

James Hogg (1770-1835)

9 *Lord Derwent*

A Fragment

“O why look ye so pale, my lord?
And why look ye so wan?
And why stand mounted at your gate
So early in the dawn?”

“O well may I look pale, ladye; 5
For how can I look gay,
When I have fought the live-long night,
And fled at break of day?”

“And is the Border troop arrived? 10
And have they won the day?
It must have been a bloody field,
Ere Derwent fled away.

“But where got ye that stately steed,
So stable and so good? 15
And where got ye that gilded sword,
So dyed with purple blood?”

“I got that sword in bloody fray,
Last night on Eden downe;
I got the horse and harness too,
Where mortal ne'er got one.” 20

“Alight, alight, my noble lord;
God mot you save and see;
For never till this hour was I
Afraid to look on thee.”

He turned him to the glowing east, 25
That stained both tower and tree:
“Prepare, prepare, my lady fair,
Prepare to go with me.

“Before this dawning day shall close,
A deed shall here be done, 30
That men unborn shall shrink to hear,
And dames the tale shall shun.

“The morning blushes to the chin,
The foul intent to see:
Prepare, prepare, my lady fair, 35
Prepare to follow me.”

“Alight, alight, my noble lord,
I’ll live or die with thee;
I see a wound deep in your side
And hence you cannot flee.” 40

She looked out o’er her left shoulder
To list a heavy groan;
But when she turned her round again,
Her noble lord was gone.

She looked to east, and west, and south, 45
And all around the tower
Through house and hall; but man nor horse
She never could see more.

She turned her round and round about,
All in a doleful state; 50
And there she saw her little foot-page
Alighting at the gate.

“Oh! open, open, noble dame,
And let your servant in;
Our furious foes are hard at hand, 55
The castle fair to win.”

“But tell me, billy, where’s my lord?
Or whither is he bound?
He’s gone just now, and in his side
A deep and deadly wound.” 60

“Why do you rave, my noble dame,
And look so wild on me?
Your lord lies on the bloody field,
And him you’ll never see.

“With Scottish Jardine, hand to hand, 65
He fought most valiantlye,
Put him to flight, and broke his men,
With shouts of victory.

“But Maxwell, rallying, wheeled about, 70
And charged us fierce as hell;
Yet ne’er could pierce the English troops
Till my brave master fell.

“Then all was gone; the ruffian Scott 75
Bore down our flying band;
And now they waste with fire and sword
The Links of Cumberland.

“Lord Maxwell’s gone to Carlisle town 80
With Jardine hastilye,
And young Kilpatrick and Glencairn
Are come in search of thee.”

“How dare you lie, my little page,
Whom I pay meat and fee?
The cock has never crowed but once
Since Derwent was with me.

“The bird that sits on yonder bush, 85
And sings so loud and clear,
Has only three times changed his note
Since my good lord was here.”

“Whoe’er it was, whate’er it was, 90
I’m sure it was not he;
I saw him dead on Eden plain,
I saw him with my ee.

“I saw him stand against an host,

While heaps before him fell;
I saw them pierce his manly side, 95
And bring the last farewell.

“O run,’ he cried, ‘to my ladye,
And bear the fray before;
Tell her I died for England’s right.’ —
Then word spake never more. 100

“Come let us fly to Westmoreland,
For here you cannot stay;
Short be thy shrift, our steeds are swift,
And well I know the way.”

“I will not fly, I cannot fly; 105
My heart is wonder sore;
My brain it turns, my blood it burns,
And I dare not look before.”

She turned her eye to Borrowdale;
Her heart grew chill with dread; — 110
For there she saw the Scottish bands,
Kilpatrick at their head.

Red blazed the beacon of Pownell,
On Skiddaw there were three;
The warder’s horn o’er muir and fell 115
Was heard continually.

Dark grew the sky, the wind was still,
The sun in blood arose;
But oh! how many a gallant man
Ne’er saw that evening close! 120

1807

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