Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)

## 8 The Erl-King

From the German of Goethe.

(The Erl-King is a goblin that haunts the Black Forest in Thuringia. — To be read by a candle particularly long in the snuff.)

O, who rides by night thro' the woodland so wild? It is the fond father embracing his child; And close the boy nestles within his loved arm, To hold himself fast, and to keep himself warm.

"O father, see yonder! see yonder!" he says; "My boy, upon what doest thou fearfully gaze?" — "O, 'tis the Erl-King with his crown and his shroud." "No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

#### (Tke Erl-King speaks.)

"O come and go with me, thou loveliest child; By many a gay sport shall thy time be beguiled; My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy, And many a fine flower shall she pluck for my boy."

"O, father, my father, and did you not hear The Erl-King whisper so low in my ear?" — "Be still, my heart's darling — my child, be at ease; It was but the wild blast as it sung thro' the trees."

#### Erl-King.

"O wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy? My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy; She shall bear thee so lightly thro' wet and thro' wild, And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child." 20

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"O father, my father, and saw you not plain, The Erl-King's pale daughter glide past thro' the rain?" — "O yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon; It was the grey willow that danced to the moon."

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### Erl-King.

"O come and go with me, no longer delay, Or else, silly child, I will drag thee away." — "O father! O father! now, now keep your hold, The Erl-King has seized me — his grasp is so cold!"

Sore trembled the father; he spurr'd thro' the wild, Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child; He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread, But, clasp'd to his bosom, the infant was *dead*!

# Trans, 1797

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