

Sydney Dobell (1824-74)

1 *The Ballad of Keith of Ravelston*

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine,
'O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Ravelston, Ravelston, 5
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
And thro' the silver meads;

Ravelston, Ravelston, 10
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston 15
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line! 20

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair, 25
She keeps the shadowy kine;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold, 30
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says naught that can be told.

Yet, stranger! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O, Keith of Ravelston, 35
The sorrows of thy line!

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood —
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear! 40

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

1856

(From *The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*. Chosen by
Arthur Quiller-Couch. Oxford: Clarendon, 1912)