

Charles K. Sharpe (?1781-1851)

1 *The Lord Herries His Complaint: a Fragment*

Bright shone the moon on Hoddom's wall,  
Bright on Repentance Tower;  
Mirk was the lord of Hoddom's saul,  
That chief sae sad and sour.

He sat him on Repentance hicht, 5  
And glowr'd upon the sea;  
And sair and heavily he sicht,  
But nae drap eased his bree.

"The night is fair, and calm the air, 10  
No blasts disturb the tree;  
Baith men and beast now tak their rest,  
And a's at peace but me.

"Can wealth and power in princely bower, 15  
Can beauty's rolling e'e,  
Can friendship dear, wi' kindly tear,  
Bring back my peace to me?

"No! lang lang maun the mourner pine, 20  
And meikle penance dree,  
Wha has a heavy heart like mine,  
Ere light that heart can be.

"Under yon silver skimmering waves,  
That saftly rise and fa',  
Lie mouldering banes in sandy graves,  
That fley my peace awa'.

. . . . .

"To help my boat, I pierc'd the throat 25  
Of him whom ane lo'ed dear;  
Nought did I spare his yellow hair,

And een sae bricht and clear.

“She sits her lane, and maketh mane,  
And sings a waefu sang, — 30  
‘Scotch rievvers hae my darling ta’en;  
O Willie tarries lang!’

“I plunged an auld man in the sea,  
Whase locks were like the snaw;  
His hairs sall serve for rapes to me, 35  
In hell my saul to draw.

“Soon did thy smile, sweet baby, stint,  
Torn frae the nurse’s knee,  
That smile, that might hae saften’d flint,  
And still’d the raging sea. 40

“Alas! twelve precious lives were spilt,  
My worthless spark to save;  
Bet had I fall’n, withouten guilt,  
Frae cradle to the grave.

“Repentance! signal of my bale, 45  
Built of the lasting stane,  
Ye lang shall tell the bluidy tale,  
When I am dead and gane.

“How Hoddom’s lord, ye lang sall tell,  
By conscience stricken sair, 50  
In life sustain’d the pains of hell,  
And perish’d in despair.”

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*1802-03*

(From Sir Walter Scott, ed. *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. Ed. Thomas Henderson. London, 1931)