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THE LADY OF THE LAKE

By Sir Walter Scott, Bart.

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Boston

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Preface

When I first saw Mr. Osgood's beautiful illustrated edition of The Lady of the Lake, I asked him to let me use some of the cuts in a cheaper annotated edition for school and household use; and the present volume is the result.

The text of the poem has given me unexpected trouble. When I edited some of Gray's poems several years ago, I found that they had not been correctly printed for more than half a century; but in the case of Scott I supposed that the text of Black's so-called "Author's Edition" could be depended upon as accurate. Almost at the start, however, I detected sundry obvious misprints in one of the many forms in which this edition is issued, and an examination of others showed that they were as bad in their way. The "Shilling" issue was no worse than the costly illustrated one of 1853, which had its own assortment of slips of the type. No two editions that I could obtain agreed exactly in their readings. I tried in vain to find a copy of the editio princeps (1810) in Cambridge and Boston, but succeeded in getting one through a London bookseller. This I compared, line by line, with the Edinburgh

edition of 1821 (from the Harvard Library), with Lockhart's first edition, the "Globe" edition, and about a dozen others English and American. I found many misprints and corruptions in all except the edition of 1821, and a few even in that. For instance in i. 217 Scott wrote "Found in each cliff a narrow bower," and it is so printed in the first edition; but in every other that I have seen "cliff" appears in place of clift,, to the manifest injury of the passage. In ii. 685, every edition that I have seen since that of 1821 has "I meant not all my heart might say," which is worse than nonsense, the correct reading being "my heat." In vi. 396, the Scottish "boune" (though it occurs twice in other parts of the poem) has been changed to "bound" in all editions since 1821; and, eight lines below, the old word "barded" has become "barbed." Scores of similar corruptions are recorded in my Notes, and need not be cited here.

I have restored the reading of the first edition, except in cases where I have no doubt that the later reading is the poet's own correction or alteration. There are obvious misprints in the first edition which Scott himself overlooked (see on ii. 115, 217,, Vi. 527, etc.), and it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a later reading--a change of a plural to a singular, or like trivial variation--is a misprint or the author's correction of an earlier misprint. I have done the best I could, with the means at my command, to settle these questions, and am at least certain that the text as I give it is nearer right than in any edition since 1821 As all the variae lectiones are recorded in the Notes, the reader who does not approve of the one I adopt can substitute that which he prefers.

I have retained all Scott's Notes (a few of them have been somewhat abridged) and all those added by Lockhart. [1] My own I have made

as concise as possible. There are, of course, many of them which many of my readers will not need, but I think there are none that may not be of service, or at least of interest, to some of them; and I hope that no one will turn to them for help without finding it.

Scott is much given to the use of Elizabethan words and constructions, and I have quoted many "parallelisms" from Shakespeare and his contemporaries. I believe I have referred to my edition of Shakespeare in only a single instance (on iii. 17), but teachers and others who have that edition will find many additional illustrations in the Notes on the passages cited.

While correcting the errors of former editors, I may have overlooked some of my own. I am already indebted to the careful proofreaders of the University Press for the detection of occasional slips in quotations or references; and I shall be very grateful to my readers for a memorandum of any others that they may discover.

Cambridge, June 23, 1883..

ARGUMENT.

The scene of the following Poem is laid chiefly in the vicinity of Loch Katrine, in the Western Highlands of Perthshire. The time of Action includes Six Days, and the transactions of each Day occupy a Canto.

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

CANTO FIRST.

The Chase.

Harp of the North! that mouldering long hast hung On the witch-elm that shades Saint Fillan's spring And down the fitful breeze thy numbers flung, Till envious ivy did around thee cling, Muffling with verdant ringlet every string,-- O Minstrel Harp, still must thine accents sleep? Mid rustling leaves and fountains murmuring, Still must thy sweeter sounds their silence keep, Nor bid a warrior smile, nor teach a maid to weep?

Not thus, in ancient days of Caledon, [10]
Was thy voice mute amid the festal crowd,
When lay of hopeless love, or glory won,
Aroused the fearful or subdued the proud.
At each according pause was heard aloud
Thine ardent symphony sublime and high!
Fair dames and crested chiefs attention bowed;
For still the burden of thy minstrelsy
Was Knighthood's dauntless deed, and Beauty's matchless eye.

O, wake once more! how rude soe'er the hand
That ventures o'er thy magic maze to stray;
O, wake once more! though scarce my skill command
Some feeble echoing of thine earlier lay:
Though harsh and faint, and soon to die away,
And all unworthy of thy nobler strain,
Yet if one heart throb higher at its sway,
The wizard note has not been touched in vain.

Then silent be no more! Enchantress, wake again!

I.

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

II.

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
'To arms! the foemen storm the wall,'
The antlered monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high
Tossed his beamed frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuffed the tainted gale,
A moment listened to the cry,
That thickened as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appeared,

With one brave bound the copse he cleared,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.

III.

Yelled on the view the opening pack;
Rock, glen, and cavern paid them back;
To many a mingled sound at once
The awakened mountain gave response.
A hundred dogs bayed deep and strong,
Clattered a hundred steeds along,
Their peal the merry horns rung out,
A hundred voices joined the shout;
With hark and whoop and wild halloo,
No rest Benvoirlich's echoes knew.
Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert cowered the doe,
The falcon, from her cairn on high,
Cast on the rout a wondering eye,
Till far beyond her piercing ken
The hurricane had swept the glen.
Faint, and more faint, its failing din
Returned from cavern, cliff, and linn,
And silence settled, wide and still,
On the lone wood and mighty hill.

IV.

Less loud the sounds of sylvan war

Disturbed the heights of Uam-Var,
And roused the cavern where, 't is told,
A giant made his den of old;
For ere that steep ascent was won,
High in his pathway hung the sun,
And many a gallant, stayed perforce,
Was fain to breathe his faltering horse,
And of the trackers of the deer
Scarce half the lessening pack was near;
So shrewdly on the mountain-side
Had the bold burst their mettle tried.

V.

The noble stag was pausing now
Upon the mountain's southern brow,
Where broad extended, far beneath,
The varied realms of fair Menteith.
With anxious eye he wandered o'er
Mountain and meadow, moss and moor,
And pondered refuge from his toil,
By far Lochard or Aberfoyle.
But nearer was the copsewood gray
That waved and wept on Loch Achray,
And mingled with the pine-trees blue
On the bold cliffs of Benvenue.
Fresh vigor with the hope returned,
With flying foot the heath he spurned,
Held westward with unwearied race,

And left behind the panting chase.

VI.

'T were long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambusmore;
What reins were tightened in despair,
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagged upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shunned to stem the flooded Teith,--
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reached the lake of Vennachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII.

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Embossed with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The laboring stag strained full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came,
And all but won that desperate game;
For, scarce a spear's length from his haunch,

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