

WALTER SCOTT

MARMION

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD

Москва, 2018

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### **Walter Scott**

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Walter Scott (1771–1832) was a Scottish historical novelist, poet, and playwright. Although he was an advocate and legal administrator by profession, Scott is most famous for his great literary works and activities in the Royal Highland Society. “Marmion” novel in verse, which, at the time of the first publication, made his author famous. The plot revolves around Lord Marmion, a favorite of Henry VIII of England and his love interest, rich woman Clara de Clare. To get her, the Lord and his mistress, Constance De Beverley, forge a conspiracy against Clara’s fiance Sir Ralph De Wilton, causing an avalanche of unexpected events.

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# INTRODUCTION TO CANTO FIRST

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To William Stewart Rose, Esq.

*Asbestiel, Ettrick Forest.*

November's sky is chill and drear,  
November's leaf is red and sear:  
Late, gazing down the steepy linn  
That hems our little garden in,  
Low in its dark and narrow glen  
You scarce the rivulet might ken,  
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,  
So feeble thrilled the streamlet through:  
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen  
Through bush and briar, no longer green,  
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,  
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,  
And foaming brown, with doubled speed,  
Hurries its waters to the Tweed.  
No longer Autumn's glowing red  
Upon our forest hills is shed;  
No more, beneath the evening beam,  
Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam:

Away hath passed the heather-bell  
That bloomed so rich on Needpath Fell;  
Sallow his brow, and russet bare  
Are now the sister-heights of Yair.  
The sheep, before the pinching heaven,  
To sheltered dale and down are driven,  
Where yet some faded herbage pines,  
And yet a watery sunbeam shines:  
In meek despondency they eye  
The withered sward and wintry sky,  
And far beneath their summer hill,  
Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill:  
The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,  
And wraps him closer from the cold;  
His dogs no merry circles wheel,  
But, shivering, follow at his heel;  
A cowering glance they often cast,  
As deeper moans the gathering blast.

My imps, though hardy, bold, and wild,  
As best befits the mountain child,  
Feel the sad influence of the hour,  
And wail the daisy's vanished flower;  
Their summer gambols tell, and mourn,  
And anxious ask: "Will spring return,  
And birds and lambs again be gay,  
And blossoms clothe the hawthorn spray?"

Yes, prattlers, yes. The daisy's flower  
Again shall paint your summer bower;  
Again the hawthorn shall supply  
The garlands you delight to tie;

The lambs upon the lea shall bound,  
The wild birds carol to the round,  
And while you frolic light as they,  
Too short shall seem the summer day.

To mute and to material things  
New life revolving summer brings;  
The genial call dead Nature hears,  
And in her glory reappears.  
But oh! my country's wintry state  
What second spring shall renovate?  
What powerful call shall bid arise  
The buried warlike and the wise;  
The mind that thought for Britain's weal,  
The hand that grasped the victor steel?  
The vernal sun new life bestows  
Even on the meanest flower that blows;  
But vainly, vainly may he shine,  
Where glory weeps o'er Nelson's shrine;  
And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,  
That shrouds, O Pitt, thy hallowed tomb!

Deep graved in every British heart,  
Oh never let those names depart!  
Say to your sons – Lo, here his grave,  
Who victor died on Gadite wave;  
To him, as to the burning levin,  
Short, bright, resistless course was given.  
Where'er his country's foes were found,  
Was heard the fated thunder's sound,  
Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,  
Rolled, blazed, destroyed – and was no more.

---

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth,  
Who bade the conqueror go forth,  
And launched that thunderbolt of war  
On Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar;  
Who, born to guide such high emprise,  
For Britain's weal was early wise;  
Alas! to whom the Almighty gave,  
For Britain's sins, an early grave!  
His worth, who, in his mightiest hour,  
A bauble held the pride of power,  
Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,  
And served his Albion for herself;  
Who, when the frantic crowd amain  
Strained at subjection's bursting rein,  
O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,  
The pride he would not crush restrained,  
Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,  
And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's laws.  
Hadst thou but lived, though stripped of power,  
A watchman on the lonely tower,  
Thy thrilling trump had roused the land,  
When fraud or danger were at hand;  
By thee, as by the beacon-light,  
Our pilots had kept course aright;  
As some proud column, though alone,  
Thy strength had propped the tottering throne:  
Now is the stately column broke,  
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke,  
The trumpet's silver sound is still,  
The warder silent on the hill!

Oh think, how to his latest day,  
When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey,  
With Palinure's unaltered mood,  
Firm at his dangerous post he stood;  
Each call for needful rest repelled,  
With dying hand the rudder held,  
Till in his fall, with fateful sway,  
The steerage of the realm gave way!  
Then, while on Britain's thousand plains  
One unpolluted church remains,  
Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around  
The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,  
But still, upon the hallowed day,  
Convoke the swains to praise and pray;  
While faith and civil peace are dear,  
Grace this cold marble with a tear –  
He who preserved them, Pitt, lies here!  
Nor yet suppress the generous sigh,  
Because his rival slumbers nigh;  
Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,  
Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.  
For talents mourn, untimely lost  
When best employed, and wanted most;  
Mourn genius high, and lore profound,  
And wit that loved to play, not wound;  
And all the reasoning powers divine,  
To penetrate, resolve, combine;  
And feelings keen, and fancy's glow –  
They sleep with him who sleeps below:  
And if thou mourn'st they could not save

From error him who owns this grave,  
Be every harsher thought suppressed,  
And sacred be the last long rest.  
*Here*, where the end of earthly things  
Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings;  
Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,  
Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung;  
*Here*, where the fretted aisles prolong  
The distant notes of holy song,  
As if some angel spoke again,  
“All peace on earth, goodwill to men;”  
If ever from an English heart,  
Oh, *here* let prejudice depart,  
And, partial feeling cast aside,  
Record that Fox a Briton died!  
When Europe crouched to France’s yoke,  
And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,  
And the firm Russian’s purpose brave  
Was bartered by a timorous slave,  
Even then dishonour’s peace he spurned,  
The sullied olive-branch returned,  
Stood for his country’s glory fast,  
And nailed her colours to the mast!  
Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave  
A portion in this honoured grave,  
And ne’er held marble in its trust  
Of two such wondrous men the dust.  
With more than mortal powers endowed,  
How high they soared above the crowd!  
Theirs was no common party race,