
 Are number'd. Can the might and pride of man  
 O'ercome the doom of God?" I ask'd her blessing :  
 She smiled in devilish joy, and gave me quick  
 To feed Caerlaverock ravens.

COMYNE. So that's all :  
 For one poor plack she'd dream thee a rare dream ;  
 And crown thee Lord Protector, for the half  
 Of a crook'd sixpence. These are old wild dames,  
 Who sell the sweet winds of the south to sailors ;  
 Who milk the cows in Araby, and suck  
 The swans' eggs of the Tigris ; they can turn  
 Their wooden slipper to a gilded barge ;  
 Their pikestaff to a winged steed, that flies  
 As far as earth grows grass. They cast their spells  
 On green hot youths, and make the fond brides mourn.  
 I give them garments which the moths have bored,  
 And mouldy cheese—and so keep my good name,  
 And my hens on my hen-roosts. *(Exeunt.)*



MARY DOUGLAS.

No tidings of thee yet—my love, my love !  
 Didst thou but live as thou camest yesternight  
 In vision'd beauty to my side, 'twere worth  
 The world from east to west.

MAY MORISON. O lady! lady!  
 This grief becomes you rarely; 'tis a dress  
 That costs at most a tear o' the eye—the sweetest  
 Handmaid that beauty has. How thou wouldst weep  
 To see some fair knight, on whose helmet bright  
 A score of dames stuck favours—see him leave  
 His barb'd steed standing in the wood, to preach  
 Thee out of thy virgin purgatory, to taste  
 The joys of wedded heaven.

*(A knock heard at the gate.)*

MARY DOUGLAS. See who this is  
 That knocks so loud and late. *(Exit May Morison.)*

Ye crowded stars,  
 Shine you on one so wretched as I am?  
 You have your times of darkness, but the cloud  
 Doth pass away; and you shine forth again  
 With an increase of loveliness—from me  
 This cloud can never pass. So now, farewell,  
 Ye twilight watchings on the castle top  
 For him, who made my glad heart leap and bound  
 From my bosom to my lip.

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE.*

COMYNE. Now, beauteous lady,  
Joy to your meditations: your thoughts hallow  
Whate'er they touch; and aught you think on's blest.

MARY DOUGLAS.

I think on thee, but thou'rt not therefore bless'd.  
What must I thank for this unwish'd-for honour?

COMYNE.

Thyself thank, gentle one: thou art the cause  
Why I have broken slumbers and sad dreams,  
Why I forget high purposes, and talk  
Of nought but cherry lips.

MARY DOUGLAS. Now were you, sir,  
Some unsunn'd stripling, you might quote to me  
These cast-off saws of shepherds.

COMYNE.

The war trump  
Less charms my spirit than the sheep-boy's whistle.  
My barbed steed stamps in his stall, and neighs  
For lack of his arm'd rider. Once I dream'd  
Of spurring battle steeds, of carving down  
Spain's proudest crests to curious relics; and  
I cleft in midnight vision the gold helm  
Of the proud Prince of Parma.

MARY DOUGLAS. Thanks, my lord;  
You are blest in dreams, and a most pretty teller  
Of tricks in sleep—and so your dream is told:  
Then, my fair sir, good night.

COMYNE.

You are too proud,

Too proud, fair lady ; yet your pride becomes you ;  
 Your eyes lend you divinity. Unversed  
 Am I in love's soft silken words—unversed  
 In the cunning way to win a gentle heart.  
 When my heart heaves as if 't would crack my corslet,  
 I'm tongue-tied with emotion, and I lose  
 Her that I love, for lack of honey'd words.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Go, school that frank simplicity of thine :  
 Learn to speak falsely in love's gilded terms ;  
 Go, learn to sugar o'er a hollow heart ;  
 And learn to shower tears, as the winter cloud,  
 Bright, but all frozen ; make thy rotten vows  
 Smell like the rose of July. Go, my lord ;  
 Thou art too good for this world.

COMYNE. My fair lady,  
 Cease with this bitter but most pleasant scoffing ;  
 For I am come upon a gentle suit,  
 Which I can ill find terms for.

MARY DOUGLAS. Name it not.  
 Think it is granted ; go now. Now farewell :  
 I'm sad, am sick—a fearful faintness comes  
 With a rush upon my heart ; so now, farewell.

COMYNE.  
 Lo ! how the lilies chace the ruddy rose—  
 What a small waist is this !

MARY DOUGLAS. That hand ! That hand !  
 There's red blood on that right hand, and that brow :



There's motion in my father's statue ; see,  
 Doth it not draw the sword ? Unhand me, sir.

COMYNE.

Thou dost act to the life ; but scare not me  
 With vision'd blood-drops, and with marble swords ;  
 I'm too firm stuff, thou'lt find, to start at shadows.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Now were thy lips with eloquence to drop,  
 As July's wind with balm ; wert thou to vow  
 Till all the saints grew pale ; kneel in the ground  
 Till the green grass grew about thee ; had thy brow  
 The crowned honour of the world upon it ;  
 I'd scorn thee—spurn thee.

COMYNE.

Lady, scorn not me.

Oh ! what a proud thing is a woman, when  
 She has red in her cheek. Lady, when I kneel down,  
 And court the bridal gift of that white hand  
 Thou wavest so disdainfully, why then  
 I give thee leave to scorn me. I have hope  
 To climb a nobler, and as fair a tree,  
 And pull far richer fruit. So scorn not me :  
 I dream of no such honour as thou dread'st.

MARY DOUGLAS.

And what darest thou to dream of ?

COMYNE.

Of thee, lady.

Of winning thy love on some bloom'd violet bank,  
 When nought shines save the moon, and where no proud  
 Priest dares be present : lady, that's my dream.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Let it be still a dream, then ; lest I beg  
From heaven five minutes' manhood, to make thee  
Dream it when thou art dust.

COMYNE. Why, thou heroine,

Thou piece o' the rarest metal e'er nature stamp'd  
Her chosen spirits from, now I do love thee,  
Do love thee much for this ; I love thee more  
Than loves a soldier the grim looks of war,  
As he wipes his bloody brow.

*Enter SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL, unseen.*

SIR MARMADUKE. (*Aside.*) What ! what is this ?  
She whom I love best—he whom I hate worst !—  
Is this an airy pageant of the fiends ?

MARY DOUGLAS. (*Aside.*)

Down ! down ! ye proud drops of my bosom, be  
To my dull brain obedient. (*To Comyne.*) My good lord,  
Much gladness may this merry mood of yours  
With a poor maiden bring you. I thank you much  
For lending one dull hour of evening wings  
To fly away so joyous.

SIR MARMADUKE. (*Aside.*) Mine ears have  
Turn'd traitors to my love ; else they receive  
A sound more dread than doomsday. Oh ! thou false—  
Thou did'st seem purer than the undropt dew,  
Chaste as the unsunn'd snow-drops' buds disclosed  
Unto the frosty stars ; and truer far

Than blossom to the summer, or than light  
 Unto the morning. And dost thou smile too,  
 And smile on him so lovingly? bow too  
 That brow of alabaster? Woman—woman!

COMYNE.

O! for a month of such sweet gentle chiding,  
 From such ripe tempting lips! Now, fair young lady,  
 As those two bright eyes love the light, and love  
 To see proud man adore them, cast not off  
 For his rough manner, and his unpruned speech,  
 A man who loves you. Gentle one, we'll live  
 As pair'd doves do among the balmy boughs.

SIR MARMADUKE. (*Aside.*)

Painted perdition, dost thou smile at this?

MARY DOUGLAS.

This is a theme I love so well, I wish  
 For God's good day-light to it; so farewell.

COMYNE.

An hour aneath the new risen moon to woove,  
 Is worth a summer of sunshine: a fair maid  
 Once told me this; and lest I should forget it,  
 Kiss'd me, and told it twice.

SIR MARMADUKE. (*Aside.*) Dare but to touch  
 Her little finger, faithless as she is;  
 Yea, or her garment's hem—My father's sword,  
 Thou hadst thy temper for a nobler purpose;  
 So keep thy sheath: for did I smite him now,  
 Why men would say, that for a father's blood

Mine slept like water 'neath the winter ice ;  
 But when a weak sweet woman chafed my mood,  
 And made sport of her vows, then my blood rose,  
 And with my spirit burning on my brow  
 I sprang with my blade to his bosom. So then, sleep  
 Fast in thy sheath. Before that lovely face,  
 Those lips I've kiss'd so fondly, and that neck  
 Round which mine arms have hung, I could not strike  
 As the son of my father should.

MARY DOUGLAS.                      Now, fair good night,  
 To thee, most courteous sir. I seek the chace  
 From dark Cumlongan to green Burnswark top,  
 With hawk and hound, before to-morrow's sun  
 Has kiss'd the silver dew. So be not found  
 By me alone beneath the greenwood bough ;  
 Lest I should woo thee as the bold dame did  
 The sire of good King Robert.                      (*Exit.*)

COMYNE.                                      Gentle dreams.  
 To thee, thou sweet one ! Gladly would I quote  
 The say of an old shepherd : mayst thou dream  
 Of linking me within thy lily arms ;  
 And leave my wit, sweet lady, to unravel it.                      (*Exit.*)

SIR MARMADUKE.  
 And now there's nought for me in this wide world  
 That's worth the wishing for. For thee, false one,  
 The burning hell of an inconstant mind  
 Is curse enough ; and so we part in peace.  
 And now for THEE—I name thee not ; thy name,

Save for thy doom, shall never pass my lips—  
Depart untouch'd: there's something in this place  
Which the stern temper that doth spill men's blood  
Is soften'd by. We're doom'd once more to meet  
And never part in life. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II. *Caerlaverock Castle.*

*Enter* HALBERT COMYNE *and* SIR JOHN GOURLAY.

COMYNE.

And so the English cuirassiers are come  
With Sir John Rashgill's spears?

SIR JOHN.

Not all, my lord :

Seven were left praying by the river side,  
For it to stay like Jordan : and they'll pray,—  
For the cursed stream keeps running. And ten more  
Sat singing " Stroudwater," by a living brook,  
To the hundred and nineteenth psalm.

COMYNE.

No more, I say ;

These men pray not more fervent than they fight.  
Now, good Sir John, I have a gentle deed  
For thee to do ; nay, nay, 'tis no dirk work.  
I'd have thee wear the sweet look of sixteen,  
When it ventures first 'mongst maidens.

SIR JOHN.

Sword or speech,

My lord, are ready ; I can work with both,  
But brief—most wond'rous brief.

COMYNE. The bravest men  
 Are oft the briefest—thou mayst be as brief  
 As a bride's prayer 'neath the blanket. But, Sir  
 John,  
 She has a marvellous soft and winning way,  
 A sovereignty in her look, which melts  
 Flint hearts as wax; she eloquently moves  
 Hands of surpassing whiteness; and her tongue  
 'Twixt her lip-rubies is a thing can charm  
 The raven's voice to sing.

SIR JOHN. 'Tis rarely painted.  
 Is she some mermaid of the flood, my lord,  
 That I must find to charm ye?—you've described  
 A thing too hard to catch.

COMYNE. She is no maid  
 Of the salt flood—but she's the sweetest maid  
 On the green earth. In yon high turret, see,  
 O'er which the twin bright stars are travelling, where  
 The casements gleam so gallantly, she dwells.  
 Here glows the red wine, ready for her lips:  
 Here is a soft couch for her gentle limbs;  
 This arm shall be her pillow; and what more  
 Can a good soldier offer, kind Sir John?

SIR JOHN.  
 She'll ask me for some token, good my lord,  
 Some antique ring, some rare and costly gem,  
 A dirty stone set deep in dirty gold;  
 Or she may have a love for bonnet pieces,

The coin o' her native country. Is she soft,  
And will listen to sweet speech?

COMYNE. Stay! take this ring;  
And, for thy pains, take thou this purse of gold.  
Nay, linger not to reckon it; begone! (*Exit Sir John.*)  
This fellow has his price. I love him for 't;  
He does the deed, and is paid. But he that doth  
His right hand wash in my foe's heart, for love  
Of shining with my rising, puts a bitt  
Between my lips, and follows all my steps  
With the halloo of hell. (*Exit.*)

SCENE III. *Cumlongan Castle.*

*Enter MARY DOUGLAS and MAY MORISON.*

MARY DOUGLAS.

Bring me my page's mantle and plumed bonnet,  
My little dagger with a golden hilt;  
A breath of time is all that sunders me  
From a life-time of dishonour.

MAY MORISON.

In the name  
Of Meg Macnay, who shaped the winding sheet  
Of her first husband, and her second's shirt,  
At once from the same web, what hastes us now?

(*Sings*)

O! Mary, at thy window be,  
This is the wish'd, the trysted hour. (*Exit.*)



MARY DOUGLAS.

A strange bold courage buoys my spirit up.  
 Yestre'en I dream'd my father's spirit stood  
 One foot on Solway, and one foot on shore ;  
 And still kept waving seaward. I'll not stay  
 And yield my fame up with a shriek, like dames  
 Who dread to soil their slippers.

MAY MORISON (*Re-entering, sings*).

Yestreen, when to the trembling string  
 The dance gaed through the lighted ha',  
 To thee my fancy took its wing :

I sat, but neither heard nor saw. (*Dresses her.*)

Eh! help me, madam, you've a martial look ;  
 The bonnet fits you rarely—the sword, too,  
 Doth seem as natural, bless me, to your hand,  
 As the leaf is to the tree.

MARY DOUGLAS. What is the hour ?

MAY MORISON.

The hour young witches walk in, and work pranks  
 With the wits of wisest men—'tis short of twelve.

(*Sings.*) I sigh'd and said, among them a'  
 Ye are nae Mary Morison.

MARY DOUGLAS.

Farewell! thou hast been faithful ; so take this,  
 And take this too—we'll meet in better times.

MAY MORISON.

Lord! I'm not shod in shoes of lead—I'll go

And see this young sweet gentleman—his boat  
Mayhap may carry double.

MARY DOUGLAS.                      Of whom speak'st thou?  
I know no one—I go far off, I care not  
With whom I meet. In this wide world but one  
Breathes, who would wrong my wretchedness.

MAY MORISON.    I speak  
Of him—even he himself—him you aye dream of.  
Lord, lady, how you crimson. The proud youth  
Who writes you such rare ballads—Redder yet?  
And sings them in your ear—Sir Marmaduke,  
He who waits for you in the greenwood now.

MARY DOUGLAS.  
Make mirth with other subjects—but on this  
Hold thy unkind and most ungentle tongue;  
He is where the blessed be.

MAY MORISON.                      Lord! Lord! my lady.  
My gray eyes are not marble. I can tell  
A flesh and blood youth from a saint of heaven:  
Why he stood here five minutes since as pale  
As one come from the grave. He saw you; heard you  
Wooe his grey-headed kinsman: he wax'd pale;  
Wax'd paler still, and paler, and his eyes  
Shot from them positive fire.

MARY DOUGLAS.                      Look in my face;  
I am no baby, whom a sugar'd tale—  
As you dread heaven, say, did you see him? now  
Look me firm in the face.

MAY MORISON.            Lord! here's the piece  
Of good red gold he gave me—it's no vision;  
'T will buy me a green kirtle, and a snood:  
He gave me a kiss, too, well worth twice as much;  
I feel it yet on my lips—a kiss far kinder  
Than e'er Jock Tamson gave me. See him, lady!  
My sooth I saw him, and I'll warrant him  
Worth all the saints o' the calendar, and sweeter  
To thee than fifty visions.

MARY DOUGLAS.            He is living!—  
So take my bent knees, heaven. O! my love,  
My tried, my faithful, and my gallant love;  
I'll follow thee o'er the world.—And he was here,  
'Scaped from extremest peril—pale did you say?  
I'll seek, I'll find him, and sink into his arms.  
Come, wilt thou go with me?

MAY MORISON.            Look, lady, look;  
The night is monstrous mirk, and the grass damp:  
Cumlongan greenwood is no gracious place,  
And I've a new snood I would gladly sew,—  
And I've a kind lad I must meet to-night.—

MARY DOUGLAS.  
They have the noblest guide who have but God;  
I give me to his guidance: so, farewell.        (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV. *Cumlongan Wood.**Enter* SIR JOHN GOURLAY.

SIR JOHN.

So here's the roost of this same song-bird. Soft!  
Here comes one of her pages.

*Enter* MARY DOUGLAS, *disguised.*

There's no lady

But has a shadow such as this, a thing  
To fan her bosom in the sun—to seek  
Out banks of violets for her—shaded nooks  
Floor'd and roof'd o'er with woodbine, where she  
may  
Be sweetest kiss'd in sleep. Now stay, stay, youth;  
Thou cool'st thy young blood late.

MARY DOUGLAS. An orphan poor,  
Outcast from those I love, I sorrowing seek  
Kind service, and kind hearts.

SIR JOHN. Thou'st found them both:  
So go with me. What dost thou gaze at, shake at,  
Even as an aspen leaf?

MARY DOUGLAS. Sir, I am seeking  
A face to please my fancy. I'm no servant  
To every man that whistles, and cries, Come!

*Enter SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL, unobserved.*

I am not corn for every crow to peck ;  
And so, good night.

SIR JOHN. In faith, proud stripling, no ;  
You go with me ? I'll find thee prettier work  
Than curling locks for a lascivious maiden.  
Come ! else my hand shall teach thy feet obedience :—  
And thou so shakest and sobb'st too ! By my faith,  
My pretty one, you are not what you seem.

MARY DOUGLAS.

O ! let me go. Oh ! kind sir, let me go ;  
If e'er you parted with one you loved dear,  
E'er won the blessing of a gentle heart,  
E'er wet your cheeks at other's deep distress,  
E'er won heaven's smile by one bright deed of mercy,  
E'er spared the milky head of reverend age,  
The babe with mother's milk between its lips,  
The mother, when her white hands she held up  
Against the lifted steel,—spare—let me go.

SIR MARMADUKE. (*Aside.*)

This moves not him. This is a goodly youth,  
Free of his speech, and touching in his words ;  
He has won my heart already—let me hear.

SIR JOHN.

Thou goest on some suspicious errand—so  
Milk not thine eyes to me. Come, thou'lt page still  
Thy lady's heels, for she doth sleep to-night

In the arms of Halbert Comyne. Come, now, come ;  
 Hast thou some love pledge in thy bosom ? come—  
 Faith I shall find it out. *(Seizes her.)*

SIR MARMADUKE. Sir, stay your hand :  
 This youth should be the chooser, not the chosen.  
 Though he's a sun-burnt stripling, sir, a thing  
 That can outweep a girl—pray let him go ;  
 Free limbs endure no bondage.

SIR JOHN. Prating sheep-boy,  
 Darest thou talk so to me ? To thy flocks—begone !—  
 And tell thy grandame that John Gourlay smote thee  
 With the flat side of his sword. *(Strikes him.)*

SIR MARMADUKE. Sir, use the edge on 't !  
 For by the Rood and Eagle they do need  
 Courage, and fence, who strike one of my name.

SIR JOHN. *(Aside.)*  
 I've ta'en the wild hawk for the hooded crow.  
*(Exeunt fighting.)*

SCENE V. *Cumlongan Wood.*

*Enter SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL and MARY DOUGLAS.*

SIR MARMADUKE.  
 Thou art free, stripling—use thy feet—fly fast,  
 The chacers' swords may yet o'ertake us both.  
 When thou dost fold thy flocks, and pray, Oh ! pray  
 For one, whom woe and ruin hold in chace ;

Who wears the griefs of eighty at eighteen ;  
 Upon whose bud the canker-dew has dropt ;  
 Whose friends, love, kindred, are cold, faithless, dead :  
 O ! weeping youth, pray not for me ; for God  
 Has left me, and to pray for me might bring  
 My fate upon thee too. Away, I pray thee.

MARY DOUGLAS.

The wretched love the wretched ; I love thee  
 Too well to sunder thus. I will go with thee ;  
 Friends, kindred, all, are all estranged, or dead ;  
 An evil star has risen upon my name,  
 On which no morn will rise.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Thou art too soft

I' the eye—too meek of speech—and thou dost start  
 For the falling of the forest leaf, and quakest  
 As the thrush does for the hawk. Who lives with  
 me

Must have eyes firmer than remorseless steel,  
 And shake grim danger's gory hand, nor start  
 For the feather of his bonnet.

MARY DOUGLAS.

O ! I shall learn.

I'll sit and watch thee in thy sleep, and bring  
 Thee clustering nuts ; take thee where purest springs  
 Spout crystal forth ; rob the brown honey bees  
 Of half their summer's gathering, and dig too  
 The roots of cornick. I will snare for thee  
 The leaping hares—the nimble fawns shall stay  
 The coming of mine arrow. We will live



Like two wild pigeons in the wood, where men  
 May see us, but not harm us. Take me, take me.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Come, then, my soft petitioner, thou plead'st  
 Too tenderly for me. And thy voice, too,  
 Has caught the echo of the sweetest tongue  
 That ever blest man's ear. Where is thy home?  
 That little sun-burnt hand has never prest  
 Aught harder than white curd.

MARY DOUGLAS. I served a lady:

And all my time flew past in penning her  
 Soft letters to her love; in making verses  
 Riddling, and keen and quaint; in bleaching white  
 Her lily fingers 'mong the morning dew;  
 In touching for her ear some tender string;  
 And I was gifted with a voice that made  
 Her lover's ballads melting. She would lay  
 Her tresses back from her dark eyes, and say,  
 Sing it again.

SIR MARMADUKE. Thou wert a happy servant.  
 And did thy gentle mistress love this youth,  
 As royally as thou paint'st?

MARY DOUGLAS. O! yes, she loved him.  
 For I have heard her laughing in her sleep,  
 And saying, "O! my love, come back, come back;  
 Indeed thou'rt worth one kiss."

SIR MARMADUKE. And did her love  
 Know that she dearly loved him? Did he keep

Acquaintance with the nightly stars, and watch  
 Beneath her window for one glance of her,  
 To glad him a whole winter ?

MARY DOUGLAS.                      Aye ! he talk'd much  
 To her about the horn'd moon, and clear stars ;  
 How colds were bad for coughs, and pangs at heart :  
 And she made him sack posset.    Songs he sung  
 Which he said he made himself, and I believe him ;  
 For they were rife of braes and birks, and burns,  
 And lips made of twin cherries, tresses loop'd  
 Like the curling hyacinth.    Now in my bosom  
 Have I the last song which this sighing youth  
 Framed for my mistress.    It doth tenderly  
 Touch present love : there future sadness is  
 Shadow'd with melting sweetness.—

SIR MARMADUKE.                      This small hand—  
 This little trembling lily hand is soft,  
 And like my Mary's.    O ! my love—my love,  
 Look up ! 'tis thou thyself ! Now blessed be  
 The spot thou stand'st on, and let men this hour  
 For ever reverence—heaven is busy in it.

MARY DOUGLAS.  
 O ! let us fly ! The hand of heaven, my love,  
 And thine, have wrought most wond'rously for me.

SIR MARMADUKE.  
 And wilt thou trust thy gentle self with me ?

MARY DOUGLAS.  
 Who can withhold me from thee ?—I had sworn

To seek thee through the world—to ask each hind  
 That held the plough, if he had seen my love ;  
 Then seek thee through the sea—to ask each ship  
 That pass'd me by, if it had met my love ;—  
 My journey had a perilous outset, but  
 A passing pleasant end. Thine enemy came :  
 I pass'd a fearful and a trembling hour.—

SIR MARMADUKE.

I know—I heard it all—I have wrong'd thee much.  
 So come with me, my beautiful, my best ;  
 True friends are near : the hour of vengeance, too,  
 Is not far distant. Come, my fair one, come. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI. *Caerlaverock Castle.*

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE.*

COMYNE.

The bold conceivment of a mighty deed  
 Is all a pageant ; for the hand of man  
 Is but a tardy servant of the brain,  
 And follows with its leaden diligence  
 The fiery steps of fancy. I do hate  
 The man who still goes choosing out his steps  
 I' the smoothest road to fame—he'll never do  
 For days like these, when daring doings must  
 Pace with the resolution—

*Enter* SIR JOHN GOURLAY.

How now, sir?

By heaven, this maid has brain'd thee with her distaff.

SIR JOHN.

I saw no lady; but in the greenwood  
 I found one of her slender sun-burnt pages:  
 And, as I parley'd with him, came a youth,  
 A simple shepherd-seeming youth, and tall;  
 Who dropt upon me as the lightning would;  
 Foil'd me, and won my sword. Ere I could rise,  
 Forth from the castle there came such a sweep  
 Of ancient men, with heads more white than snow,  
 Of youths with tresses like the raven's back,  
 Of matrons, shrewd old dames, on whose tongues  
     live

The wanton deeds o' the parish, and sweet maids  
 Ripe in their teens, and rosy—seeking her  
 Whom I was sent to find!—

COMYNE.

Sir John! Sir John!

This is the strangest dream thou ever hadst.

SIR JOHN.

Aye! and the truest too. But I would lay  
 A golden basnet to a milkmaid's bowl,  
 That page was no true page; but a sweet maid  
 Hid in her mantle, like the summer moon  
 Shrouded in dewy mist. And that bold youth,  
 Who seem'd a shepherd rude, conversant with

Flocks ring-straked, speckled and spotted, wore on his  
heels

Spurs of pure silver.

COMYNE. By the fiends, I think  
That murder has not done sure work, and those  
Do walk the world, whom the deep hungry sea  
Hath grown sick with, and given the world again;  
Or hath not dared, for fear of heaven, to swallow.  
This page—a lady in her mantle shrouded!  
This youth—who wears proud knighthood's silver spurs!  
This prophetess—that dooms me to the sword,  
And gives this soldier to Caerlaverock ravens!  
And, thy fate too, my head and right hand, Hubert!  
Macubin, ho! go saddle our steeds straight;  
I'll seek the woodland lair of this famed witch,  
This hag who deals in destinies of men,  
And dooms unto the drugg'd cup, or the dirk,  
All those she hates! and hood-wink'd peasants, then,  
With sharp sword, or swift poison, make her sayings  
Come suddenly to pass. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VII. *A wild Cave in a Wood.*

*Enter* LADY MAXWELL *and* MABEL MORAN.

MABEL.

Lady, I tell thee that sword is not forged,  
Nor is that man born yet in the wide world,

Shall harm a hair of his head. Now stand, and tell me  
What thou dost see and hear.

LADY MAXWELL.                      A stillness sits  
On hill, and dale, and ocean ; there is lustre  
Unwonted in the heaven—but I hear nought,  
Save the sweet waters of the Solway sea  
Sing 'mongst the shells and pebbles.

MABEL.                                      Lady, look ;  
What think'st thou of that bright and little star ?  
See o'er Caerlaverock's turret top it stays,  
And far its shining tresses shoot o'er heaven,  
Even like a silver crown. Now, lady, this  
Comes not in idle radiance forth ; it comes  
To tell thee that thy time of glory's coming.  
BE VALIANT, and BELIEVE. For ere it comes,  
Extremest peril shall compass thee and thine.

LADY MAXWELL.  
Peril, again ? O ! I do dread thee still,  
Thou high and wrathful heaven. My hope will fall,  
Even as yon large and gloomy star is flung  
From the mid sky to the earth.

MABEL.                                      Now, nerve your heart,  
And fill that bosom, where thy babe has suck'd,  
With courage that quails never. Thou canst do it.  
Hear'st thou the rush of horses ? Hark ! he comes,  
And you must look upon your direst foe.  
Fear not—fear not ; there is a hand, to which  
A murderer's arm is rushes, guards thee, lady.

He comes to prove me, and to spurn me. Give  
 To me that garment ; I must hem 't—it will  
 To-night be wanted, though the corse be quick  
 That's doom'd to fill this shroud ! 'Tis a fair sark.—  
 Now, lady, swathe thy silken robe around thee ;  
 Hide here, and heed my song.

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE and SERVANT.*

MABEL *sings.*

THE SONG OF DOOM.

WHEN the howlet has whoop'd three times i' the wood,  
 At the wan moon sinking behind the cloud ;  
 When the stars have crept in the wintry drift,  
 Lest spells should pyke them out o' the lift ;  
 When the hail and the whirlwind walk abroad,  
 Then comes the steed with its unbles'd load :  
 Alight—alight—and bow and come in,  
 For the sheet is shaping to wind thee in.

COMYNE.

This lame hag whoops an ominous song—hush! hush!  
 For she doth sing again.

MABEL. (*Song continued.*)

When didst thou measure 't, thou hoary heck ?  
 When the sea-waves climb'd thy splintering deck,  
 When hell for thee yawn'd grim and yare,  
 And the fiends stood smiling on thy despair ;  
 And I proved my measure, and found it good,  
 When thy right hand reek'd with noble blood :  
 Alight—alight—and bow and come in,  
 For the sheet is shaping to wind thee in.



COMYNE.

Where didst thou learn this song, thou hag? What shroud  
Do thy long, sharp, and shrivelled fingers sew?

MABEL. (*Song continued.*)

The heart is whole that maun mense this sark,  
And I have been tax'd with a thankless dark;  
Fast maun I sew by the gleam of the moon,  
For my work will be wanted, 'ere it be done;  
But helms shall be cloven, and life's blood spilt,  
And bright swords crimson'd frae point to hilt.  
So say thine errand, thou man of sin;  
For the shroud is sewing to wind thee in.

COMYNE.

Beware! lest one stroke of this good sharp sword  
Should mar thy skill in shroud-sewing—beware!  
Why dost thou bend those sooty brows on me,  
And measure me o'er thus?

MABEL. (*Song continued.*)

Thy right hand shall lose its cunning, my lord;  
And blood shall no more dye the point of thy sword;  
The raven is ready, and singing hoarse,  
To dart with a croak on thy comely corse;  
And looks all hollow mine eyes must give  
On him who has got but some hours to live:  
So say thine errand, thou man of sin;  
The shroud is sewing to wind thee in.

COMYNE.

Name me the man of whom thou warblest thus.  
Beldame, dost thou mean me?

MABEL. *(Song continued.)*

I name not his name, let him think on my strain ;  
 There's a curse on them that shall name him again.  
 I mean the man—even HE who gave  
 A noble corse to a midnight grave ;  
 I mean the man—name THOU his name,  
 Who drown'd a sweet youth, and a comely dame.  
 So say thine errand, thou man of sin ;  
 For the shroud is sewing to wind thee in.

COMYNE.

There seems a dooms-note sounding in this song !  
 Old dame, who taught thee these wild words, and gave  
 Thee this cursed shroud to sew ?

MABEL. *(Song continued.)*

I learn'd my skill from those who will sever  
 Thy soul from grace, for ever and ever ;  
 The moon has to shine but a stricken hour,  
 And I maun work while the spell has power.  
 They are nigh who gave me this dark to do,  
 This shroud to shape, and this shroud to sew ;  
 They are nigh who taught this song to me.  
 Look north, look south ; say what dost thou see ?

COMYNE.

From me wild words alone no credence gain,  
 And I see nothing, save this dreary cave,  
 And thine accursed self.

MABEL. *(Song continued.)*

To the heaven above—down to the earth dark,  
 Now look and tell me what dost thou mark.—  
 Appear ! from the deep and darksome wave ;  
 Appear ! from the dark and the dreary grave ;

Appear! from your presence the sinful shall soon  
 Pass away, as yon cloud passes now from the moon.  
 The time is come now, else it never shall be.  
 Look east, and look west; say, what dost thou see?

COMYNE.

Come, come, thou dotard beldame—thy strange words  
 Dismay me not—things visible and felt—

*(Sees Lady Maxwell.)*

Eternal God! what form is this? does fancy  
 Hoodwink my reason with a dreamer's marvel?  
 Art thou a figure painted out of air?  
 Pale and majestic form, I've sinn'd against thee,  
 Beyond repentance' power. Is there another?

*(Sees the Spirit of Lord Maxwell.)*

What terrible shape is that? Art thou a thing  
 Permitted thus to blast my sight—or but  
 The horrible fashioning of the guilty eye?  
 This bears the stamp of flesh and blood—but thou,  
 Thou undefined and fearful, thou dost make  
 A baby's heart-strings of my martial nerves;  
 I'll look on thee no longer—mine eyes ache  
 As if they gazed upon a fiery furnace.  
 Give me some drink, Macubin.

SERVANT.

Oh! my lord,

What moves you thus?

COMYNE.

Dost thou see nought, Macubin?  
 Nought that doth make your firm knees knock like mine,  
 And make your heart against your bosom leap,

And make you think upon the blood you've spilt,  
 And make you think on heaven's eternal wrath ?

SERVANT.

I see this old dame, and thine honour'd self ;  
 What should I see, my lord ?

COMYNE.

O ! nothing—shadows :

Such as the eye shapes to alarm the heart.

Nay, nothing—nothing. 'Ancient dame, I've been  
 Ungentle in my speech ; I've wrong'd thee much.

I will repair the folly of this hour

With a fair cot and garden—They are gone—

Perchance were never here, for the eye works

Unto the timid thought, and the thought paints

Forms from the mire of conscience, will-o'-the-wisps,

To dazzle sober reason.

(*Exeunt.*)

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *Caerlaverock Castle.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN GOURLAY, *Captains and Soldiers.*

FIRST CAPTAIN.

There are three beacons burning in the west ;  
Half heaven is ruddy—mickle do I wish  
Our warlike leader here.

SECOND CAPTAIN. For one full hour  
Have signal horns kept sounding, sulphur lights  
Shoot thick as stars—the long-hair'd cavaliers  
Have got their feet in the stirrups ; else this stir  
Is past my groping out.

THIRD CAPTAIN. 'Tis rumour'd, Monk  
Has pluck'd his standard up, and vow'd to wash  
The dusty fetlocks of his jaded steeds  
In the silver Tweed.

SIR JOHN. This war's a pleasant pastime.  
A rich town's sack is worth the wishing for.  
And cavaliers wear gold spurs on their heels—  
Have broad domains to forfeit ; current gold  
Is plenty in their pockets, and their ladies  
Wear far more jewels in their clust'ring locks  
Than would buy a baron's land.







Pitch our pavilions on Caerlaverock lea.  
 Give lords their down beds, and their gilded roofs :  
 Give me the greenwood, and the lily lea ;  
 The tented canvas rustling on strain'd strings ;  
 The sea behind me chafing on its shores ;  
 My foes before me, numerous as the leaves  
 Of this wide forest ; and I would lay down  
 My helmed head upon that rough gray stone,  
 And sleep as fearless, 'till the trumpets sang,  
 As that blackbird on the bough. (Exeunt.)

SCENE II. *A Tent on Caerlaverock Lea. Midnight.*

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE, SIR JOHN GOURLAY,  
 Captains, &c.*

COMYNE.

Before the sun-rise we commence our march,  
 And ford the gentle Nith by break of day,  
 Nor pass through old Dumfries.

SIR JOHN.

Far in the west

The chief strength of the martial covenant lies,  
 And that way marches Monk.

FIRST CAPTAIN.

Four regiments good

From Nithsdale, Annandale, and the green glens  
 Of mountain Galloway, march at his back.

SECOND CAPTAIN.

I know each man by name ; with them I've stood

Knee deep in moats, and trenches ; and we've wash'd  
In England's brooks our bloody hands together.

THIRD CAPTAIN.

And did our general wave his bonnet feather,  
They'd cast their banners in the Tweed, and hang  
Monk up to feed the hawks.

SIR JOHN. Or sell his head  
For thrice its weight in beaten gold—each eye,  
In the pressing peril of the times, is worth  
A kingdom wide ; and his right hand would bring——

COMYNE.

Now keep some converse for the morning's march.  
How now ? What say the peasants ? Where are they ?

*Enter a SOLDIER.*

SOLDIER.

My lord, each peasant in this vale's become  
Thine enemy on the sudden. I explain'd  
Your order for their armed muster : they  
Laugh'd loud, and one show'd me the hilt of his sword,  
And said, " I draw it at no villain's bidding,"  
And clang'd it in the sheath ; another cried,  
" Tell Halbert Comyne, when he finds a stream,  
That can make milkwhite murder's spotted hand,  
Wash—wash ; I'll be his soldier ;" straight a third  
Said, " Say one saw on Solway yesternight  
A lovely lady, and her sweet son, sailing  
In a bottomless boat." And one stern man,

Whom they call'd Simon Graeme, took me aside,  
 And talk'd of destiny, and drew his sword ;  
 Said, " Soldier, seest thou this ? the blood thou seest  
 (And it was red with late spilt blood, my lord)  
 Is Hubert Dougan's."

COMYNE.                      Take six armed men,  
 And bring this rustic—keep him mute—or slay him,  
 Should he breathe but a word.

SOLDIER.                      My lord, I heard  
 These tidings as a soldier should ; I drew  
 My sword—so did my comrades. This man is  
 A thing not to be taken. He slew two ;  
 And though I grappled with him, he did shake  
 Me like a baby from him ; and, unharm'd,  
 Leap'd in the dashing river.

COMYNE.                      For his head  
 A score of bonnet pieces ! twenty more,  
 To hear him speak ten words upon the rack !  
 For he's a proven traitor to the state,  
 And no rude peasant he.

SIR JOHN.                      Lord ! how much gold,  
 And pure gold, too ! I've fought for seven long years,  
 And never made so much. I go, my lord ;  
 This is a glorious ransom. I will have him,  
 If he tarries above ground. All current gold !

*(Exeunt Sir John Gourlay, and soldiers.)*

COMYNE.  
 What kind of night is this ? A sick'ning weight

Hangs in the air; the moon is down, and yet  
Her light is left behind her. I can see  
'Tis past midnight upon the chapel clock.

FIRST CAPTAIN.

'Tis on the stroke of twelve—'tis a wild night,  
A fearful looking night—ranks of grim clouds  
Stand all around us on the woodland tops:  
At times, behind them, flashes of live fire  
Brighten, but burst not through.

SECOND CAPTAIN. As I unfurl'd  
Lord Maxwell's banner o'er this tent to-night,  
A thing even like a flying banner came  
And pitch'd itself aside it. I straight strook  
The spectre banner with my lance; and, lo!  
Forth gush'd red fire, even as blood gushes from  
The thrusting of a spear—and it evanish'd.

COMYNE.

So vanish thou.

*Enter a SOLDIER.*

How now! what shadow, man,  
Has chased away the red blood from thy cheek?

SOLDIER.

My lord, as I stood on the watch to-night,  
Down where the pinewood stretches to the sea,  
An armed phantom came and march'd aside me,  
And measured step and step.

COMYNE.

I'll hear no more;

Go out, and learn to look on thine own shadow.  
Now let no one come in my tent to-night ;  
Wait, four of you, and sleep, or walk, or watch,  
Even as it feels most pleasant. As you love me,  
And as you fear me, see for me no visions ;  
Call me up with the first cock crow. Good night.

FIRST CAPTAIN.

My lord, we beg to stretch us on the ground,  
To woo an hour of slumber.

COMYNE.

Court and find it.

*(Captains stretch themselves on the floor, and sleep.)*

Now golden slumber has found out these men,  
But I can find no rest. Though in my path  
Fame sows her ripest honours—'tis not that  
Can give me pleasant slumber, can call back  
The colour to my cheek. Although I know  
Four of this Monk's six thousand men are mine,  
That this famed kingdom's crown hangs in the air  
And waits for my bared brow, I'm troubled—troubled :  
Thou cursed woman, thy song fills my veins  
With thrice 'gealed ice, and in mine ear thy strain  
Begins to talk of doomsday. What light's that ?  
Has fire from heaven fallen in my camp ? Ho ! ho !—  
Rise ! hosts of heaven, lend me your safeguard now ;  
Arise—awake !—nay then, sleep on till doomsday ;  
'Tis I alone that must face all the fiends !

*(Storm, thunder, and fire.)*

*Enter SPIRIT OF HOGAN.*

SPIRIT.

Come, Halbert Comyne ; we are waiting for you.

COMYNE.

Go, senseless semblance of a shallow villain,

Thou creature cursed for cowardice—from me

Expect brief speech—begone! *(Spirit passes on.)*

*(Storm, thunder, and fire.)*

*Enter SPIRIT OF DINGWALL.*

SPIRIT.

Come, Halbert Comyne ; Hell is ready for thee.

COMYNE.

Shadow, away ; the unsumm'd sins of nature,

Grovelling and gross, so swarm'd in thee when living ;

Hope not I'll heed thy summons.—To be saved

With such as thee would be a curse indeed ;

So cumber not the night air with thy presence :

Away!

*(Spirit passes on.)*

*(Storm, thunder, and fire.)*

*Enter SPIRIT OF NEAL.*

SPIRIT.

Come, Halbert Comyne ; there are fires prepared.

COMYNE.

I will not speak to this thing, of all forms

That merit reprobation the most abject.

If this be thy chief pageant, hell, thou'rt poor  
 In shapes to shake men's souls. (*Spirit passes on.*)  
 (*Storm, thunder, and fire.*)

*Enter SPIRIT OF HUBERT DOUGAN.*

SPIRIT.

Comyne, this night prepare to dwell with me ;  
 And by the light of hell's unquenched fire,  
 We'll talk of what has passed.

COMYNE. Oh! shadow, stay ;  
 Stay, thou sad semblance of a noble man ;  
 Stay, brave and injured spirit, stay ! Oh ! speak  
 What fate hath thee befallen ? speak, Hubert, speak !  
 O ! by the time in battle when I turn'd  
 The sword aside that else had found thy heart,  
 O ! speak. O ! speak ; by all the days we pass'd  
 In tender friendship, and in perilous battle ;  
 By the dread wish of living with thee, spirit,  
 In bliss, or deathless fire,—I do conjure thee  
 To speak to me one word. By all the wrongs  
 I have imagined and have wrought on earth,  
 Speak, and depart not. Silent shadow, thou  
 Hast nought of Hubert Dougan, save the shape.  
 Stay, horrible illusion ! Stay, and tell me  
 A terrible hidden thing— (*Spirit passes on.*)

O! day-light, come!

Go, hideous night, thou art a fearful time ;  
 Come morning, though the first beam of thy light



Should shine on my life's blood. Pass on, dark night!  
God, when wilt thou give day?

FIRST CAPTAIN. (*Wakes.*)

Touch him not, villain!—my good lord—my lord!  
God keep thee safe, for I did dream I saw  
A fearful figure, with a bared sword  
About to pierce thy bosom.

SECOND CAPTAIN. (*Wakes.*) Help, oh! help;  
Did you cry help? I heard a voice cry help,  
With the tongue of a wounded man.

THIRD CAPTAIN. (*Wakes.*) My lord, my lord,  
The round big drops have started on your brow!  
Has some dread thing alarm'd you?

*Enter a SOLDIER.*

SOLDIER. A rough storm,  
With hail and whirlwind, has fallen on our camp,  
And blown thy banner into the deep sea;  
The crooked fires were running on the ground,  
And 'mid the fires—My lord, John Jardine saw  
This sight as well as me; and 'mid the fires—

COMYNE.

Well! well! amid the fire ye felt some fear,  
And I do well believe you. Haste, pluck down  
All our pavilions, let my chosen spears  
March in the front, and let our rear guard be  
Our proof-coat cuirassiers. We pass the Nith  
Within one stricken hour—begone.



Will follow this, and teach young maids to moan ?

GRAEME.

What human tongue less than inspired, or fill'd  
 With the gift of prophecy, may dare to blab  
 About God's meaning, when he sits enthroned  
 Amid majestic darkness, filling the heaven  
 With dismal signs and portents, that defy  
 All mortal calculation. 'Tis enough  
 For us to know, sad meaning and dread wrath  
 Were in those signs that round Caerlaverock hall  
 Were visible yesternight.

MACGEE.

I heard alone

The roar of waters, the loud war of winds,  
 And shaking of the cedars. A sweet sleep  
 Fell on me, and dread portents saw I none.

GRAEME.

And now let murder-meditators moan ;  
 Let hands unwashen from spilt blood beware :  
 And let the dweller in Caerlaverock towers,  
 Even thou, Lord Halbert Comyne, kneel thee down,  
 Among dust, gravel, supplicate, and groan !  
 For, oh ! Lord Maxwell's piteous moan, even now  
 Makes moist the eyes in heaven, nor can the dew  
 Of life-time's golden summers blanch the stains  
 Of blood which flooded all his marble floor.

MACGEE.

Some fearful thing, my friend, has moved thee thus.

GRAEME.

A thing shall move thee too. I rose and left

The embers glowing on my lonely hearth,  
And all my children sleeping. All was mute ;  
The homely cricket's song was loudest heard.  
Forth as I walk'd, the brook began to moan ;  
The wind woke with a dismal sigh, and spake  
As with a human tongue ; the Solway flood  
Flash'd on the shore, five fathom deep abreast ;  
And I heard tongues that made my flesh to quake.  
I stood and gazed upon the earth and heaven,  
And, lo ! I saw grim forms, perdition-doom'd,  
Fill all the land—earth shudder'd to the throng  
Of horrible phantoms, issuing o'er the bourn  
Of mortal pilgrimage. Corses unloosed  
From hearsing sheets were there, nor sweeping shrouds  
Might hold their occupants. The halter-doom'd,  
The treason-hatcher—he who fearless digs  
The grave for a quick corse—with him who drops  
The hemlock juice i' the entertainer's cup,  
Flock'd toward Caerlaverock, like a festal throng  
Unto a nuptial banquet. There I saw,  
Trooping i' the rear of this infernal file,  
A countenance horribly foul, and plaster'd thick  
With new spilt blood—the phantom glared on me ;  
And, summoning all hell into one frown,  
Pass'd surly by. I named him, and he stood ;  
And stern the grizly spectre glared on me  
A moment's space, and vanished.

MACGEE.

Simon Graeme,

This is a winter's mirth. What curious pains  
A man devout and hoary-hair'd may take  
To fashion the moan o' the elements into  
God's indignation, when no woe was meant,  
And only the pleasant sound of the voice was heard,  
O' the commonest occurrence! Gifted men,  
Who can divine all this, may be allow'd  
To see hearsed corses trooping, and high heaven  
With hellish faces fill'd; nay, even to hear  
The dying moaning on an unfought field.  
Why, what in the name o' the Lord can palsy thus  
A mind, that all his sovereign wonders fill  
With most sublime emotion? In the coil  
O' the world's employment, and sweet whisperings  
Of Nature o'er her wonders, we may make  
Phantoms like those which haunt the murderer's sleep.  
When the pert magpye chatters on the roof  
Of my aunt's dwelling, she doth presently  
Fancy her body winding-sheet enrapt,  
And drops into devotion. My wife too,  
Than whom a dame more duteous is not found,  
Nor one who makes such lily-looking linen,—  
When the south wind sighs in the chimney top,  
Her thrift she ceases, shakes her head, and says,  
Thou whistlest for no good; looks me i' the face,  
And thinks on widowhood, and wipes her cheek.

GRAEME.

It way be wit—but it is wicked wit

Which shapes God's high and terrible purposes  
Into a meaning, for to shake men's sides  
When 'tis no time for mirth. 'Tis well, when hearts  
Are all so reckless of this tainted world ;  
They clamour not at those tremendous signs  
Of God's remembrance. I do know a heart,  
That to the lips starts, if a mouse but stir,  
Or a leaf rustle ; but I thank my God  
It beats in a far loftier breast than mine.

MACGEE.

I thank God too—yet that's no proof of grace:  
The thief, who prowls at midnight by the fold,  
Thanks God who doth unmuffle the full moon,  
To let him choose the fairest of the flock.  
The knight, who wins his silver spurs, thanks God,  
And from his sword-blade wipes his brother's blood.  
The churl who sickens at men's prosperousness  
Thanks God, when tempests thrash their ripen'd fields,  
Or some foul murrain thins their fairest flocks.  
So, thank God, then, not for the deeds thou doest,  
Nor for the height thou'rt raised o'er prouder men  
In purity and wisdom ; nor for the gift  
Thou hast of fashioning heaven's familiar things  
To signs denoting wrath ; but, thank God for  
Fresh air, to fan thee when the sun shines hot ;  
The rain, that nourishes thy new-sown fields ;  
Thy rosy daughters, and thy comely sons,  
His noblest present in this world to man.

GRAEME.

There spoke the son of good old John Macgee,  
 Than whom a better ne'er a sickle sway'd ;  
 Nor held the plough along the fallow land ;  
 Nor hied to market on a Wednesday ;  
 Nor welcomed a neighbour by a shake of the hand ;  
 Nor sang a psalm, nor read the gospel book ;  
 Nor pray'd to God for his dear children's weal :  
 Yet he was stiff-opinion'd, and self-will'd,  
 And he would walk fifteen rough miles about,  
 Rather than ride along the nearer way  
 His neighbour recommended. Hast thou heard  
 How once upon a summer eve the Nith,  
 Even from the deep pool at thy father's door,  
 Sent a loud cry, and shriek succeeding shriek ;  
 Thy mother started, for the warning cry  
 Seem'd in thy father's voice. Good dame, she wept,  
 But moved not him whom all men wail'd as dead.  
 Thy father said, " Go tell those babbling sprites,  
 To guard their salmon from the otter's tooth,  
 And keep their watery winding-sheet for some  
 Poor shipwreck'd motherless sea-boy."—Three days  
 pass'd,  
 And tears and wailing for the good man's loss  
 Fill'd every cot i' the vale.—Now on his son,  
 Thee, Mark Macgee, I call—the hour is come.

MACGEE.

Heaven bless thee, Simon, for that old man's sake !



Speak ! I can now be silent as the grave ;  
 Close, as cold lips of marble ; still, as the deep  
 In the unvoyaged, fathomless profound  
 Of the untillable ocean.

GRAEME. 'Tis no secret  
 Now, for the heaven has told it o'er the earth ;  
 The troubled earth has echoed back the heaven,  
 And children's lips ev'n lisp it. Take thy sword,  
 My friend, and follow me. His doom is sign'd ;  
 He'll fall ere the sun shines.

MACGEE. Come, Simon Graeme ;  
 Our swords are now both seated on our sides ;  
 This is the gladdest hour of my whole life,  
 For these three days I've lived in troubled thoughts ;  
 The nights had fearful dreams. 'Twas but last night  
 I lay in sweet sleep stretch'd—sudden I sprung,  
 My right hand clutching at an unseen throat,  
 And call'd with a voice that made my young babes  
 quake,

“ There, murderous villain, fill the grave thou madest ! ”—  
 My wife her white arms flung around my neck,  
 And I awoke, and said it was a dream ;  
 Only a dream ; kiss'd her, and smiled, to smoothe  
 Unutterable anguish. What's thy wish ?

GRAEME.  
 That we should place us in the murderer's path :  
 This night he passes through the fords of Nith,  
 Where death shall find him, though he were in steel

Lapt sevenfold proof ; three score of hearts, and true,  
 Have at my summons bared their blades, and watch  
 Aside the winding river. We will strike  
 Him with no secret, but an open blow.

MACGEE.

Stay till my sweet wife and my little ones  
 Get one sweet kiss—I shall not fight the worse for it.

GRAEME.

The tenderest heart is aye the truest, bravest.  
 Hush ! here's a hurried footstep—who art thou ?—  
 Speak, lest I smite thee—these are not the times——

*Enter SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL.*

Come to my bosom with a bound, my son ;  
 I ask'd of yon dread heaven but this one sign,  
 To see thee dead or living. Thou art safe :  
 Now, Nithsdale, blessed days are thine again ;  
 Heaven's high decree's fulfilling.

MACGEE.

My young lord,

One kind glance of thy gallant eye is worth  
 Ten thousand thousand visions. Bless thy face.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Friends of my father, why do you keep watch  
 At this dark hour, and watch with weapons too ?

GRAEME.

A few nights since heaven wet these swords of ours  
 In the blood of hired murderers ; we sheathed  
 Our weapons, and night after night kept watch

For God's assurance by most fearful signs,  
 That we might smite the master murderer. We  
 To night have seen dread tokens, and HIS hour  
 Is surely come ; he will not see sunrise.  
 Sir Marmaduke, go with us on God's errand,  
 And strike with us the slayer of thy father,  
 If thou dost know the man.

SIR MARMADUKE. Oh ! name him not ;  
 His name shall ever be an evil omen,  
 Even to the holiest lips ; so name him not.

GRAEME.  
 To tell thee how we found this murderer out  
 Will be the unfolding of a tragic story :  
 I heard of thine own perilous escape,  
 From a sure hand, one whose keen eye can pierce  
 Far into future woe, even one whose tongue  
 Has counsel'd me to keep my good sword sharp :—  
 But this we'll talk of as we walk along. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV. *Caerlaverock Wood, by the River side.*

*Enter* SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL, SIMON GRAEME,  
 MARK MACGEE, *and armed men.*

GRAEME.  
 Here let us stand beneath the greenwood tree,  
 For he must pass down this way, Now be firm ;  
 Strike fierce and spare not ; but leave HIM to me.

These are the tokens you shall know him by:—

He rideth ever on a coal black steed,

Whose long tail sweeps the ground. His black helm  
has

A snowy crest that never has been soil'd

By blood or dust, but God shall smite it down

Among men's feet. High is his warlike brow,

And close and clustering curls his raven hair,

And keen the glancing of his swarthy eye;

When he sees us, he'll wave his right hand thus,

And say, "keep back, rude churls!"—leave HIM to me.

SIR MARMADUKE.

I have some friends, all firm, assured soldiers,

Derned in the greenwood. Yet have we to fight

Against a woeful odds.

MACGEE.

Yes, he has with him

Twelve score of chosen lances, and four hundred

Of horsemen sheathed in steel; we are in all

Eight score and twelve: hearken! I hear, ev'n now,

His horsemen prancing up the river side.

GRAEME.

Lo! heaven gives not the battle to the strong;

The race to the swift foot. His hour is come;

And though he had a thousand for each one,

Though his steel coat were triple proof, and though

He were enclosed with lances as a grove,

The avenger's hand would reach him. When man's

time

Is come that he must die, a pin would slay,  
 One drop of water drown him.

SIR MARMADUKE. My sure friend,  
 Thy words refresh me : I do not dread death,  
 For I have dared it in its sternest shape ;  
 But oh ! if heaven smile not upon our cause,  
 I dread the weeping of your little ones,  
 The wailing of their mothers ; that aged men  
 Should tell our tale, shake their grey heads, and say,  
 “ They were valiant but not wise.”

GRAEME. This river side  
 Is a right lovely spot ; here the spring sun  
 Aneath the grey trunk of that ancient tree  
 First gets his balmy cowslips. I’ve pulled here  
 Crowtoes, and violets, and the honey-suckle,  
 The brown ripe nuts, and sought the song bird’s nest ;  
 Each one is lovely in its own sweet season ;  
 And all beneath this beauteous holly bough  
 I’ve said some soft words in a fair dame’s ear.

*(Trumpet sounds.)*

He is nigh now. Lo ! here the murderer comes.  
 Eternal one, make the keen edged sword  
 Fall sevenfold sharp.

*Enter HALBERT COMYNE, SIR JOHN GOURLAY,  
 Captains and Soldiers.*

SIR JOHN.  
 I had, indeed, a bootless chace, my lord ;



*Re-enter* SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL *and* Captain.

CAPTAIN.

Home to thy plowshare, home!

SIR MARMADUKE. I seek thy lord;

See thou pluck not his peril on thyself.

*(Fight, the Captain falls.)*

My men are slain or scatter'd: I sought death,  
But found it not. This murderer's life is charm'd,  
For twice I strove to strike him with my sword.

*Enter* ANOTHER CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Yield thee, or die, for thou hast slain my kinsman.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Twice hast thou come between thy chief and me;

Thou'lt never do it again. *(Fight, the Captain falls.)*

*Enter* MARY DOUGLAS.

SIR MARMADUKE. Alas! my love,

My star of glory is for ever set;

What can I do for thee.

MARY DOUGLAS. Fly! fly! Oh, fly!

Down in the greenwood, by the river side,

There is a wild path shaped by lovers' feet;

We know it well, my love. Thy mother there

Waits in the cavern for thee; haste then, haste,

For morning light will soon be on the hill,

And thy foes hunt for thee on every side. *(Exeunt.)*



*Re-enter* SIMON GRAEME.

GRAEME.

I've hung his head for hawk's meat. Where, oh where  
 Art thou, Sir Marmaduke? Heaven! have I chased  
 The fox to death, and let the tiger range?  
 There are more signs, oh God, on earth than thine:  
 Hell has assumed thy sceptre. I've believed  
 A meteor pageant of the pit, and fought  
 Even for mine own perdition. (*Exit.*)

SCENE V. *Caerlaverock Wood.*

*Enter* SIR MARMADUKE MAXWELL and MARY  
 DOUGLAS, *disguised as peasants.*

SIR MARMADUKE.

Now weep not, soft and gentle one, weep not;  
 These drops yon frozen heavens will not melt,  
 Nor will these sweet sobs blunt the chacer's sword,  
 Nor soothe that wild and agitated sea  
 Where we must soon seek shelter.

MARY DOUGLAS. I did hope  
 The hour was come when fortune's icy breath  
 Would cease to chill us; yet, my love, oh! yet,  
 The wing'd destroyer's shadow 'nights our path,  
 On which no morn shall rise.

SIR MARMADUKE. My gentle one,  
 My stedfast love, what have we lost? here still

Is thy true love and thee ; yon is the heaven,  
And this the good green earth : come, smile again,  
We yet shall find a home—a humble home,  
Clad o'er with long marsh rushes ; thou shalt sing  
Songs of thine own love's making, and thy boys  
Shall plait rush swords and sceptres at thy knee.

MARY DOUGLAS.

This is a bright spot mid the darkness. Hark !  
I hear the thunder muttering, and, lo !  
The lightning shoots from Criffel to Caerlaverock :  
Dost thou not hear a steed prance ? Hark again !  
Mercy in heaven, here comes an armed man !

*Enter* HALBERT COMYNE.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Look on that man, my lovely one ; now look  
Upon him well ; he hastens on God's errand.

MARY DOUGLAS.

'Tis Halbert Comyne ; does not the ground gape ?  
And is the lightning idle, when a fiend  
Insults the heaven by cumbering the green earth ?

COMYNE.

Now will I seek that hoary hag ; her lair  
Lies not far distant : she doth seem to know  
More of my fortune than mute stars may teach.  
My soldiers rest them by the river side,  
And wait the coming of the kindly sun.

Now I hold fortune's clay between my palms,  
 To mould it as I list. In my hand lately  
 Was my sword hilt alone : swift hath it hewn  
 My pathway unto fame ; and its sharp edge  
 Some little pryncedom shall shape for me yet ;  
 For civil war works wonders, and casts down  
 The meek and timid, and exalts the bold.—  
 But I am haunted by a fearful Shape,  
 A hated thing, which sharp fear forms of shadows ;  
 Something that takes no known form, yet alarms  
 Me more than my worst enemy arm'd in proof ;  
 A thing which haunts my slumbers ; finds me out  
 In my deep dreams ; in fiercest strife where blood  
 Is rife as rivulet water ; in quiet peace  
 When rustic songs abound ; in silent prayer—  
 For prayer, too, have I tried—still is it there !  
 Now, now, the dismal shadow glides before me,  
 More visible than ever. Phantom, stay !  
 I'll know thy errand : dark and doubtful thing  
 That hoverest round me as a cloud, darest thou  
 No nobler semblance take ? By heaven and hell,  
 What fearful change ! and yet I know thee not ;  
 Thou nobler seem'st than him, and brighter lookest.  
 Fly from me, spirit, trouble not the earth ;  
 Fly from the gleaming of this crossed steel :  
 And yet it flies not. If thou blessed art,  
 Why dost thou page the heels of wickedness,

And seek to herald hell? Away! begone!

SIR MARMADUKE.

O thoughtless lassie, thou hast lost a dog  
Worth half the dames o' the parish; he was fleet  
As wind o' the mountain; faithful as yon star  
Is to the grey o' the morn. Pleased I'll ne'er sip  
My curdled whey again, nor breathe my pipe  
To charm the corncrakes when the grain is green.

COMYNE.

Cease thy wail, shepherd, and show me the way  
To Mabel Moran's home,—a dame who lives  
On shepherd's bounty, and repays their alms  
By charming their hirsels from the fox's tooth.

SIR MARMADUKE.

I know the cummer, and her house is near.—  
I'm but a plain poor man; I watch my sheep  
An' play on the pipe,—full blythely can I dance;  
And read the plowmen's riddles. Maidens smile  
As I go by, and ask how many lovers  
Yon horned moon shall bring them. When the wind  
Shakes out o' the husk the yellow corn, I cry,  
“Faith, I foretold you this.”—

COMYNE.

Peace! peasant, peace!

Show me the way, and silence thy rude tongue.

SIR MARMADUKE.

Sir, I must talk, for I have other gifts  
Which I would gladly teach you. Pray, sir, pray:  
You have a river deep and dark to cross;



Thou awful semblance of the unrotted dead?  
Thy glorious presence robs me of my might.—  
Sheathe thy sword, stripling, else I'll make thee mate  
To this infernal shadow.

SIR MARMADUKE. Use thy sword;  
I will not touch thee while thy point is turn'd  
From me, and seeks to wound the silent air.

*(Spirit vanishes.)*

COMYNE.

Then feed the worms; shall I be shamed with shadows?

*Enter* LADY MAXWELL.

LADY MAXWELL.

Mercy in heaven! I hear the sound of swords!

COMYNE.

Is this thy coinage, hell?—Thou yawning sea,  
Where is your ancient might? you cease to hold  
Your bloody morsels, and the faithless ground  
Has lost its fame for silence. Thus hemm'd in  
By hell and heaven, my good sword, thou must try  
A way through this frail flesh. *(Fights.)*

Now, what is this  
That hangs so on mine arm; makes my keen sword  
Stick in the air, and turns my nerves to rushes?  
That freezes up the current of my heart,  
And fills mine ear with the howlings of deep hell?

*Enter* SIMON GRAEME.

GRAEME.

Eternal villain, turn to me : God's cause  
Requires but a brief speech. (*Draws his sword.*)

SIR MARMADUKE. This cause is mine ;  
My arm shall work mine own revenge ; I feel  
My father's hand upon my weapon's hilt.

COMYNE.

Rude churl, thou comest too late. That hand has stopt  
My sea of greatness with a spade of earth.  
Thou cursed fiend that trimm'st men for destruction ;  
Thou caster down of noble spirits, that paintest  
Their dreams with robes and sceptres ; pluck me swift,  
Before the hand of vengeance shake me down  
From mine exalted bough. Come not when gored  
And spit upon I lie, the rabble's marvel ;  
Come, ere grey men their old heads shake and say,  
" Behold what murder comes to." (*Falls.*)

MARY DOUGLAS. Oh ! my love,  
The shepherd's grey plaid and the rushy sheal,—  
Earth has room for us yet.

LADY MAXWELL. O, my fair son !  
Thrice blessed be that heavenly hand, that kept  
Thy tender bosom from the murderer's sword.

SIR MARMADUKE.

My honour'd mother ! may the plotter never  
Sunder us more.—Bless thee, my fair, my loved one ;  
God's hand was visible here.—Oh ! my firm friend,



God walks his way in silence till his hour—  
And then men hearken thunder.

COMYNE. Stand away,  
And let me see them ; gentle youth, come near,  
Thou and that maiden. Woe be to thy bed,  
May it be barren as the desert sea ;  
And should a baby bless thee, may this earth  
To which my body's doom'd to add its dust,  
Swallow thy darling up. O'er thy famed name  
May dark dishonour come, as comes a cloud ;  
Dread of the dagger and the drugged cup  
Frequent thy dreams ; and may the sharp sword find thee  
When thy joy's fullest, and thy loved one smiles.

*(Starts up and strikes at them with his sword, and dies.)*

SIR MARMADUKE.  
All merciless and remorseless as thou lived'st,  
So hast thou died. Let men no more put trust  
In gentle carriage or in noble looks ;  
Trust kindred blood no more : let sharp suspicion  
Haunt in the steps of princes.

GRAEME. Trust a spark  
Of fire among swift powder ; trust the dove  
With the fledged hawk ; the dog in the deer's den.  
Shall we the pure earth poison with his bones,  
Pollute the kindly sea, or hang him high,  
To taint the wind and feed the birds of heaven ?  
Thou didst the proverb pluck from the horn'd fiend ;  
What art thou now ?—a morsel for the crows.

SIR MARMADUKE.

He was a bad man, but he was a brave one ;  
 Let him be buried as a brave man should :  
 We war not with his dust. My knee to thee,  
 Thou noblest pattern of connubial love !—  
 And wilt thou promise me, thou gentle one,  
 The gift of this white hand ?

MARY DOUGLAS.                      Take hand and heart.

GRAEME.

Now hang your bonnets on the horns o' the moon ;  
 Make bridal fires, the fair dames of Dumfries  
 May braid their tresses by ; the hour is come.  
 The dumb shall sing, and crippled limbs shall leap.  
 With gallant horse-hair we will string our swords  
 And make our targets fiddles—the sweet voice  
 O' the pipe shall no more cease.

SIR MARMADUKE.                      My friend, my friend !!

Let us not mock our sorrow in our mirth :  
 Woe is a wise man's livery. Our torn land  
 Even of its noblest and its best bereft ;  
 My father's blood undried yet in his halls ;  
 Ourselves scarce from extremest perils escaped ;—  
 This is no time for mirth.