

Thomas Campbell (1777-1844)

6 *Lochiel's Warning*

Wizard — Lochiel.

WIZARD.

Lochiel, Lochiel! beware of the day
When the Lowlands shall meet thee in battle array!
For a field of the dead rushes red on my sight,
And the clans of Culloden are scattered in fight.
They rally, they bleed, for their kingdom and crown; 5
Woe, woe to the riders that trample them down!
Proud Cumberland prances, insulting the slain,
And their hoof-beaten bosoms are trod to the plain.
But hark! through the fast-flashing lightning of war,
What steed to the desert flies frantic and far? 10
'T is thine, O Glenullin! whose bride shall await,
Like a love-lighted watch-fire, all night at the gate.
A steed comes at morning: no rider is there;
But its bridle is red with the sign of despair.
Weep, Albin! to death and captivity led! 15
O weep, but thy tears cannot number the dead!
For a merciless sword on Culloden shall wave,
Culloden! that reeks with the blood of the brave.

LOCHIEL.

Go, preach to the coward, thou death-telling seer!
Or, if gory Culloden so dreadful appear, 20
Draw, dotard, around thy old wavering sight
This mantle, to cover the phantoms of fright!

WIZARD.

Ha! laugh'st thou, Lochiel, my vision to scorn?
Proud bird of the mountain, thy plume shall be torn!
Say, rushed the bold eagle exultingly forth, 25
From his home, in the dark-rolling clouds of the north?
Lo! the death-shot of foemen outspeeding, he rode
Companionless, bearing destruction abroad;
But down let him stoop from his havoc on high!

Ah! home let him speed, — for the spoiler is nigh. 30
 Why flames the far summit? Why shoot to the blast
 Those embers, like stars from the firmament cast?
 'T is the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven
 From his eyrie, that beacons the darkness of heaven.
 O, crested Lochiel! the peerless in might, 35
 Whose banners arise on the battlements' height,
 Heaven's fire is around thee, to blast and to burn;
 Return to thy dwelling! all lonely return!
 For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood,
 And a wild mother scream o'er her famishing brood. 40

LOCHIEL.

False Wizard! avaunt! I have marshalled my clan,
 Their swords are a thousand, their bosoms are one!
 They are true to the last of their blood and their breath,
 And like reapers descend to the harvest of death.
 Then welcome be Cumberland's steed to the shock! 45
 Let him dash his proud foam like a wave on the rock!
 But woe to his kindred, and woe to his cause,
 When Albin her claymore indignantly draws;
 When her bonnetted chieftains to victory crowd,
 Clanronald the dauntless, and Moray the proud, 50
 All plaided and plumed in their tartan array —

WIZARD.

— Lochiel, Lochiel! beware of the day;
 For, dark and despairing, my sight I may seal,
 But man cannot cover what God would reveal;
 'T is the sunset of life gives me mystical lore, 55
 And coming events cast their shadows before.
 I tell thee, Culloden's dread echoes shall ring
 With the bloodhounds that bark for thy fugitive king.
 Lo! anointed by Heaven with the vials of wrath,
 Behold, where he flies on his desolate path! 60
 Now in darkness and billows he sweeps from my sight:
 Rise, rise, ye wild tempests, and cover his flight!
 'T is finished. Their thunders are hushed on the moors:
 Culloden is lost, and my country deplores.
 But where is the iron-bound prisoner? Where? 65
 For the red eye of battle is shut in despair.

Say, mounts he the ocean-wave, banished, forlorn,
Like a limb from his country cast bleeding and torn?
Ah no! for a darker departure is near;
The war-drum is muffled, and black is the bier; 70
His death-bell is tolling: O! mercy, dispel
Yon sight, that it freezes my spirit to tell!
Life flutters convulsed in his quivering limbs,
And his blood-streaming nostril in agony swims.
Accursed be the fagots, that blaze at his feet, 75
Where his heart shall be thrown, ere it ceases to beat,
With the smoke of its ashes to poison the gale ——

LOCHIEL.

—— Down, soothless insulter! I trust not the tale:
For never shall Albin a destiny meet,
So black with dishonor, so foul with retreat. 80
Though my perishing ranks should be strewed in their gore,
Like ocean-weeds heaped on the surf-beaten shore,
Lochiel, untainted by flight or by chains,
While the kindling of life in his bosom remains,
Shall victor exult, or in death be laid low, 85
With his back to the field, and his feet to the foe!
And leaving in battle no blot on his name,
Look proudly to Heaven from the death-bed of fame!

1801

(From *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell*. Ed.
Epes Sargent. Boston, 1854)