

Poems of Sir Walter Scott

for the Lower Secondary School

by Ronald Renton

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Sir Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1771. As a baby he was afflicted by poliomyelitis which left him permanently crippled. To convalesce his parents sent him to his paternal grandfather's farm of Sandy-Knowe south of Melrose. It was there that was kindled his love of the Border country which was to be so important to him for the rest of his life and which is the background to many of the poems in this unit.

He was educated at Edinburgh High School and then proceeded to the University of Edinburgh where he studied Law, and in 1792 he became an advocate. In 1799 he was appointed Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire and in 1806 he was made a Clerk of the Court of Session – a demanding position but one which still left him time to pursue his career as a writer of poetry and novels.

His first major publication was his three-volume collection of ballads which he had gathered and edited, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3). This was followed by his long romantic poems “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” (1805), “Marmion” (1808) and “The Lady of the Lake” (1810). After this he turned to prose and began writing historical novels which were to become very well known across the world. Some of these are *Waverley* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1818), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) and *Ivanhoe* (1820).

In 1826 the printing company with which he was involved collapsed. Sir Walter lost everything he owned, but he vowed to clear his enormous debt by heroically taking on a huge programme of book writing – and eventually he did! Unfortunately, however, his health suffered very badly and he died in 1832. He is undoubtedly one of Scotland's greatest writers.

SCOTT'S SHORTER POEMS

Not all of Sir Walter Scott's poems are long like “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” and “Marmion”. Some of them are short independent poems. Others are embedded in the long poems and in chapters of Scott's novels, and one is sung by a character in a play. This unit will focus on eight of these shorter poems. It should be said at the outset that Scott's poems are romantic and their storylines often far-fetched. They are, however, artistically sound and can provide welcome escape and relief from gritty reality.

It is not anticipated that all eight of these pieces will be taught, but rather that one or may two be selected to fit into the programme of work being followed. The prefatory matter on each poem is intended for the teacher and the questions, of course, for the pupils. Full texts of the poems are provided on pages 7–16.

LOVE TRIUMPHANT

1. “Lochinvar”

“Lochinvar” is a free-standing poem embedded (as Lady Heron’s song) in Canto V of the long poem “Marmion”. It is highly romantic and is set in medieval times in the Border country of Scotland and England. Lochinvar, a gallant young Scottish knight of the Gordon family in Dumfriesshire, is deeply in love with a young English lady called Ellen. She, however, is about to be married – against her wishes – to a man of whom her family approve in Netherby, Cumberland, on the English side of the Border. Lochinvar gallantly rides to Netherby overcoming all obstacles in the hope of getting there to stop the wedding taking place. But he is too late; the ceremony is over, Ellen has been married to a very weak character and the guests have all now moved into the hall for the wedding reception. When he arrives the bride’s father challenges him, asking why he has come. Lochinvar replies that his love for Ellen is over and he merely wishes to have one last dance with her. But this is a ruse. In spite of the family’s frustration he succeeds in dancing a galliard with Ellen and, when they work their way round to the door of the hall, at his signal they escape to his waiting charger. He lifts her onto the horse and they ride away to be happy together. The fact that the poem is written in anapaestic tetrameters makes it move at a rollicking pace.

Questions

- How would you describe the personality and character of Lochinvar?
- How would you describe the character of the bridegroom? Consider the lines:
*For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.*
- How does Lochinvar persuade Ellen’s father that he is not going to cause trouble? Consider the lines:
*There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar*
- Explain how the lovers escape. What, according to the last stanza, will happen after that?
- Listening to the sound of the poem what do you think makes it move so quickly?
- What does the poet mean when he says:
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide
- In your group consider how you might act out this poem.

2. “Jock of Hazeldean”

“Jock of Hazeldean” deals with exactly the same situation as “Lochinvar” – a young English woman is obliged to marry a man she does not want and is madly in love with a young Scot, Jock of Hazeldean. Unlike “Lochinvar”, however, in this poem all the emphasis is on the unnamed damsel. We never actually meet Jock at all! In the first six lines of the first three stanzas the father of Frank, the groom to be, addresses the lady, urging her to marry his son. Why her own parents are not involved we never learn. Perhaps they are dead and she is his ward and he feels he can tell her how she should behave. What is clear is that Frank, unlike the bridegroom in “Lochinvar” is a fine, accomplished young man. The lady simply prefers Jock. Frank’s father promises her comfort and prestige if she marries his son, but on the morning of the wedding when all is ready she does not appear in church. She has run off with Jock of Hazeldean. The dramatic ending of the poem is emphasised by the change in the last two lines of the last stanza from the earlier:

*But aye she loot the tears doon fa’
For Jock of Hazeldean*

to

*She’s o’er the Border an awa’
Wi Jock o’ Hazeldean*

Questions

- Who speaks the first six lines in the first three stanzas?
- From the last two lines of the first three stanzas what can we tell about the lady’s affections?
- Describe the character of Frank?
- What sort of gifts and advantages are promised to the lady if she marries Frank?
- Describe the preparations in the kirk for the wedding in Stanza 4.
- How effective is the change of wording in the last two lines of Stanza 4 from the last two lines of the other stanzas?
- Do you consider the groom’s father had the right to behave the way he did?
- Google **Jock o Hazeldean** for a sung version of this poem by The Corries.

LOVE UNREQUITED

3. “The Maid of Neidpath”

The situation in “The Maid of Neidpath” is very different from that of the previous two poems. It is set in Neidpath Castle just outside the Border town of Peebles. Mary, the daughter of the Earl of March, sits in her tower watching anxiously for her lover returning. Legend has it he had been rejected by her father as not good enough for her and had gone abroad. In her desperate longing for him she has become very ill and is wasting away, so her father agrees to have him recalled as the only way of saving her life. Her great desire to see him again sharpens her senses and she hears the beat of his horse’s hooves as he approaches even before the watch-dog. In keen anticipation she leans over the battlement to greet him. But her illness has so altered her appearance that he does not recognise her and he rides past not noticing her. The feeble moan she makes tells of her broken heart – and imminent death.

Questions

1. What is Mary doing as she sits in her tower in the castle?
2. What do the following lines tell of Mary’s condition:
*Till through the wasted hand at night
You saw the taper shining*
3. What do following lines mean:
*Yet keenest powers to see and hear
Seem’d in her frame residing*
4. How does her lover treat her when he returns?
5. What is her reaction to this?

THE PRICE OF PRIDE

4. “Proud Maisie”

“Proud Maisie” is sung by the crazed character Madge Wildfire in Chapter 40 of Scott’s great novel *The Heart of Midlothian*. In some ways it reflects her own life.

The key word in this poem is “proud”. The poem takes the form of a dialogue between Maisie and a robin. Maisie is a very proud woman and expects the very best in life. She confidently asks the bird to tell her when she will be married. The bird replies:

*When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye*

Maisie, of course, does not see the ambiguity of this answer and assumes “carry” to be understood in its older sense of “escort”. She then asks who will be her bridegroom. When she is told that he will be the sexton (the gravedigger) it becomes clear that she will die a spinster and the only big occasion for her in a church will be her funeral. There will be no bright lights and no wedding bells. There will be only the dim shining of the glow worms in the churchyard where she will be buried and the screech of the owl in the bell tower at night. Pride indeed comes before a fall!

Questions

1. Maisie is described in this poem as “proud”. What do you understand by the expression “pride comes before a fall”?
2. When Maisie asks the robin to tell her when she will get married and the robin replies “When six braw gentlemen / Kirkyard shall carry ye”, what do you think “carry” means and what do you think Maisie understands by it? (When a word can be understood in two different ways like this we call this “ambiguity”.)
3. Find out what a sexton is.
4. What is the robin really telling Maisie about her future?
5. What is being described in the last stanza and how would you describe the atmosphere in it?
6. Do you think Maisie’s pride deserves what is forecast for her?
7. Why do think the poet has Maisie talking to a robin?

MURDER MOST FOUL

5. “The Twa Corbies”

“The Twa Corbies” was first published in Scott’s *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in 1803, his collection of anonymous ballads. It appears that, although this ballad is very old, Scott edited and re-organised it quite extensively, so that it can be considered, to some extent at least, his poem. “The Twa Corbies” goes further than “Proud Maisie” in that it features **two** birds in conversation. One day, the narrator tells us, when he is out walking he hears two crows talking to one another. One asks where they can get food. The other replies that the fresh body of a knight is lying hidden behind a turf wall. The only person who knows he is there is his “lady fair” who “has taken another mate”. Clearly he has been murdered to facilitate her new relationship. The two predators ravage the knight’s body and use his hair to improve their nest. By the time they are finished with him no one will recognise him. All that will be left will be his bare bones somewhere in the open countryside.

Questions

1. Don’t be afraid of the Scots words in this poem. Say them out loud and you will get most of their meanings. If you still can’t work them out Google **Dictionary of the Scots Language** and put the word you don’t understand into the Search box.
2. The crows are hungry. How does one of them suggest they get food?
3. Why would his hawk and his hound be important to the knight?
4. How do you think the knight died and why?
5. The word mate is usually used when referring to animals. What does it tell us about the character of the knight’s lady?
6. *And I’ll pike out his bonny blue een* (eyes). Why do think the crow wishes to pick out the knight’s blue eyes?
7. What do they intend to do with his hair?
8. If there has been foul play what evidence will there be of it at the end?
9. How would you describe the atmosphere of the last stanza?
10. Why you think the author of this poem chose to have two crows (rather than two humans) tell us about the dead knight?
- 11 Google **The Twa Corbies** for a sung version by The Corries and other singers.

INTO BATTLE

6. “March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale”

“March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale” occurs in Chapter 25 of Scott’s novel *The Monastery*. The tune to which it is set is frequently played by pipe bands today. It is a lively rallying cry intended to boost the Scottish troops (the Blue Bonnets), drawn in this case from the Border area, as they march south to fight the English enemy. The time is the reign of Mary Queen of Scots. Use is made of Border place names to suggest number and unity as they advance. Men are urged to join from every part of the region and reference is made to the banners and pride of the different families represented by the soldiers, to arms and cavalry and, above all, to good discipline which will ensure their success in battle. The piece moves forward at a lively pace as a result of the skilful use of dactylic meter, varying line length, rhyme and alliteration.

Questions

1. Who are the Blue Bonnets and with whom are they going to do battle? Why do you think they are given this name?
2. In the poem what are Ettrick, Teviotdale, Eskdale and Liddesdale?
3. What are the “banner” and “crest” mentioned in Stanza 1?
4. Why is the phrase “march in good order” so important for the success of the soldiers?

Why do you think the poem is so lively and moves so fast?

Listen to the rhythm and the rhymes.

Look at the lengths of the lines.

Listen to the repetition of the same letter in certain lines, e.g. the repetition of the letters ‘c’ and ‘b’ in:

Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing

(This is called alliteration.)

6. Google **A’ the Blue Bonnets** for a sung version by The Corries.

7. “Bonny Dundee”

“Bonny Dundee” occurs as a song in Scott’s play *The Doom of Devorgoil* sung by a character named Leonard. It is still sung and recited frequently although the play itself is rarely performed.

Bonny Dundee is the nickname of the dashing soldier, John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee. He was a loyal Jacobite, that is a supporter of the Stuart King James VII of Scotland. When the Convention of Scottish Estates rejected James in favour of William of Orange in 1689 Bonny Dundee left Edinburgh and made for the Highlands to raise an army to support James. He later defeated the supporters of William convincingly at Killiecrankie but was himself killed in the battle.

This song tells of the day he left Edinburgh. He and his small band of followers ride down the West Bow into the Grassmarket and out through the West Port (Gate). Only the Castle is still loyal to King James. The rest of the town is full of Whigs and Covenanters, his enemies. As he and his men make their way out of city the Provost is glad to see him go, the young girls admire him and his heavily armed enemies look on him with hatred but are still very afraid of him and move out of his way. He stops below the Castle rock to assure its Jacobite commander, the Duke of Gordon, that he is going to the Highlands where he is sure he will attract support for King James. He proclaims that he will never surrender to the usurper, William of Orange, and then he and his men gallop away.

Questions

1. Explain the two meanings of the word “crown” in Stanza 1.
2. What is the Provost of Edinburgh’s attitude to Bonny Dundee?
3. Dundee’s enemies are the Whigs and the Covenanters. What is their attitude to Bonny Dundee?
4. He stops at the Castle rock and asks the Jacobite commander, the Duke of Gordon, to
Let Mons Meg and her marrows [companions] speak two words or three
What is Mons Meg and what is he asking Gordon to do?
5. From whom does he expect to get support once he has left Edinburgh?
6. *Away to the hills, to the caves to the rocks –
Ere I own an usurper, I’ll couch with the fox.*
Find out what a “usurper” is.
What is Dundee prepared to do rather than be disloyal to his King?

7. *Then tremble false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnets and me.*
Not long after leaving Edinburgh Bonny Dundee raises an army and defeats the Whigs in 1689 at Killiecrankie. Google John Graham of Claverhouse, Bonny Dundee and see if you can find out more information about that battle.
8. Read the chorus again. What is the effect of repeating the chorus on the atmosphere of this poem?
9. Google **Bonny Dundee** for a sung version by The Corries.



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PATRIOTISM

8. “Breathes there the man”

“Breathes there the man” is the first stanza of Canto VI of “The Lay of the Last Minstrel”. The words are spoken by the minstrel himself. They are among Scott’s most famous lines. They celebrate love of homeland and decry as worthless and selfish anyone who, whatever his worldly success, does not love his native soil.

Questions

NB: The words of this poem are spoken by a minstrel.

1. What does “with soul so dead” mean?
2. How does the narrator expect someone who is returning from abroad to feel about his native land?
3. If a person does very well in life (has titles, becomes wealthy etc) but has no love for his native land, the narrator tells us he has become “concentred all in self”. What do you think “concentred” means?
4. What does “forfeit fair renown” mean?
5. Sum up what the minstrel says should be the fate of the person who has no love for his native land?
6. Do you feel that the minstrel’s verdict is a fair one? Why or why not?

TEXTS

1. LOCHINVAR

O, young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war, 5
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none,
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate
The bride had consented, the gallant came late: 10
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,) 15
'Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?'

'I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied; –
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide – 20
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar.'

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up, 25
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar, –
'Now tread we a measure!' said young Lochinvar. 30

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered 'Twere better by far 35
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.'

One touch to her hand and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung! 40
'She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They'll have fleet steeds that follow,' quoth young Lochinvar.

.../over



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There was mounting 'mong Graemes of the Netherby clan;
Fosters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannonbie Lee, 45
But the lost bride of Netherby ne'er did they see.
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e'er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

Netherby: hamlet in Cumberland on River Esk, adjacent to boundary with Scotland

croupe: hindquarters of an animal

scaur: precipice

Cannonbie: border village and parish of Eskdale, south Dumfriesshire

2. JOCK OF HAZELDEAN

‘Why weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I’ll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:
And ye sall be his bride, ladie, 5
Sae comely to be seen’ –
But aye she loot the tears down fa’
For Jock of Hazeldean.

‘Now let this wilfu’ grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale; 10
Young Frank is chief of Errington
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha’,
His sword in battle keen’ –
But aye she loot the tears down fa’ 15
For Jock of Hazeldean.

‘A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair; 20
And you the foremost o’ them a’
Sall ride our forest-queen’ –
But aye she loot the tears down fa’
For Jock of Hazeldean.

The kirk was decked at morning-tide, 25
The tapers glimmer’d fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha’;
The ladie was not seen! – 30
She’s o’er the Border, and awa’
Wi’ Jock of Hazeldean.

Hazeldean: Hassendean in Minto Parish, Roxburghshire

loot: let

Errington: village in Northumberland

Langley-dale: near Hexham in County Durham



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3. THE MAID OF NEIDPATH

O lovers' eyes are sharp to see,
And lovers' ears in hearing;
And love in life's extremity
Can lend an hour of cheering,
Disease had been in Mary's bower, 5
And slow decay from mourning,
Though now she sits on Neidpath's tower
To watch her love's returning.

All sunk and dim her eyes so bright,
Her form decay'd by pining, 10
Till through her wasted hand, at night,
You saw the taper shining.
By fits, a sultry hectic hue
Across her cheek was flying;
By fits, so ashy pale she grew, 15
Her maidens thought her dying.

Yet keenest powers to see and hear
Seem'd in her frame residing;
Before the watch-dog prick'd his ear,
She heard her lover's riding; 20
Ere scarce a distant form was kenn'd,
She knew, and waved to greet him;
And o'er the battlement did bend,
As on the wing to meet him.

He came – he passed – an heedless gaze, 25
As o'er some stranger glancing;
Her welcome, spoke in faltering phrase,
Lost in his courser's prancing –
The castle arch, whose hollow tone
Returns each whisper spoken, 30
Could scarcely catch the feeble moan
Which told her heart was broken.

Neidpath's tower: Neidpath Castle, near the Scottish Border town of Peebles

4. PROUD MAISIE

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

‘Tell me, thou bonny bird, 5
When shall I marry me?’ –
‘When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye.’

‘Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?’ – 10
‘The grey-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

‘The glow-worm o’er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady.
The owl from the steeple sing, 15
“Welcome, proud lady.”’



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5. THE TWA CORBIES

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane;
The tane unto the t'other say,
'Where sall we gang and dine to-day?'

'In behint yon auld fail dyke, 5
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

'His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame, 10
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

'Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair 15
We'll, theek our nest when it grows bare.

'Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes, when they we bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair.' 20

6. MARCH, MARCH, ETRICK AND TEVIOTDALE

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
Why the deil dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread, 5
Flutters above your head,
Many a crest that is famous in story.
Mount and make ready then,
Sons of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and our old Scottish glory. 10

Come from the hills where your hirsels are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding, 15
War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms then, and march in good order;
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border. 20

Blue Bonnets: a broad round flat cap of blue wool was worn by Scottish soldiers
Queen: Mary Queen of Scots
Hirsels: flocks, herds



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7. BONNY DUNDEE

To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke.
'Ere the King's crown shall fall there are crowns to be broke;
So let each Cavalier who loves honour and me,
Come follow the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can, 5
Come saddle your horses, and call up your men;
Come open the West Port and let me gang free,
And it's room for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward, the drums they are beat; 10
But the Provost, douce man, said, 'Just e'en let him be,
The Gude Town is weel quit of that Deil of Dundee.'

Come fill up my cup, etc.

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow; 15
But the young plants of grace they looked couthie and slee,
Thinking 'Luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!'

Come fill up my cup, etc.

With sour-featured Whigs the Grassmarket was crammed,
As if half the West had set tryst to be hanged; 20
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watched for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, etc.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had spears,
And lang-hafted gullies to kill cavaliers; 25
But they shrunk to close-heads and the causeway was free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, etc.

He spurred to the foot of the proud Castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke; 30
'Let Mons Meg and her marrows speak twa words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.'

Come fill up my cup, etc.

The Gordon demands of him which way he goes –
'Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose! 35
Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, etc. .../over

‘There are hills beyond Pentland and lands beyond Forth,
If there’s lords in the Lowlands, there’s chiefs in the North; 40
There are wild Duniewassals three thousand times three,
Will cry hoigh! for the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, etc.

‘There’s brass on the target of barked bull-hide;
There’s steel in the scabbard that dangles beside; 45
The brass shall be burnished, the steel shall flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, etc.

‘Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks
Ere I own an usurper, I’ll couch with the fox; 50
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me!’

Come fill up my cup, etc.

He waved his proud hand, the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clashed and the horsemen rode on, 55
Till on Ravelston’s cliffs and on Clermiston’s lee
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.

*Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle the horses, and call up the men,
Come open your gates, and let me gae free, 60
For it’s up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!*

Lords of Convention: Convention of Scottish Estates which proclaimed William and Mary as King and Queen of Scotland in April 1689.

Claver’s: John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee (1649–89)

Bow: the West Bow, a street in Edinburgh

flyting: scolding

couthie: affable

slee: sly

Whigs: Presbyterians

Grassmarket: place of public execution in Edinburgh

cowls of Kilmarnock: covenanters from the west of Scotland

gullies: knives

close-heads: entrances to passages of tenement houses

Gordon: George, Duke of Gordon (1543–1716), who held Edinburgh Castle for King James until June 1689.

Mons Meg: a cannon in Edinburgh Castle

Montrose: James Graham, Marquis of Montrose (1612–50) who fought for Charles I in Scotland, 1644–5.

Duniewassals: gentlemen (Gaelic)

barked: tanned

Ravelston, Clermiston: estates in Corstorphine parish, Midlothian



ASSOCIATION FOR SCOTTISH LITERARY STUDIES
SCHOOLS AND FURTHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
TEACHING NOTES: 2011-2

8. BREATHES THERE THE MAN

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
'This is my own, my native land!'
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned, 5
From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim; 10
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung, 15
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.